



Preschool Transition Toolkit Steps to Kindergarten

This toolkit has been created for educators and parents as they prepare their learners to transition from **preschool to kindergarten**. The toolkit includes unique activities for this transition.

The transition activities have also been divided into two sections: 1) the **Spring** – Connecting Families to School/Teachers **Before** the transition year and, 2) **Summer** months. A suggested schedule to start the **Beginning** of the transition year (August/September) is also included.

Table of Contents

1.	Kindergarten (<i>An Introduction</i>)	4
2.	Transition Tools for Kindergarten – Spring <i>Connecting Families to School/Teachers</i>	8
3.	The Top Five Things Parents Wish Teachers Knew	10
4.	The Top Five Things Teachers Wish Parents Knew	10
5.	Teachers and Families Have Different Perceptions	11
6.	Ten Characteristics of Children Who Succeed in School	12
7.	Teacher Letter ‘ <i>Help Me Know Your Child</i> ’	14
8.	Collaboration Responsibilities	18
9.	Books that help children and their families ease their way into Kindergarten	19
10.	Suggested Outline for Kindergarten Parent Orientation	22
11.	Suggested – Words of Advice from Our School Counselor	24
12.	Transition Tools for Kindergarten – Summer Months <i>Learners & Families</i>	26
13.	Kindergarten KAMP Resources	28
14.	Addressing transition concerns (teacher)	34
15.	Home Literacy Ideas/Activities	36
16.	Kindergarten Begins – August/September <i>Suggested Activities for the School & Families</i>	52

Kindergarten

The transition to Kindergarten is one of the most significant transitions that a young child experiences in his or her formative years. What happens may lay the foundation for a child's adjustment to future success in school. The transition to Kindergarten is much more than a one-time event. It is a journey that takes time, preparation, and advanced planning.

What is the transition to Kindergarten?

The word transition refers to the process of change. It involves moving from one situation to another. It can be smooth and satisfying or bumpy and frightening for a young child. While it is the child who directly experiences the transition, other groups of people are involved. The attitudes and actions of those who are directly involved can do a great deal to make the transition to Kindergarten a positive or not so positive experience for a young child and his or her family. The Following are some of the effects that the transition to Kindergarten may have on different groups of people who are touched by it.

For the child:

The transition can be exciting because the child is moving to something new that the adults in his or her life regard as important. He or she may be apprehensive about leaving familiar people and routines and facing the unknown. A child entering Kindergarten must learn to cope with an unfamiliar place, changes in expectations, a new role, peer group, and authority figure, and many new experiences like riding the bus and eating in the cafeteria. If not handled well these new experiences and relationships may be stressful for the child.

For the Family:

There is pride that their child is entering school and will be facing new challenges. There is also concern about how their child will cope with the change; if he or she will be successful, and the change this may bring to their role as parents. They hope that the transition to Kindergarten will be a smooth and happy one.

For the early education and care teacher/provider:

Transition means saying good-bye to children to whom they have grown attached. Early childhood educators would like to be asked about the child's progress in their care and hope that the experiences they have provided the child have built a solid foundation for continued learning and development.

For the Kindergarten teacher:

Transition means saying hello to a new group of children. They hope the children will be well prepared for school expectations from their previous experiences in school or home. They hope that the children who enter their classes will be ready to be successful in the Kindergarten program.

For the elementary school principal and staff:

Principals and other school staff members are also preparing to say hello to a new group of kindergartners. They also hope these children will come well prepared and that their families will be supportive of the school and its programs.

For the community:

Members of the community want to know that children are successful and thriving in school. They want productive citizens and schools that are a model of excellence. When children enter school ready to be successful learners these goals are promoted. For each community the hope is that Kindergarten teachers and staff, early education and care teachers, along with administrators and elementary school level transition teams, will work in collaboration and plan in advance for a successful transition to Kindergarten for all children and families.

Why is the transition to Kindergarten important?

Thoughtful planning for this transition can have meaningful results for children, families, teachers, schools, and communities that last well beyond the first weeks of school. The transition to formal school sets the tone and direction of a child's school career and can even be a turning point in a child's life. "Kindergarten is the place in which children make important conclusions about school as a place where they want to be and about themselves as learners. If no other objectives are accomplished it is essential that the transition to school occur in such a way that children and families have a positive view of the school and that children have a feeling of perceived competence as learners." (Bailey in Pianta, 1999, p. xv)

The National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) points out that the transition to Kindergarten is a significantly important time to establish competencies critical to a child's school success and achievement. They point out that the transition involves not only how children adjust to Kindergarten, but also how families and schools interact and cooperate. Their research documents that **it is not just the child who makes the transition – families and school personnel are also involved.** (NCEDL, 2002)

A successful transition to Kindergarten is seen as a key component of school readiness. (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003) Research shows that children who experience continuity as they enter the formal world of elementary school are more likely to be successful in school. (Glicksman & Hills, 1981; Lombardi, 1992; Pianta & Cox, 1999)

Research conducted in the last twenty years has also shown that children, especially those at risk for school failure, who experience continuity as they enter the formal world of school are more

likely to sustain gains that were achieved in preschool programs. Early school adjustment has been shown to have a long-term impact on children's later school success. (Pianta & Cox, 1999; Parker & Asher, 1987)

What can be done to make the transition to Kindergarten successful?



The transition to Kindergarten can be seen as an ongoing process that has a number of steps and can be made more successful when the adults in children's lives recognize its importance and plan in advance for it thoughtfully and carefully.

Before they enter Kindergarten, many young children have already made the transition from home care to an early childhood program or care provider. Moving from a known, comfortable environment to one that is different and unfamiliar is challenging, especially if careful attention is not given to the transition. And the more different the settings are the more difficult that transition may be.

A positive school entrance increases the chance for a successful school experience. A well-planned transition benefits children, families, teachers, and builds trust and relationships for the whole school community.

Bibliography

Bailey, D. (1999). Forward. In R.C. Pianta & M.J. Cox (Eds.). *The Transition to Kindergarten* (pp. xv-xci). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Glicksman, K., & Hills, T. (1981). *Easing the Child's Transition Between Home, Child Care Center & School: A Guide for Early Childhood Educators*. Early Childhood Education Resource Guides. New Jersey State Department of Education: Trenton, N.J.

Lombardi, J. (1992). *Beyond Transition: Ensuring Continuity in Early Childhood Services*. ERIC Digest, ED345867.

National Center for Early Development & Learning. (Winter, 2002). *Transition to Kindergarten*. Early Childhood Research & Policy Briefs, Vol. 2, #2.

Parker, J.G., & Asher, S.R. (1987). Peer Relations and Later Personal Adjustment: Are Low Accepted Children at Risk? *Psychological Bulletin* 102, 357-89.

Pianta, R.C., & Cox, M.J. (1999). *The Transition to Kindergarten*, Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Pianta, R.C., & Kraft-Sayre, M. (2003). *Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, & Schools*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Ramey, S.L., & C.T. (1999). *Going to School: How to Help Your Child Succeed – A handbook for Parents of Children Ages 3-8*. New York, NY: Goodard Press.



Spring

Connecting Families to School/Teachers

The Top Five Things Parents Wish Teachers Knew:

1. I appreciate it when you recognize that my child doesn't need more of the same.
2. I like it when you look at the whole of who my child is.
3. I'm glad when you understand that my child is sometimes doing the best she/he can.
4. It makes me happy when you trust my child.
5. It's satisfying when you communicate with me.

The Top Five Things Teachers Wish Parents Knew:

1. I appreciate it when you don't try to schedule a conference during the first two weeks of the school year.
2. I like it when you show respect for me in front of your child.
3. I'm gratified when you get your information first-hand, not from other parents.
4. I can feel more comfortable in our ability to work together when I know that you will keep our conversations private.
5. I appreciate that you understand that I have many children in my classroom.

Resource: adapted from – *Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers*. Great Potential Press, Inc. <http://www.giftedpsychologypress.com>

Teachers and Families Have Different Perceptions

Most teachers realize how important it is to communicate with families, yet they often feel frustrated in their efforts to communicate. One reason may be a lack of home/school communication skills. Another reason may be the differences in perception that exist between teachers and families. Below is a chart compiled by Mendoza and Cegelka of project P-Pact, San Diego State University, (Community Education Journal (April 1987). P. 12)

Differences in Perception That Can Interfere with School/Home Communication

Teachers	Family
Group – must focus on the whole class or group.	Individual – is concerned with own child’s individual progress, needs.
Established Skills – has knowledge of what child has mastered.	Emerging Skills - is concerned with what child is learning.
Present – is concerned with present development of child.	History – has the perspective on how far the child has come.
Futuristic – looks to what child will be able to do in the future, career potential.	Present – is concerned with here-and-now.
Specificity – is concerned with mastering specific skills.	Diffused – tends to see whole child’s ongoing development.
Cognitive – sees child more abstractly, able to distance self from child.	Emotional – has emotional involvement with child.
Achieved/chosen profession – encourages child to make professional career choices.	Given – family accepts the child as she or he is.
Dominant – has power, position, expertise.	Submissive – may feel helpless, uneducated.
Universal – look for the best method, way to work with all children.	Individualized – wants to have child approached and taught as an individual.

Ten Characteristics of Children Who Succeed in School

1. **They love to learn.** They are very curious and have been encouraged to explore and discover things from a very early age.
2. **They ask questions and they ask for help.** They know they can learn from others and feel comfortable asking questions at home; therefore, they ask questions and ask for help when needed at school also.
3. **They work hard and know that their efforts matter.** They know that doing well in school is under their control. They see results as the outcome of the effort they make. These children have been encouraged to work hard and have been helped by adults to succeed in their efforts.
4. **They are well-developed socially and emotionally.** They get along well with others. Good behavior has been explained to them and they have likely had positive and constant care and attention from adults in their lives.
5. **They are good at assessing their skills.** They do not overestimate or underestimate their academic abilities. Honest self-appraisal is important to the learning process as it serves as a basis for self-esteem which is based on a child's actual achievement.
6. **Their parents are role models for learning.** Children who exceed in school see the important adults in their lives reading, learning, and attempting new challenges. They hear adults say, "I don't know" or "Oh, I was wrong" and then look for the answer.
7. **The important adults in these children's lives promote learning** by "natural" teaching at home. The adults talk to the children and point out new ideas to them. They realize that they can teach their children in the course of everyday activities. They stay in touch with the school and express an interest in the child's class experiences.
8. **Their family routines support doing well in school.** Children who succeed in school have families who will provide a sense of order in their lives. Their schedule is predictable. They follow routines for daily activities which include bedtime, tooth-brushing, bathing, reading together, and homework.
9. **Their parents are effective at setting and maintaining limits.** There has been discussion within the family about what they want their children to learn and how they want their children to behave. Guidelines have been set and explained to the children.

- 10. The children's school's have high expectations for student achievement, support professional staff development, and communicate frequently with parents and their children.** Effective schools have appropriate expectations for children of each age level. The staff is well-trained and is knowledgeable in regard to grade level guidelines and standards and culturally responsive practices. Effective schools ensure regular two-way communication with all families.

Many studies have looked at what characteristics are common to children who succeed in school. Sharon and Craig Ramey (1999) point out that each of the attributes listed above come up repeatedly in the studies on different parts of the country. They are confident that each of these characteristics can be positively influenced by all adults who are important in the lives of children.



Help Me Know Your Child

Please help me get to know your child!

As your child's teacher, I'd like this school year to be extremely successful. That's why I am asking for your help. I have found that the more I know about my students, the easier it is for me to help meet their individual needs. For that reason, I would appreciate it if you could take time to answer the questions below. Of course, this is completely voluntary. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, just skip it. Thank you so much for your time!

Child's Name: _____ Nickname: _____

Parent Names: _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone (mom) _____

Cell Phone (dad) _____

Work Phone (mom) _____

Work Phone (dad) _____

Home E-Mail _____

Please list all other children in the family, along with their ages and gender.

Name Age Sex

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Does your child have any allergies, or take any medication?

Does your child speak or understand a language other than English? _____

If so, what language? _____

What are your child's major strengths?

Tell me about your child's interests and after-school activities.

Describe your child's feelings about school.

How does your child get along with other children?

Does your child have any academic struggles?

Please describe any recent family events or changes (ex... death, divorce, new sibling, moving) that you feel a teacher would need to know.

How do you feel I can best help your child this year? What would you like him/her to accomplish?

A good teacher for my child is one who...

Is there anything else you think your child would like me to know about her/him?

Would you like to become involved in the classroom or school? Are you interested in helping in any particular area?

Thanks for your time and help in answering these questions!

The Elementary school's Transition team coordinates transition efforts

Possible Team members: counselor, Kindergarten Teacher or Kindergarten Grade level chair, Administrator, Preschool Teacher/Director from a feeder preschool, a community agency representative, parents, a school program coordinator such as a Title 1, representative from Help Me Grow.

Who will coordinate? Divide up the responsibilities.



Most Important is Collaboration

- Begin with: Preschool, Kindergarten teachers & Administration coordinate and plan transition efforts
- Early Education/Care teachers with children or parent and child are invited to visit the elementary school and Kindergarten classes one morning
- Early Education/Care teachers, children and families are welcomed to campus, shown around, enjoy a snack, and possibly view a video such as: Kindergarten, HERE I COME! Read Aloud – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkxDa7o0L3I>

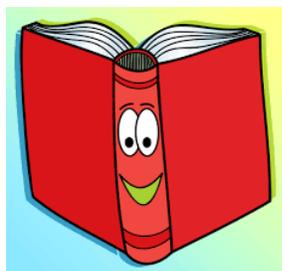
Elementary Schools start Kindergarten Registration efforts...

- Brainstorm ideas to encourage families in the community to register their children promptly. Registering as early as possible (*early* March) gives the school a more accurate accounting of # of incoming Kindergartners.
 - Radio/Newspaper/Social Media ads
 - School Newsletter reminders
 - Flyers to preschools
 - Flyers posted at shopping centers, churches, pediatricians' office, community fairs, parks, libraries and apartment buildings
 - Office staff trained to handle walk in registration
- Kindergarten class lists are generated early – parents are notified of teacher assignment.
 - Families are given a "Supply List" of what is needed for Kindergarten

- May **Kindergarten Orientation for parents only** (Ideas: General School Info., Literacy, Brain Research, Parent Involvement, Question and Answer), Child-care offered. – **ideas/suggestions for consideration may be found on page 22**
- Incoming Kindergarten students are invited to a **Kindergarten Kamp (Kindergartners Are Most Precious)** to introduce students to other Kindergarten children. **See pg. 28**
- Always lay the groundwork for good communication/collaboration.

Preschool Teachers work with their departing 4 and 5-year olds to ease transition...

- Talk to parents to make sure they are registered, and **all** paperwork is in
- Photos of new school
- Play/act kindergarten rituals
- Peer relationships are supported outside of school
- Let families know who will go to the same elementary school to foster natural linkages
- Kindergarten Teacher and children can visit preschool to share with preschool Children



Books that help children and their families ease their way into Kindergarten

Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner by A. Schwarts

Annabelle Swift has been tutored for kindergarten by her older sister, Lucy.....will it help?

Do You Want to Be My Friend? by Eric Carle

This book shows how Little Mouse seeks and eventually finds a friend.

First Day Jitters by Julie Danneberg

A new spin on the sheer terror suffered by millions of children as the first day of school approaches.....but this turns out to be a teacher who is afraid of HER first day!

Friends at School by Rochelle Bunnett

Children learn what they live. Beautiful photographs which convey the importance on inclusion from a child's perspective. Experience a great day in a wonderful kindergarten classroom.



Harry Gets Ready for School by Harriet Ziefert

Is school ready for Harry? Is Harry ready for school? Everyone has a lot to do before the first day of school.

Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come! by Nancy Carlson

Henry Mouse discovers that Kindergarten is even better than he thought it would be.

Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten by Joseph Slate

It's the first day of kindergarten and Miss Bindergarten has to get the classroom ready. Her twenty-six students are an ABC bunch of rhymes and laughs.

Owen by Kevin Henkes

Owen has a blankie that he fondly names Fuzzy. With kindergarten just around the corner, his mother finds the perfect way for Owen to hang onto his blankets.

School Bus by Donald Crews

The school bus can be a new and sometimes scary experience for young children. Colorful illustrations.

Sheila Rae, the Brave by Kevin Henkes

Sheila Rae is not afraid of anythinguntil she gets lost on the way home from school.

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Chester Raccoon does not want to go to school. He wants to stay with his mother. She tells him a family secret that will make school seem just as cozy as home.

The Night Before Kindergarten by Natasha Wing

“ ‘Twas the night before kindergarten, and as they prepared, kids were excited and a little bit scared. They tossed and they turned about in their beds, while visions of school supplies danced in their heads



The Twelve Days of Kindergarten...a Counting Book by Deborah Lee Rose

A cumulative counting verse in which a child enumerates items in the kindergarten classroom, from the whole alphabet, A to Z to 12 eggs for hatching.

Tiptoe into Kindergarten by Jacqueline Rogers

A preschooler tiptoes into her older brother's classroom to find paints, puzzles, blocks, and books. A perfect book to introduce a young child to the school experience.

Tom Goes to Kindergarten by Margaret Wild

Tom can't wait to go to Kindergarten! His family walks him to school and decide to stay with him. Now they love school, too. Vibrant watercolor animal characters.

Vera's First Day of School by Vera Rosenberry

Spunky Vera is off to her first day of school in this encouraging story about new adventures.

When you Go to Kindergarten by James Howe

Beautiful photographs give children a peek into what life as a kindergartner is really like. This book addresses everything from bus rides to fire drills to the life in the classroom.

Will I Have a Friend? by Miriam Cohen

Illustrations show the diverse and completely real antics of a kindergarten classroom.



The logo features the word 'Kindergarten' in a large, colorful, bubbly font with a small heart icon to its left. Below it, the words 'Parent' and 'Orientation' are stacked in a similar colorful, bubbly font.

School Year _____ - _____

Suggested Outline:

1. What to Bring on the First Day of School
2. School Calendar
3. Discussion about backpacks, lunch boxes, etc.
4. Snacks and lunch
5. If your child is feeling nervous on the first day: *What can students bring with them?*
6. First day photos
7. School Supplies
8. Before School Supervision
9. Transportation – Getting to School
 - Walking and Biking
 - Bus
 - Parking and Walking
 - Carline
 - Getting home from School (Carline, Parking and Walking)
10. Answers to Common Questions
 - How do I find my child's classroom?
 - Do I need to bring supplies?
 - How will I get other important information? ***If teachers have individual class pages, be sure to introduce them.***
 - Volunteering – how can I help out at school?
 - Do you have any words of advice from the school counselor?
 - How will I be contacted if my child gets sick at school?
 - My child has an appointment during school hours. How do I pick him or her up?
 - What do I do if my child will be absent or late?
 - What do I do if there is an emergency and I need to get a message to my child?

- My child needs medicine during the day. How do I arrange for him/her to get it?
- What happens if my child has an “accident” and needs fresh clothes?
- What happens if my child cries, misses me, or is very sad during the day?
- What is the best school phone number?
- I have a question for/need to discuss something with the principal or assistant principal. How can I reach them?
- Are there any after school programs offered at school?
- I would love to do something to show my appreciation for my child’s teacher. Is there a list of what s/he likes anywhere?
- My child lost his jacket at school. Is there a Lost and Found?
- What happens if I am late to pick up my child?
- My child speaks English As a Second Language. Will s/he be able to participate in the same activities as the other children?

***Suggested* – Words of Advice from Our School Counselor**

Dear Kindergarten and New Student Parents,

We are so excited to welcome your children to our school community. It is understandable for children and parents to experience some anxiety about starting school. **Here are some tips to help students have a successful first day of school:**

Start school bedtime and wake-up time about a week before school begins. Children's body clocks need time to adjust to going to bed earlier and waking up earlier. Being well rested will help make sure their first day is more relaxed.

Have clothes picked out the night before in order to help the morning go smoothly. Allow them to pick out the outfit. You want them to be comfortable and feel safe – so let them wear what they want on the first day and save the new clothes for another day.

Try not to put too much pressure on the first day (taking lots of pictures, special breakfast, etc.). Those things can make kids feel more anxious. Downplay the milestone and treat it as any other day.

Say your goodbyes at the class line or even at carpool. When a parent lingers at a classroom door, it gives the child the sense that you do not think school is a safe place and can make kids feel more anxious. When they see you doing what everyone else is doing, it will make them feel more comfortable. You will get to see the classroom at back to school night.

If your child starts to feel anxious or starts to cry:

Offer simple reassurances: "Your teacher is a good teacher – if you need something just ask him/her; I am proud of you for going to school; I am sorry you feel nervous, but you're going."

Say a cheerful, short goodbye and leave. Don't show hesitation; your uncertainty to leave the school will make them uncertain about staying at school. Do not promise you will come back at recess/lunch or that they can call you. Reassure them that you will see them after school or at childcare pick-up

Know that most children who cry, stop crying very soon after the parent leaves. The tears are just for you!

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at

Best regards,

_____ School Counselor



**Summer Months
Transition Tools for
Kindergarten
Learners & Families**

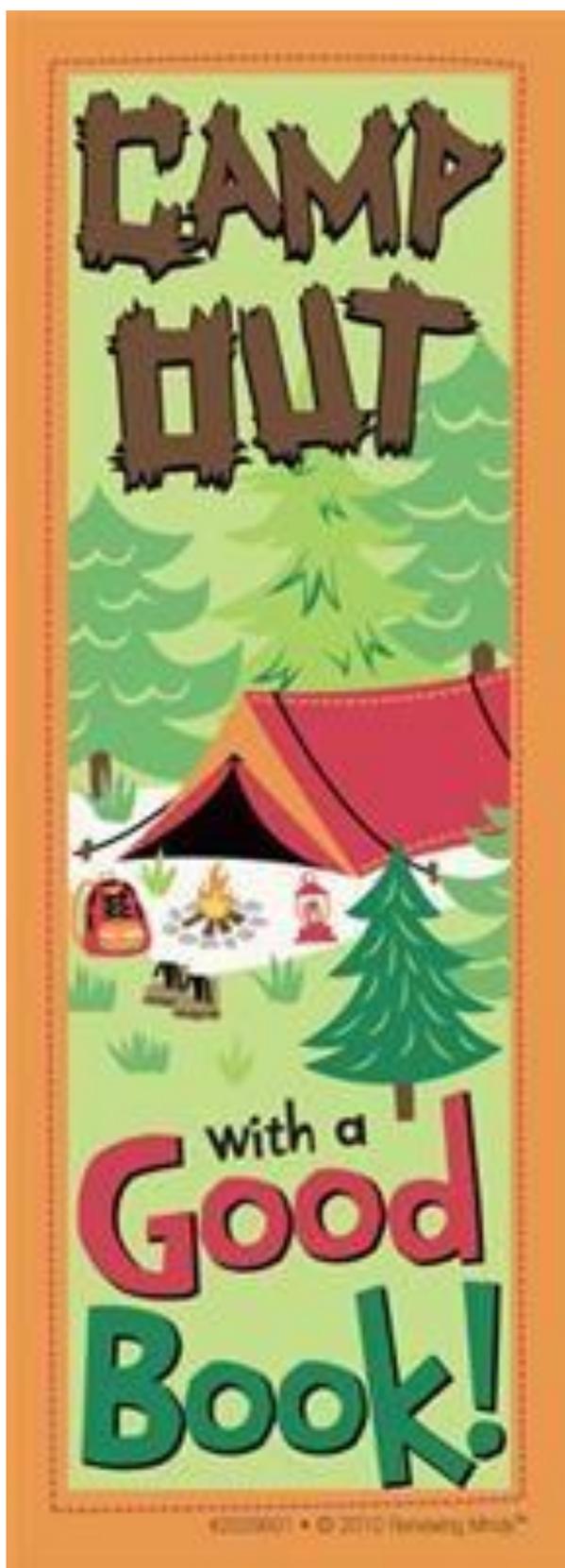


Kindergartners **A**re **M**ost **P**recious

This is an opportunity for your child to meet other kindergarten children before school starts in September. The children rotate through many activities each day (arts and crafts, music, playground, sports activities, show-and-tell, courtyard activities- big wheels, hula hoops, etc.). ***Small camper to counselor ratio.*

Kindergarten Kamp Sample Schedule

Activity	Description
Morning Round-Up	morning announcements, introductions, whole camp songs, whole camp storytelling, cheers, challenges awards, recognitions
Arts & Crafts	painting, drawing, clay, beading,
Fun & Fit	field games, tag cooperative games & competitive games
Snack & Recess	Snack provided by camp, recess on Elementary School playground, basketball, small climbing wall
Drama	acting games, skits, improv music, dancing on big stage, talent show
Lunch	campers either bring lunch or it is provided by school, campers eat at picnic tables or in classroom
Cooking	simple, but fun and tasty recipes, "dirt dessert, s'mores, smoothies, and more
Sports & Games	basketball, floor hockey, climbing ropes, whiffle ball, kick ball, crazy relays
Woodworking	Painting of wood-cut outs – designs of all kinds
Dismissal	4:00 p.m. dismissal



Bailey Goes Camping

by Kevin Henkes (Author, Illustrator)

In this heartwarming story, Bailey discovers that being too little to go camping with his older brother and sister doesn't have to mean feeling left out, when his mother and father bring the camping trip home for him!

Curious George Goes Camping Paperback – October 25, 1999

by Margret Rey (Author), H. A. Rey (Author)

Curious George Goes Camping is an entertaining story of the Great Outdoors based on H. A. and Margret Rey's popular primate and painted in the original watercolor and charcoal style. George tries to be helpful, but he of course just ends up upsetting a nearby camper. As he's hiding in the woods, he meets a forest creature who catapults the mischievous monkey into a chain of even more outrageous events! For more monkey fun, investigate www.curiousgeorge.com and discover all the latest on Curious George books, promotions, games, activities, and more!

Fred and Ted Go Camping (Beginner Books(R)) Hardcover – May 24, 2005

by Peter Eastman (Author, Illustrator)

Fred and Ted—beloved canine stars of P. D. Eastman's *Big Dog . . . Little Dog*—are back in an all-new Beginner Book written and illustrated by P. D.'s son, Peter Eastman! In this story Fred and Ted go camping, and as usual, their uniquely different approaches to doing things (such as packing equipment, setting up camp, and fishing techniques) have humorous—and sometimes surprising—results. A charming introduction to opposites that beginner readers will find *ruff* to put down!

Glow-in-the-Dark Constellations Paperback – January 25, 1999

by C. E. Thompson (Author)

90,000 stargazers can't be wrong! Our original Glow-in-the-Dark Constellations was such a hit that we're bringing it back in an affordable paperback edition for a new generation! From Andromeda to Pegasus, Orion to the Big Dipper, this super informative guide covers it all with dazzling glow-in-the-dark illustrations of the constellations, eight sky maps, and fascinating retellings of the legends behind the constellations. Helpful tips on locating stars in the night sky through every season of the year make this a book the whole family can enjoy together.

Maisy Goes Camping: A Maisy First Experience Book Paperback – March 10, 2009

by Lucy Cousins (Author, Illustrator)

When Maisy sets off to go camping in the country, it's only natural that all her friends come along, too. But they soon find that pitching a tent is not an easy thing to do. Even if they do manage to keep the tent up, there's the matter of fitting them all in — Maisy, Charley, Cyril, Tallulah, and finally, the huge elephant, Eddie. What a squeezey squish-squash! Good night, campers! Uh-oh-what's that popping sound?

S Is for S'mores: A Camping Alphabet (Sleeping Bear Press Sports & Hobbies) Hardcover – May 1, 2007

by Helen Foster James (Author), Lita Judge (Illustrator)

Next to baseball and fireworks on the Fourth of July, nothing else seems as American as the family camping trip. From what to pack, where to go, and what to do when you get there, S is for S'mores: A Camping Alphabet takes readers on an A-Z trail exploring this outdoor pastime. Veteran camper Helen Foster James tackles topics such as unique camping environments, equipment necessities, famous conservationists, and national parks and other attractions. Whether your idea of "roughing it" is a blanket in your own backyard or the subarctic ecosystem of Alaska's Denali National Park, S is for S'mores is a fun and informative guide that is sure to help campers of all ages make the most of their wilderness adventures. Helen Foster James started researching this book when she was four years old - that's when she went on her first camping trip. An educator for over 20 years, Helen is a lecturer for San Diego State University. Her first book, E is for Enchantment: A New Mexico Alphabet, was a WILLA Literary Award Finalist. Helen lives in San Diego, California. Lita Judge lives in New Hampshire with her husband. She studied geology and dug for dinosaurs before she turned to writing and illustrating children's books. Her love of nature, animals, science, and history inspires her art.

Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe (Reading Rainbow Books) Paperback – August 1, 1984

by Vera B Williams (Author, Illustrator)

Follow the red canoe from page to page as it journeys down river carrying the family on a camping tour. It's the next best thing to paddling it yourself.

Toasting Marshmallows: Camping Poems Hardcover – February 28, 2001

by Kristine O'Connell George (Author), Kate Kiesler (Illustrator)

Everything that happens when you go camping can be an adventure, from getting dressed inside your sleeping bag on a chilly morning to meeting a moose to sharing secrets in a tent at night. Kristine O'Connell George turns the memorable moments of a family outing into spirited, evocative verse, and Kate Kiesler's vivid paintings provide a cast of characters and the perfect setting. The captivating poems and pictures in Toasting Marshmallows will leave readers with wonderful memories of a camping trip—even if they've never been on one!

When We Go Camping Paperback – April 20, 2004

by [Margriet Ruurs](#) (Author), [Andrew Kiss](#) (Illustrator)

In this beautifully illustrated book, one busy family finds lots to do from sunup to sunset. At the campsite, there's wood to chop for the fire and fish to catch. And there's lots of time to explore, climb rocks, splash in the lake, and discover animals in the shadows of the woods. As afternoon turns to evening, supper needs to be made, and just before bed, stories are told around the campfire.

When We Go Camping is as instructional as it is delightful. Each painting highlights the tracks of one animal, which curve from the text into the illustration. Readers can turn to the glossary for more details about the wildlife depicted on each page.

When We Go Camping is a perfect way to preserve summer memories all year long.

The Graves Family Goes Camping Hardcover – May 19, 2005

by [Patricia Polacco](#) (Author, Illustrator)

When the Graves family goes camping to mysterious Lake Bleakmire, so do all their ghoulish sidekicks—bats, spiders, and even their Venus Flytrap. Yet nothing can prepare them for their latest sidekick: a fire-breathing dragon, who eats the Graves family's irresistible Jum Jills and then follows them home like a stray kitten. How do they get rid of the dragon, especially after the giant beast accidentally soaks all the town's fireworks just before the big 4th of July celebration? The explosive solution is pure fun.

A Camping Spree with Mr. Magee Kindle Edition

by [Chris Van Dusen](#) (Author)

Mr. Magee and his trusty dog, Dee, are enjoying a peaceful camping trip when all of a sudden they find themselves plunging down a mountain and teetering on the edge of a huge waterfall! How will they find their way out of this slippery situation? Chris Van Dusen, the creator of *Down to the Sea with Mr. Magee*, has filled this new adventure with charming illustrations and a playful, rhyming text. A fun read-aloud for children (and adults!) on campouts or snuggling at home!

Teacher addresses family transition concerns by home visits, phone calls home, or those found on returned letter of introduction. 'Help Me Know Your Child' *See pg. 14*



Provide Home Literacy Ideas/Activities

Resource: Preschool/Kindergarten Social Emotional Learning Activities
Did You Know Publishing, 2016 Cincinnati, Ohio

Alphabet Supermarket Run

Go on a letter-based scavenger expedition

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Language & Literacy, Life Skills, Math, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Responsible decision making

Materials needed: child-safe scissors, glue, index cards, markers, paper (large sheets), supermarket advertisements/flyers

Directions: Young children love to assist with grown-up tasks, so they will definitely enjoy making this alphabetical shopping lists.

1. **Groundwork preparation:** Write the letters of the alphabet across the top of a large sheet of paper. In addition, create a deck of alphabet cards by writing different letters on top of index cards.
2. **Go shopping:** Have each child pull a card off the alphabet deck and scan supermarket advertisements/flyers for words that begin with the corresponding letter. Help the children tear or cut out words and pictures that they find, and glue them to the paper under the appropriate letters. *If a child can't find appropriate words/pictures, let them move on to the next card in the deck.* Play acting continues this way until the deck is gone **or** if the children are ready to stop!
3. **Categorize items:** When you are finished shopping, work together to sort your items into categories (such as produce, canned goods, frozen foods, drinks, and household supplies – *including cleaning supplies*).

Extend the Learning:

Take a walk and have your children look for signs that begin with different letters (such as “S” for stop, or “W” for walk). Younger children might also comment on the shapes that they see.

Appreciation Postcards

Create special postcards for special people

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Art, Language & Literacy, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Relationship management

Materials needed: index cards, crayons, markers, glue, glitter, additional art supplies as needed, paper

Directions: Help your children talk about appreciation and make postcards for special people in their lives.

1. **Chat:** Ask your children what they think it means to “appreciate” something or someone. Simplify the meaning of the word through discussion. Tell your children some of the reasons why you appreciate them. (*Such as, they are helpful, they are good companions, they are compassionate, they are fun*). Share what you appreciate about other people in your life, also.
2. **Cheer:** Introduce children to the motions and rhythm of slapping their thighs and clapping their hands – and teach them this cheer: **2,4,6,8! Whom do we appreciate?** After singing this verse, ask: *Whom do you appreciate? Why?* Chant the verse seven times, adding different answers. (Note: If playing this with several children, it is important to let them all have a chance in answering.)
3. **Create:** Help your children create special postcards for people they appreciate. For each child, write the words “2,4,6,8! Whom do I appreciate?” on an index card. On the other side of the card children can draw the people they appreciate and decorate the cards as they wish. Ask your children why they appreciate these people and write their explanations on their cards. Tell children that if at all possible, they need to share their cards with those persons they have identified as such.

Appreciating the Talents of our Peers and Family Members

Cherish children's unique abilities

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Art, Language & Literacy, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competencies: Self-Awareness, Social-Awareness and Relationship management

Materials needed: festive music, glue, markers, paper circles (*write "The World's Greatest _____"* on each one), stars and glitter

Directions: Enhance children's self-esteem by assisting them to generate awards recognizing their personal strengths and abilities.

1. **Shine and share:** Help your children pinpoint their talents. What do they do best? *Is it: Hopping on one foot? Blowing bubbles? Being a wonderful friend or a fantastic older brother or sister?*
2. **Create awards:** Use paper circles to create the awards for *The World's Greatest _____.* Each child will determine what their award will read. **They may also need to create an award for another child in the class, family member, neighbor, etc.** (It is okay to have more than one prize for the same accomplishment.) Let your children decorate their awards using markers, stars, glitter, etc.
3. **Host an awards ceremony:** Hold an awards ceremony in your living room (at home) or circle area (in class). Play festive music and lead the "award winners" in a procession.

Chitchat Circle:

Explain to your children that everyone is great at something, and people take pride in having their skills recognized. Ask: How does it feel to be complimented on something? How does it feel to praise somebody else for an accomplishment?

Archeology Dig

Dig up some fascinating stuff

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Art, Language & Literacy, Science & Health, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Social-Awareness

Materials needed: paint brushes, sand, shovels or spoons, sifter or colander, miscellaneous objects (such as toy dinosaurs, large-sized buttons, feathers, seashells), water table or large tray, modeling clay, leaves, pinecones

Directions: Assist your children to go on an archaeological “dig” and create a museum.

1. **Groundwork preparation:** Fill up an empty water table or tray with sand. Bury miscellaneous objects in sand.
2. **Dig:** Invite your children to use archaeologists’ tools (spoons, brushes, colanders, sifters) to find the buried objects.
3. **Display:** When they have unearthed the items, help your children set up a “museum exhibition” to display their discoveries. Older children may enjoy writing labels for the artifacts.

Chitchat Circle:

Discuss what kinds of objects are found in museums. Be sure to use and define related words, such as museum, fossil, ancient, fragile, etc.

Extend the Learning:

Use modeling clay to create fossils. Let your children push objects found in nature (such as leaves, pinecones, seashells) into the dough or clay to create impressions.

Babies

Offer tender loving care

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Diversity Appreciation & Understanding, Life Skills, Music, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Relationship management

Materials needed: dolls or stuffed animals

Directions: Help young children to role-play in taking care of babies.

1. **Care for the baby:** Make sure each child has a doll or stuffed animal. Ask your children to identify some ways to care for a baby. Give them the opportunity to act out each task with their dolls or stuffed animals (such as feeding, diapering, putting them to sleep).
2. **Play games with the baby:** Model games that can be played with a baby, such as “Peek-a-boo” or “This Little Piggy.” Have your children try these kinds of games and rhymes with their dolls or stuffed animals.
3. **Sing to the baby:** Have your children put their babies to sleep by rocking them and singing a lullaby. What lullabies are your children familiar with?

Extend the Learning:

Have the children listen to lullabies from different cultures. You may want to look for various recordings at your local library. Some suggestions:

1. *Lullabies from Around the World* [Lullabies heard and loved in different parts of the world, from Mozart’s fabulous works to an Indian composer’s equally brilliant composition, all share something in common – a kind of loving tenderness that all of us at any age desire and need. Through the sweet voices of the Beijing Angelic Choir (singing in Chinese), now you can hear and feel the same tenderness from each of these selected lullabies of different culture and music style.]
2. *Daddies Sing Good Night* (various artists)
3. *Earth Mother Lullabies* by Pamela Ballingham
4. *Globalullabies* by Freyda
5. *Lullaby Land* by Linda Arnold

Big Buddies

Demonstrate being a good role model

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Art, Language & Literacy, Math and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Relationship management

Materials needed: older children to work with younger children, books (such as *The Gingerbread Boy* by Paul Galdone), bread, gingerbread-figure cookie cutter, peanut butter, raisins, butcher paper, drawing supplies, painting supplies

Directions: When children of different ages work together, older children are empowered by being “teachers” and role models, and younger children develop confidence from the positive support and attention. Ideas listed below are some suggestions for older children (grades 3rd – 5th) can do with younger siblings, cousins, or friends.

1. **Sharing Stories:** Have older children read a folktale to their younger partners. One suggestion is *The Gingerbread Boy* by Paul Galdone. After reading this book, children can partake in a related activity of making sandwiches by cutting a slice of bread with a gingerbread-figure cookie cutter and decorating it with peanut butter and raisins. *(Note: Be aware of food allergies, especially to nuts, such as peanuts)*
2. **Draw and paint:** Older children can assist their younger buddies to draw life-sized outlines of themselves on large sheets of paper. Have the younger children dictate captions for the older children to write on the pictures.

Chitchat Circle:

Ask older children: How does it feel to be a mentor? Do you feel empowered by being a teacher and role model? What did you learn from it? As younger children: What kinds of things did you learn? Did you feel more confident having an older buddy to help you?

Extend the Learning:

Younger children can make thank-you cards to send to their “big buddies.”

Blooming Kindness

Exploring Acts of Kindness

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Art, Language & Literacy, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Social-Awareness

Materials needed: flowers (made from colored paper), a tree (trunk, branches, leaves) made from construction paper, affixed to a wall

Directions: Create a “Blooming Kindness Tree” with your children and show them how to make it bloom.

1. **Understand kindness:** Have your children name ways that they can be nice to people. Ask question to prompt ideas: *What can you say to make someone feel better when they are sad? How can you help each other every day? What special things can you do to show your friends you like them?*
2. **Measure kindness:** Each day, ask your children to share ways that they have been kind or helpful to a friend or family member, or ways that a friend or family member has been kind to them.
3. **Commemorate kindness:** Write down each example on a paper flower and affix it to the tree.

Extend the Learning:

Have your children take photos of people who have been kind. Encourage them to make drawings to illustrate their experiences. Add these photos and drawings to your “Blooming Kindness Tree.”

Large Group:

Talk about that with a group of children participating, your kindness tree will bloom so much more! Help children read the flowers: Can they find their names? Can they find the names of their friends?

Bowling Blunders

Knock down milk cartons

Age Range: 3-5

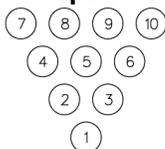
Skills/Subjects: Dramatic Play & Creative Movement, Math, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible decision making

Materials needed: 10 empty plastic milk cartons (quart or half-gallon), ball, marker

Directions: This is an amusing bowling activity which allows children to improve counting and gross motor skills. They also explore how to respond if they spill something.

1. **Create pins:** Label each milk carton with a number and compatible dots from 1 to 10.
2. **Set up:** Have your children set up the cartons in sequence to form a triangle.



3. **Let the bowling begin:** Your children can “spill the milk” by knocking down the cartons with a roll of the ball. Help your children add up the numbers (and/or dots) on the cartons they knock over.
4. **Role-play:** As you play, encourage kids to role-play what to do when the milk spills: *“I spilled the milk! I’m sorry” “That’s OK. Let’s clean it up together.”*

Chitchat Circle:

Reiterate to the children that we all accidentally spill things from time to time. Remind your children that when they spill something, they do not have to feel bad. It happens! They can merely apologize and clean it up.

Large Group:

Divide children into teams and have a bowling tournament.

Collaborate in Order to Create

Create something as a TEAM

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Art, Creative Thinking & Problem Solving, Life Skills, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competencies: Social-Awareness, Relationship management, Responsible decision making

Materials needed: crayons, markers (or paint), puzzles with 6 or 8 pieces, two large pieces of butcher paper

Directions: Work together with your children to complete a puzzle or make a mural.

1. **Puzzle Pieces:** Choose a puzzle and divide the pieces among you and your children. Work together as a team to complete the puzzle.
2. **Shared Mural:** Decide on a theme with your children. Spread a large strip of paper on the floor or tape it to the wall. Work together as a team to create a piece of shared artwork based on your chosen theme. Encourage children to share ideas.

Chitchat Circle:

Talk about the word *teamwork* with your children. Ask them what are the specific ways they worked together to complete the puzzle and create the mural?

Large Group:

Each of these activities can be done with groups of children by giving each group its puzzle and by having each group vote on a theme for its mural. After each activity, groups can share how they worked together to get the task completed.

Conflict Resolution

Delve into conflict resolution strategies

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Creative Thinking & Problem Solving, Dramatic Play & Creative Movement, Life Skills, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competencies: Self-Management, Relationship management

Materials needed: puppet or stuffed animal

Directions: Use role-play to set up and resolve conflicts.

1. **Introduce:** Pushy Paige has a reputation for being a class bully. Explain to your children that Pushy Paige, like some kids, sometimes does things that scare other kids or make them mad. Introduce a puppet as Pushy Paige.
2. **Role-play:** Set up role-playing situations reflecting conflicts that may occur among children. Possible scenarios include: (1) Pushy Paige tries to grab your crayon, saying: *"You've got the red crayon. I was looking for that."* (2) Pushy Paige knocks your block tower down, saying: *"Hey, I'm an earthquake. Your tower is history!"*
3. **Resolve:** Encourage children to use their own words to work out a solution with Pushy Paige.
4. **Discuss:** After each role-playing situation, discuss what happened. Compliment children for their good problem-solving skills.

Chitchat Circle:

Brainstorm with your children on some different approaches to resolving conflicts. Ask them about any past experiences with conflict resolution and offer some examples such as:

- Suggest compromise: *I'm using the red crayon at the moment, but I will finish up quickly so that you can use it, too.*
- As you children come up with responses to situations, have them think about how those responses would make them feel.
- Emphasize the importance of thinking before talking/acting out.

Cooperative Play

Introduce your children to some cooperative games

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Creative Thinking & Problem Solving, Dramatic Play & Creative Movement, Life Skills, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competencies: Relationship management, Responsible decision making

Materials needed: drums, hula hoops (mats, rug squares, or other materials can be used)

Directions: Introduce your children to some cooperative games to play with friends.

1. **Locomotive in Motion:** Have each child hold on to the waist of the person in front of them, forming a train. Beat a drum to set various train speeds. Have the train move forward slowly, then faster. Stop the train, then have it slowly back up. The goal is for the train to stay in one piece and avoid crashes.
2. **Getting from Here to There:** Give children hula hoops. (Mats, rug squares, or other materials may also be used.) Have the children work together to try and make it across the room without stepping on the floor (i.e., they may step **only inside the hoops**). Give them time to figure out that the solution is to lay down the hoops and have people standing together in the first one. Then they pick up and pass along the first (empty) hoop, put it in front and repeat this procedure until they reach the end of the room.

Large Group:

These games are great with a group of children. “Getting from Here to There” works particularly well with teams. Invite some friends to play!

Courage Postcards

Create a pocket-sized reminder

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Art, Language & Literacy, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Self-Awareness

Materials needed: art supplies, blank index cards, child-safe scissors, clear contact paper, paper (large sheet)

Directions: Help your children find ways to assess their feelings, finding ways to tap into their courage supply.

1. **Brainstorm:** Ask your children what helps them feel brave when they are scared. Suggestions might include a flashlight, a favorite stuffed animal, or having a family member nearby. Write their ideas on a large sheet of paper. (You may choose to include quick sketches for nonreaders).
2. **Illustrate:** Ask children to draw pictures on index cards of whatever it is that helps them to feel brave. Encourage them to dictate labels for you to write on their pictures.
3. **Laminate:** Now you can place each card between two pieces of contact paper, press to rub the bubbles out, and trim the edges. This way your children can carry these pocket-sized courage cards with them wherever they go!

Creative Additions

Put some pep into some familiar rhymes and tunes

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Creative Thinking & Problem Solving, Dramatic Play & Creative Movement, Language & Literacy, Math, Music, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Social-Awareness

Materials needed: celery sticks, cream cheese or peanut butter, raisins

Directions: Sometimes adding interesting activities to your favorite songs and rhymes can give them new life in the eyes of your children. Try applying ideas like the ones below to your favorite tunes, nursery rhymes, or fairytales.

1. **Little Bo Peep:** Do your children know this classic nursery rhyme? Help them to turn it into a play. Let one actor be *Bo Peep*, and another be the *Sheep*. Have the sheep “hide” close by. Actors can ad-lib lines and add an epilogue: *What do you say to your sheep, Bo Peep? What do you say to that, sheep?*
2. **The Ants Go Marching One by One:** Teach this song to your children. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pjw2A3QU8Qg> Children can make the snack called “Ants On a Log” to go with the song. First, have the children spread peanut butter or cream cheese on celery sticks to make logs. Then, they can each count out six raisins per log to make the ants. (Note: Be aware of food allergies, especially to nuts such as peanuts.)

Culture Awareness Commotion

Delve into diversity

Age Range: 3-5

Skills/Subjects: Diversity Appreciation & Understanding, Language & Literacy, Life Skills, and Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Core Competency: Social-Awareness

Materials needed: *Hello! Goodbye!* by Aliko, music from diverse cultures, picture books from and about diverse cultures

Directions: By providing daily exposure to various cultures, you will enrich your children's experiences, and enable them to appreciate and share their own heritage.

1. **Read and dance:** Tap into the resources of your community to find books and music that you can share with your children. A couple of related books are: *Loving* by Ann Morris, *New Shoes for Silvia* by Johanna Hurwitz, and *Somewhere in Africa* by Niki Daly and Ingrid Mennen. Read stories to your children about contemporary children in different countries. Invite children to dance to the music of different cultures.
2. **Learn many greetings:** Read *Hello! Goodbye!* by Aliko. Sing the song "Hello Everyone" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdeB9kDT6ul> For each round, replace "Hello" with...

Spanish: Hola

Italian: Buon giorno

Japanese: Konichi wa

Russian: Privet

Mandarin Chinese: Nea how

French: Bonjour

Hebrew: Shalom

Chitchat Circle:

Ask your children to talk about their own heritage and what it means to them.

Extend the Learning:

Look for cultural organizations holding events in your community. Invite family or friends to share their childhood experiences in other countries or among various U.S. cultures. Ask your guests to teach your children a game, song, dance, or greeting, specific to their country or culture.



August/September

Kindergarten Begins

Suggested Activities

- Staggered orientation for children – ½ day of half class, ½ day of whole class, full day of half class
- Extra staff and volunteers added at beginning
- First day of school from 8-9 am, child-care may be offered. All Kindergarten families welcomed to school in cafeteria by administration and Kindergarten teachers. Families then go to individual Kindergarten class to meet with child's teacher.
- Kindergarten screening, etc.
- Teacher takes photo of child and family member.
- Child brings photo from home or previous school.
- Teachers take children around school to introduce and orient them to school.
- Traditional Back-to-School night for whole school. Then after two months add a special night just for each Kindergarten class, which will be a foundation for the child and family's school relationship, give parents the opportunity to ask questions and let them know about teacher/school expectations. Create a sense of community in your classroom and at your school.

Resources:

- ABCs for Success with the Common Core (Did You Know Publishing, Inc.)
- Kindergarten Parents Guide to Learners Success Literacy & Math (Did You Know Publishing, Inc.)