Children get ready for school at home by listening, talking, and playing. Simple things you can do with children can make a big difference.

Dear Parents,

We know that entering Kindergarten is an exciting and sometimes scary time for both parents and children. Parents often wonder if their child has the skills necessary to be successful in Kindergarten and ask us for things they can do at home to prepare for this transition. This packet includes some things you can with your child to assist in the transition to school.

Kindergarten students enter school with a wide variety of skills and needs. Your child’s teacher will work with you to build upon the base of skills you have already taught your child.

We look forward to seeing your child in Kindergarten next year!
**IMPORTANCE:** A regular routine can help children move from one activity to another more easily. In school children will have a very regular schedule. At home, having a regular routine can help children feel safe. Children are more comfortable when they know what will happen next. Children who are able to follow a schedule and routine, will be better prepared for school.

**ACTIVITIES:**

1. **ROUTINES DO NOT HAVE TO BE EXACT** or a down to the minute schedule; just a predictable sequence of events. For instance, a simple morning routine could be:
   - First we wake up
   - We make our bed
   - Next we use the potty and wash hands
   - We get dressed
   - Then, we eat breakfast

   Letting your child know the routine and then sticking to it helps her understand and plan for the day and lets her know what you expect. Does she need to make her bed? Or wash her hands? Clean up toys? If she knows it is part of a regular routine, she gets used to her responsibilities. Of course, not every day is the same, and the unexpected will happen. Letting your children know that there may be a change of plans is always a good idea.

2. **NAP-TIME AND BED-TIME ROUTINES:**
   Make sure that your child gets the sleep he needs. Typically children between 3 and 6 years old need at least 10-12 hours of sleep every day. For children who have to be at school at 7:30 a.m., that means a bed time of 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. As any parent knows, bed-time can be a difficult transition time for children. A routine helps them make that transition more easily. A typical bedtime routine could be:
   - Dinner
   - Short activity (building blocks, playing games, singing songs)
   - Preparing for the next day (clean up, putting away dishes, laying out clothes, etc)
   - Bath
   - Reading books in bed
   - Lights out
3. **MORE HELPFUL ROUTINES IDEAS:**

- Ask your child to help you create a daily routine
- Post the daily routine on the fridge at your child’s eye level
- Have a symbol (sun for morning, moon for night, flowers, animals) for each routine
- Take a photo of your child doing each activity and put it next to the routine on the chart
- Empower your child by asking him “What is next on your chart?”
- Praise the effort, not the child. Instead of saying “good girl” or “good boy” focus on his work, e.g. “You brushed your teeth tonight, right after your bath. You must be proud you remembered that.”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHECK LIST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>As you try these activities, reflect on the skills your child is building that help her get ready for school. These skills can help children start school strong!</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child can move easily through different activities.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Child is able to tell what activity comes next in a sequence of events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child is able to complete activities in her regular routine (cleaning up a room or brushing teeth), with just a few reminders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child is able to complete all the steps to use the toilet and wash hands without assistance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child is able to complete two-step directions regularly, for example “Put on your shoes and brush your hair.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child is able to complete three-step directions often, for example “Pick up the trash on the floor, put away the toys and go to the bathroom.”</td>
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**IMPORTANCE:** When children play games, they learn a lot! Children learn to follow rules. They pay attention. They use self control. Playing games can help a child improve memory and increase and problem solving ability. Being physically active also helps children build balance and coordination. Plus, it is fun!

**ACTIVITIES:**

There are many **SIMPLE GAMES** that you can play with children:

1. **I SPY**
   - Play with at least two players.
   - Players try to guess what another player sees based on clues, questions and answers.
   - Player 1 looks for something they can see. This can be a car, a bike, a building, a book, a toy, a shirt – anything. Player 1 begins the game with saying, “I spy with my little eye something ______ ________.” They add a clue about the object such as the color of the object, the shape of the object or what you can do with the object.
   - The other players ask questions about the object (taking turns if there is more than two people playing). “Is it big?” “Is it green?” Player 1 can only answer “yes” or “no”.
   - Once a player thinks she knows the answer, she can guess if it is the object. “Is it that book?” If she guesses correctly, she gets to find something and give the next clue, “I spy with my little eye something ______________.” If she is incorrect, play continues until a player guesses correctly.

2. **RED LIGHT/ GREEN LIGHT:**
   - Play with at least two players.
   - One person is the “stop light” and the other players try to touch him.
   - At the start, children form a line about 10 feet away from the “stop light”.
   - The “stop light” faces away from the line of children and says, “green light”.
   - At this point the kids are allowed to move towards the “stop light”.
   - The “stop light” faces away from the line of children and says, “green light”.
   - The first child to touch the “stop light” wins.
   - The stop light wins if all the children are out before anyone is able to touch him.
3. **SIMON SAYS:**

   - Play with at least two players.
   - One person is the leader, “Simon”.
   - “Simon” orders the other players to do things (usually very silly things).
   - Players only obey the command when Simon uses the phrase “Simon says ______________.” For instance if the leader says “Simon says, touch your head,” all the other players must touch their heads.
   - If the leader says, “Touch your feet” but does not say, “Simon says, touch your feet,” any player who touches his feet would be out.
   - The leader keeps giving commands until there is one person left.
   - That person wins the game and becomes the new leader.

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**CHECK LIST**

As you try these activities, reflect on the skills your child is building that help them get ready for school. These skills can help children start school strong!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>✔</th>
<th>Child takes turn in a game</th>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can wait her turn</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can follow directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child understands the rules of the game</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can tell you the rules of the game</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child is kind to other players in a game</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child does not get overly upset if she loses the game</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can resolve conflicts that come up during play</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can stand on one foot and hop</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child uses a variety of words</td>
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**IMPORTANCE:** Children learn from everyday experiences. Anytime is learning time for young children. At the store, children can learn to follow rules, make plans, and learn new words. These activities can be done when you are out and about with your children. Going to the park, riding the bus, and going to the library are great for learning new rules and new words.

**ACTIVITIES:**

Important tips: Shopping can wear you out! Before you go, make sure that both you and your child eat a healthy snack. When children are hungry, they are more likely to be irritable or grab for items in the store (and you are too!). Healthy low-sugar snacks can help both children and adults focus and be on their best behavior.

**SNACK SUGGESTIONS:**
- Raisins
- Fresh fruit
- Crackers
- Nuts
- Carrots
- Yogurt
- Cheese

1. **TALK ABOUT THE ITEMS YOU SEE AT THE STORE:**
   This is a wonderful way to learn new words. The produce department is a great place to talk about how different things look, feel, and smell.

   First, start by describing what you see, then ask children questions about what they see. Here are some phrases you may want to try:
   - “The avocados are really soft today, want to feel? They are bumpy, but this spot – it is too soft.”
   - “Oh, look those apples are so red, but those other apples are green.”
   - “What color is it?”
   - “Tell me about the apple? What do you see, smell, feel?”
   - “How many words can you use to describe the banana? Let’s count.”
   - “I love the way oranges smell, so fresh.”

2. **MAKE A GROCERY LIST:**
   Make a grocery list for you and help your child make one, too. Having a list helps children become engaged and stay interested.
A. Help your child make his own list with just 3-4 items on it. This helps him practice his writing or holding a pencil even if just scribbling or drawing a picture of items on their list. If your child wants to write down words, help him by writing out a word for him to copy onto his list. Your child can practice letter by letter. Also, help your child write his name at the top of the list.

- John
  - Milk
  - Bread
  - Apples

B. Have your child count the number of items left on the list and cross items off when they go in the cart.

C. Have your child find items that start with letters. “Find the ‘M’ for ‘Milk’”. “Ok cross that off; we have it!” Checking items off the list helps him know how much more shopping is left to do.

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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can make marks that look like letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can write her first name</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can identify at least 20 upper and 20 lower case letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can tell you what comes next in a series, a plan or a story</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child can use words to describe things in the store</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child is able to stay on task for several minutes (making the list or looking for items in the store)</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Child is able to describe objects with a variety of words, for example “It is yellow, prickly and smells sweet.”</td>
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IMPORTANCE: Reading to children helps them be ready to become readers. Reading to children lets them know that letters represent words and words stand for ideas. Children also learn how to hold a book, how to turn pages and that pictures help tell the story. All of these skills put together help children get ready to read! Peaceful time spent close to children, helps them relax, feel good, and calmly process what they are learning. When you spend time with your children reading, it lets them know reading is a good and important thing to do. Reading at home, in the car or in the doctor’s office is a valuable way to spend time with children.

ACTIVITIES:

READ, READ, AND RE-READ:
Children love reading books over and over again. Reading the same stories over and over helps children understand more and more about the words in the story. Children will look at the pictures and the words on the page and start making connections. They start to understand that “Once” starts with the letter “O”. Stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. The more stories children hear, the more they recognize this pattern. Ask your child questions about the words in the book and the story. Talk about a story before, during and after you read with them. This helps children think more about what they are hearing and seeing.
• “Can you find a word that starts with the letter ‘C’?”
• “How do you think he feels?”
• “Did you like that story? Why?”
• “What do you think happens in the story?”
• “What do you think will happen next?”
• “What could have happened instead?”
• “Who was your favorite character in the story?”

NEED HELP FINDING A BOOK:
Help in choosing books for children at PBS.org
Free books are available at local libraries
Comprehensive site of free eBooks
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<tr>
<td>Child holds a book right side up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child turns pages in a book, with a purpose to look at pictures or to be read to</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is able to re-tell a story after it is read out loud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify characters in a book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can describe the beginning, middle and end of a story</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child understands and can identify feelings of a character in a story</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can pay attention to a short children’s book being read out loud</td>
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**IMPORTANCE:** Letters are the building blocks to words. Knowing your A, B, C’s is much more than singing a song. Children who can recognize their letters and identify the sounds that letters make are getting ready to become readers!

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Sing the Alphabet song over and over and over with your children.
- Show children upper and lower case letters (in books, magazines, newspapers, on signs or billboard, on products in the grocery store).
- Encourage your child to draw a picture and tell you a story about it. Write the story down next to the picture.
- Write your child’s name for her and encourage her to practice writing her own name.
- Teach letters through names- your child’s and those of siblings, parents, and other people who are important to your child.
- Encourage your child to use any letter sounds she knows to try to write (“Bdy” for “Birthday”)
- Compare letters that look similar (M and N) and sound familiar (V and F.)
- Play a game where you take turns thinking of words that start with an ‘A’ sound like “Ant” or “Apple, a “B” sound like “Bread” or “Banana”, and so on.
- Read books with your child and point to the words you are reading. Ask children to identify letters they see in books.
- Label everyday objects around the house. Take a piece of paper and make labels for things like “table”, “chair”, “couch”, “TV”, “sink”.

For more ideas on learning letters visit [PBS.org](http://pbs.org).
As you try these activities, reflect on the skills your child is building that help them get ready for school. These skills can help children start school strong!

- Child is able to identify at least 20 Upper Case letters
- Child is able to identify at least 20 lower case letters
- Child is able to identify all the letters in his or her name
- Child is able to write his or her own name
**IMPORTANCE:** Children that can classify items are able to understand how things are alike, or different. It helps them make connections. This helps them better understand our world. When children can describe what they see and what they know, they do better in school. It also helps them become problem solvers.

**ACTIVITIES:**

1. **SORT LAUNDRY:**
   - Ask your child to help sort laundry.
   - “Can you find all the socks?”
   - “Can you find all the shirts?”
   - “What makes them alike?”
   - “What makes them different?”
   - “How many do we have?”

2. **GATHER ITEMS FROM AROUND THE HOUSE**
   (buttons, cans, boxes, forks, spoons, rocks, acorns, etc.):
   - Ask your child to describe and sort the objects.
   - “Can you put all the red objects together?”
   - “Can you put the objects that are alike together?”
   - “How are these objects alike?”
   - “How are these objects different?”
   - “What shape are the objects?”
   - “Can you sort the objects from biggest to smallest?”
   - “How many objects are there in each group?”
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child can sort a collection of objects into groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child can describe how things are alike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child can describe how things are different</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child can compare items by size, shape and color</td>
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</table>
**NUMBERS, SHAPES & COLORS**

**SCHOOL READINESS PARENT GUIDE: PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS**

**IMPORTANCE:** How many are there? What color is it? What can we make? Before children can add or subtract, they count, identify, and build things. These skills are the basics of math. Numbers, shapes, and colors help children understand and talk about their world in meaningful ways that build learning and help them be ready for school.

**ACTIVITIES:**

1. **FIND THE NUMBER:**
   Ask your child to find numbers all around him and count everything!
   - “Do you see the number 3 on our door? Show me.”
   - “Let’s count the people on the slide.”
   - “Press the 2 in the elevator.”
   - “How many do we have?”

2. **LOOK FOR DIFFERENT SHAPES WHEREVER YOU ARE:**
   - “Can you find a circle in the house?”
   - “Can you find a square on the bus?”
   - “Can you find a triangle outside?”

3. **LOOK FOR DIFFERENT COLORS WHEREVER YOU ARE:**
   - “Name three things that are blue.”
   - “Can you find something yellow?”
   - “Show me the red flower.”

4. **PLAY WITH BLOCKS:**
   Ask your child to describe what they are building.
   - “What shapes did you use to build it?”
   - “Why does this shape fit best here?”
   - “Can you stack it this way?”
   - “Can you put all the blocks that are alike together?”
   - “How are these alike?”
CHECK LIST

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<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify a square</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify a circle</td>
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<td>Child can identify a triangle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify a rectangle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify the color red</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify the color blue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify the color yellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify the color orange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify the color green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify the color purple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can identify the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can count to ten</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child can give you ten things by counting them out</td>
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