



Dear Families and Caregivers,

We know the transition children make into kindergarten can be difficult to navigate. It is important that families feel supported and know how they can encourage children during this important transition. We put this packet together in order to give you some information and guidance on how you can help children transition smoothly into kindergarten.

Our community has worked together to provide you with some valuable resources that will give ideas on how you can support children over the next few months. A child's most valuable resource is their family or caregiver and the time that is spent together reading, exploring, and having fun! *While these are recommendations, it is not necessary for children to be able to do everything on the list to start kindergarten.*

This packet contains a variety of information related to preparing children for success in kindergarten, what children will be learning in kindergarten, and fun things that you can do together to develop and support children's skills!

We want to ensure that every child (& family/caregiver) is prepared for this transition into kindergarten. By working together we can make this a successful and enjoyable experience for everyone!

Sincerely,

*The School Readiness Advisory Committee
A workgroup of the Ingham Great Start Collaborative*



Children learn many different skills in the following areas that will help them be ready to succeed in kindergarten. Some of these skills include:

Language Development

- Answering questions about a story you've read together
- Taking two or more turns in a conversation
- Using words learned from stories, experiences and conversation
- Being understood by most people
- Using I, he, she, him, her, his, and hers correctly

Literacy Development

- Playing with sounds in words (rhyming, beginning sounds)
- Identifying 10 or more upper and lowercase letters and some of the sounds they make
- Recognizing his or her own written name
- Looking at a book front to back and turns the pages one at a time
- Writing his or her first name beginning with a capital and finishing with lowercase

Mathematical Development:

- Verbally counting to 20
- Physically counting out 10 objects correctly
- Identifying numbers 1-10
- Identifying basic shapes (square, circle, triangle, rectangle, diamond, oval)
- Creating a two part pattern (green, white, green, white)
- Sorting objects by something they have in common (color, size, shape etc.)

Physical Development

- Jumping with two feet
- Maintaining personal space
- Using a tripod grasp (thumb and two fingers) to write or draw a letter, numeral, or shape
- Using child size scissors

Social Development

- Trusting other adults and children
- Playing with, not just next to, other children
- Learning and participating in a group

Emotional Development

- Separating from primary caregiver for an extended period of time
- Taking care of his or her own needs (i.e. wiping after toileting, washing hands)
- Controlling the expression of his or her feelings

Approaches to Learning

- Showing curiosity and motivation to learn new things
- Spending 10-15 minutes work on interesting tasks
- Focusing and concentrating on an activity for 10-15 minutes (i.e. listening to story)
- Remembering and connecting experiences with environment (grocery store, library)
- Following two step directions and remembering simple routines
- Sticking with and solving simple problems (i.e. putting together a puzzle)

What Can I Do at Home? Parent Guide #16

As your child's first teacher you have a key role. You can help your child prepare for school and life success.

The quantity and quality of time you spend with your child matters. You can do some things to help your child be better prepared for school while having fun.

- **READ every day.** Share your love of books with your child. Research shows there are benefits from reading to your child for 30 minutes a day. It does not have to be done all at once.
- **TALK and LISTEN.** When you talk and listen with your child, he/she builds language and learns needed skills.
- **WORDS. Use as many words as possible to describe things in your child's world.** The number of words your child knows relates to his/her later reading success. Don't use 'baby talk.' If your child makes mistakes in grammar, repeat the word correctly.
- **RESPECT.** Be respectful with your child and others. Your child learns from watching you. Make sure your actions are ones you want your child to repeat.
- **PLAY with your children.** Let them see you as a playful person. Remember that play *is* a child's work. Children solve problems and learn new skills through play.
-

HELP your child see herself/himself as a capable person. Help build self-esteem by pointing out all the things your child does 'right.' Make an effort to look for the good in your child. Help your child see how wonderful she/he is.

- **COOK with your child.** Measure, pour, stir, read the recipe, clean up, and eat with your child. Cooking activities are good ways to work small muscles. These muscles are used later to write.
- **COLOR and draw with your child.** This will improve his or her fine motor skills and help prepare the muscles in the fingers for writing.

ASK for help. If you are concerned about your child's development in any area, and he or she is under the age of three, call 1-800-*Early On*. If your child is over the age of three, contact Build Up Michigan (<http://buildupmi.org>), your local school district, or the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education, at 1-888-320-8384.

How Do I Enroll My Child In Kindergarten? Parent Guide #3

A child who is five years old on or before September 1 may enroll in kindergarten.*

- Most public school districts begin signing children up for kindergarten in early spring for the following fall.
- Contact your local school to find out the exact date.
- If you are interested in signing up your child in a district other than your own, contact that district to see if they are offering schools of choice enrollment for kindergarten and if so, what the deadline is for application.
- Be ready with names, addresses and phone numbers to fill out forms. Also bring contact information about your child's doctor.
- Check with your local school for what information they want you to bring.
- If you do not have all of the forms they want, you should still sign up your child for kindergarten. The staff can help you get any missing forms.
- If you are staying in a temporary place or have lost your housing recently, let your school know that when you sign up.
- When you sign up, let the school know if your child gets other services, such as speech therapy.

Here are some common papers needed to sign your child up for kindergarten.

- Proof of your child's age and identity (birth certificate) is required. Other proof of birth may be accepted (passport, hospital birth record, adoption record or baptismal certificate, etc.).
- Proof of where you live (driver's license, voter registration card, utility bill, rent statement, income tax return statement, or any official document showing both your name and address).
- Records of vaccination and immunization. You may contact your school to apply for a waiver, which is an exemption from vaccinations for religious or medical reasons. Current immunizations can be found at the [Michigan Care Improvement Registry](http://www.mcir.org) (www.mcir.org).
- Vision and hearing tests. Each child needs to have a hearing and vision test before starting kindergarten.

****Please see Parent Guide #4 for information about an early entry option for kindergarten enrollment.***

What Will My Child Do In Kindergarten? Parent Guide #9

If your child has gone to a preschool or child care center, kindergarten could be a “big change.”

- The kindergarten program will be more formal than preschool. Schools today have more teaching time to meet certain goals.
- Local schools are allowed to choose programs that meet those goals for learning. Schools also choose the daily routine in kindergarten.
- The state of Michigan has goals for what children should have learned by the end of the kindergarten year.

Ask your child’s teacher to share the kindergarten daily routine with you. Then you can talk with your child about parts of the day, such as:

- Large and small group time.
- Time for children to work alone on projects or in “centers” around the room.
- Snack time.
- Lunch in the cafeteria.
- Active and quiet activities.
- Extra classes such as gym, music, art, library and computers.

No matter what the kindergarten routine looks like, the most important thing is the variety and types of learning opportunities.

- Good teachers know that kindergartners need lots of learning opportunities. Activities in typical subject areas are blended with social/emotional and physical development experiences.
- By talking with the teacher, you can learn about what your child is doing. This is important during changes as you work together to help your child adjust.
- When this works, your child looks forward to school each day!

Growing up - Changes from the preschool years. Differences your child may experience in the classroom:

- More structured time and more teacher-directed activities.
- More group projects and less free play.
- More inside activities, less outside time.
- More writing letters and numbers.
- More school-wide rules.
- More children in the class.

Why Play in Kindergarten? Parent Guide #10

There are many ways to learn. Children and adults learn best when they are encouraged and interested.

Many years of research shows that play is more than just fun and games.

Play boosts strong growth in many areas, including:

- **Mental:** There is a close link between play and strong brain growth. It lays the groundwork for later school success in reading and writing. It provides experiences that help children develop.
- **Social:** Play is important for the imagination. It also helps to develop creative problem-solving skills.
- **Emotional:** Make-believe play improves teamwork and compassion. It also helps children learn to control their behaviors.
- **Physical:** The rough and tumble of active play helps children's muscles develop and brains grow.

Play has other benefits for learning:

- Most kindergartners are not ready to sit and listen for long periods of time.
- Research shows play works better when the teacher uses the child's strengths and interests. The teacher can then provide chances to learn through experience.
- A young child's play is his/her work. A kindergarten classroom should be filled with chances to learn through play.
- Children love school when the teacher supports their learning both in and out of class and when their parents are interested in their school day.

How Can I Help My Child Ease Those First Day Jitters? Parent Guide #18

Positive attitudes go a long way.

- Your child will feel your confidence in his/her ability to succeed.
- Your child is influenced by the things you say and do. He/she also sees the feelings you show.
- It is important that you are happy and excited about your child starting kindergarten. Your child will follow your lead.
- There are many good books to read together to get ready for the first day of school.

Breakfast is fuel for your child's body.

A good way for your child to have energy through the day is to give him/her a healthy breakfast. This meal is important because your child's body needs the "fuel" to get going in the morning. Numerous studies show that children who eat breakfast daily have better school records and better attitudes. The fuel gained from a healthy breakfast also helps with memory.

Choices are empowering.

Let your child make choices about school clothes, food and school supplies. This can help him/her feel more confident and in control. This also increases his/her independence skills.

Morning rush hour can be avoided.

- Waking up with enough time to get ready for school makes your home more relaxed. This helps

your child feel more comfortable.

- Setting out clothes and supplies the night before works well for many families.

Saying goodbye is better than the "disappearing act."

- Leaving your child that first day might be difficult. Studies show that a loving but firm goodbye is the best way to go.
- Comfort him/her and let him/her know the next time he/she will see you. Don't make your child feel awkward when he/she is upset to see you go.
- The teacher can help with good ideas before the first day of school.

How Can I Be Engaged With My Child's Education? Parent Guide #20

Research shows it is important for you to be engaged in your child's education.

Parent engagement helps your child succeed in school. It results in your child being absent less and better behaved. A home that supports learning is important. This affects your child's school success. It matters more than your income, educational level or cultural background, and it is fun.

Three things that help your child succeed in school:

1. Help organize your child's time.
2. Help with homework.
3. Talk about school.

The following tips may help your child do well:

- Start a daily family routine. Provide time and a quiet place to study. Be firm about bedtime. Eat dinner together.
- Set limits on TV watching. Set up after school activities and care.
- Show the values of discipline and hard work.
- Notice and support special talents.
- Share successes with family and friends.
- Talk positively about school experiences.

Different ways to be engaged:

COMMUNICATION: Read and respond to all notices and newsletters. Attend parent-teacher conferences. Translators may be available if needed.

VOLUNTEERING: Support your child's class by helping their teacher. Go on a field trip. Share your family's culture with the other children.

PARENT LEADERSHIP: Join PTA/PTO or other parent groups. These groups offer a lot of chances to help in the school. They also give you a chance to connect with other parents and staff.

DECISION MAKING: Let the principal know if you want to serve on advisory councils or committees. Attend school board meetings or work sessions.

If you are a parent of a child with a disability, make sure you are included in the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Your engagement is important to the IEP process.

Are there books to read to help my child get ready for kindergarten?

Yes! Here are some fun books that can help your child be aware of kindergarten routines.

[Monkey: Not ready for kindergarten](#) by Marc Brown

ISBN: 9780553496581

Monkey's family models a positive, family-centered approach to preparing for kindergarten.

[Kindergarten rocks](#) by Katie Davis

ISBN: 9780152064686

Dexter isn't worried about starting kindergarten, but his stuffed dog, Rufus, is definitely nervous.

[Kindergarten diary](#) by Antoinette Portis

ISBN: 9780061456916

Annalina describes her transition to kindergarten by keeping a record of her first month of school.

[Welcome to kindergarten](#) by Anne Rockwell

ISBN: 9780802776648

A simple, reassuring look at kindergarten routines.

[Planet kindergarten](#) by Sue Ganz-Schmitt

ISBN: 9781452118932

A child imagines going to kindergarten is a journey to another planet.

[Miss Bindergarten gets ready for kindergarten](#) by Joseph Slate ISBN: 9781442053038

This classic animal alphabet book cleverly shows how teachers prepare for students while the students are preparing to go to school.

[Is your buffalo ready for kindergarten?](#) by Audrey Vernick

ISBN: 9780062067197

An entertaining and reassuring look at first day worries, this story follows a cartoon buffalo who learns there is a place for everyone in kindergarten.

[Timothy goes to school](#) by Rosemary Wells

ISBN: 9780140567427

In this classic starting school story Timothy learns about being accepted and making new friends.

[How do dinosaurs go to school?](#) by Jane Yolen

ISBN: 9780439020817

Explains how young dinosaurs should behave during a typical school day.

[Mom, it's my first day of kindergarten!](#) by Hyewon Yum

ISBN: 9780374350048

In a delightful twist mom is more nervous about school starting than her child. A great book to start conversations about parents' and children's feelings about kindergarten.



Capital Area District
LIBRARIES

Find these titles and more at your [CADL branch](#) or on our website: [cadl.org](#).

Don't have a library card? Visit any [CADL branch](#) or [cadl.org](#) to find out how to get one.

* The East Lansing Public Library serves East Lansing residents: [elpl.org](#).