



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

As professionals in the field of early childhood education, we know that the transition a child makes from preschool to kindergarten can be difficult to navigate. It is important to us that families feel supported and know how they can encourage their child during this important transition. We have put this packet together in order to give you some information and guidance on how you can help your child transition smoothly into kindergarten this fall.

We have worked together as a committee, to provide you with some valuable resources that will give you ideas on how you can support your child over the next few months. A child's most valuable resource is a parent or caregiver and the time that is spent together reading, exploring, and having fun!

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

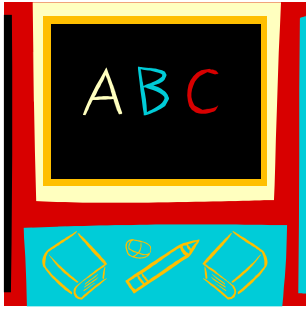
We want to ensure that every child (& parent/caregiver) is prepared for this transition into kindergarten. By working together we can make this a successful and enjoyable experience for everyone!

Sincerely,

*The Kindergarten Transition Committee*

*A workgroup of the Ingham County Great Start Collaborative*





# Is My Child Ready for Kindergarten?

When children turn five years old, many parents question whether or not their child is ready for kindergarten. There is a lot of advice floating about these days, and not all of it is helpful.

School readiness is more complex than gender and chronological age. It is also not simply being able to recite numbers, letters, shapes, and colors. School readiness is a combination of many factors. Few children are completely ready for kindergarten, and most will fall somewhere in between on a continuum of readiness.

*Here are some developmental skills to look for in a school-ready child:*

## **Social Development:**

- Able to trust other adults and children
- Able to play with, not just next to, other children
- Able to learn and play in a group

## **Emotional Development:**

- Some degree of independence and self-direction
- Self-control or ability to delay gratification (even briefly)
- Reasonably confident and willing to try new things
- Interested in school and in learning new things

## **Language Development:**

- Able to understand directions
- Able to express needs
- Able to communicate with adults and other children
- Can express thoughts in sentences
- Reasonably broad vocabulary

## **Motor Development:**

- Can run and jump
- Sense of spatial awareness and balance
- Shows right or left dominance
- Has self-help skills: dressing, eating, and toileting
- Able to manipulate small objects
- Can copy simple symbols
- Can hold a pencil appropriately

## **Intellectual and Academic Development:**

- Able to focus and concentrate on an activity for 10-15 minutes
- Understands that letters stand for something
- Understands that printed text is spoken language written down
- Has had experience with environment (grocery store, post office, library, department store, etc)
- Can follow simple directions and remember simple routines
- Able to stick with and solve simple problems

Parents can prepare their children for school by communicating that school is important and by helping them develop language skills and social behaviors needed for school.

## How Do I know if My Child Is Ready for Kindergarten? Parent Guide #1

**Michigan allows a child who is five years old on or before December 1 to sign up for kindergarten.**

- Some children seem too young or not ready for school. Some families and teachers believe that getting older will help the child get ready for kindergarten. This is not always true; remember that children change a lot between May and September.
- Children grow and develop by learning from the world around them.
- New people and children help your child learn and grow.
- All children need time to talk about what they are doing with adults and other children.
- Kindergarten can help parents help their children at home.
- The following website gives more information about kindergarten enrollment age and alternative kindergarten programs:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5234\\_6809-48211--00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5234_6809-48211--00.html).

***The Family:*** Every child wants to feel safe and ready to succeed in school. Your family is the most important part in supporting your child to achieve this. Parent involvement improves your child's school success. It also helps your child feel good about himself or herself. Family support helps encourage them to learn.

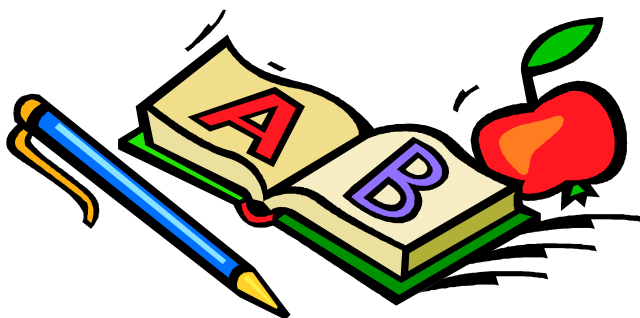
- Maintain a daily routine that includes mealtimes, snacks, and bedtimes.
- Be sure your child's shots and health check-ups are current.

- Make sure your child has plenty of play and outdoor time.
- Play with your child.
- Listen to your child.
- Talk to your child.
- Read to your child.
- Write with your child.

### ***The Schools***

- Work with families and neighborhoods so children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
- Must be ready to teach children who come to school with different experiences of learning.
- Teach the material children need to learn for that grade level.

***All young children can learn if they are given proper material, encouragement and family support.***



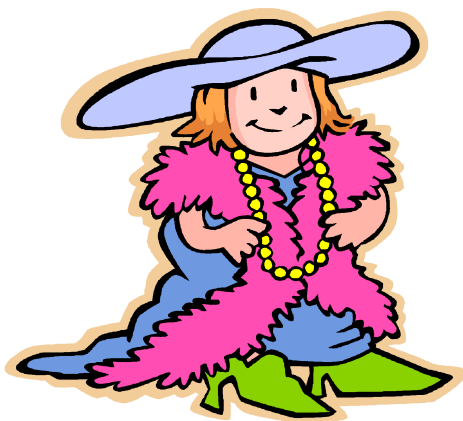
## Why Play in Kindergarten? Parent Guide #7

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

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

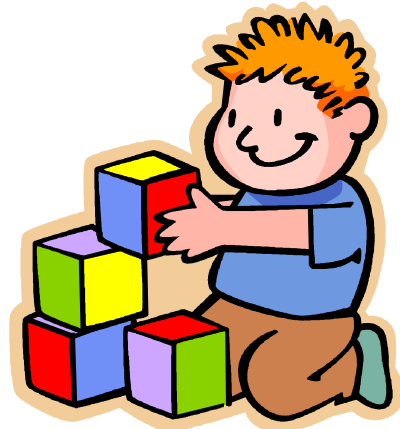
***Play boosts strong growth in many areas, including:***

- **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 brain growth.



***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.





## What Will My Child Learn in Kindergarten? Reading Success = Student Success Parent Guide #11

**When a child enters a kindergarten class for the first time, he or she continues the learning that began at birth. Just like his/her first years of life, in school there are skills like reading he/she will need to develop before other skills can follow.**

The National Reading Panel focuses on five skills that are important to early reading success. These include:

- **Phonemic awareness:** The ability to hear and recognize sounds in spoken words.
- **Phonics:** The connection between the letters of written words and the sound of spoken words.
- **Fluency:** The ability to read correctly, quickly and gather meaning (with expression).
- **Vocabulary:** The words students must know to communicate effectively.
- **Comprehension:** The ability to understand and gain meaning from what has been read.

As your child's first teacher, you can help ensure your child's success. You can watch his/her progress. You can also support learning at home.

You will find lots of grade level ideas for the five reading skills by clicking "Family FUNdamentals Activities" at the MDE website, [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde), under the Quick Links section.

### ***What should my child learn in each grade?***

Parents often ask, "What should my child learn in school? What should he/she know and be able to do by the end of each grade?"

***The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has developed guides for parents of kindergarten through eighth grade students. The guides outline what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade in math and English.***

The guides are called "A Parent's Guide to Grade Level Content Expectations." These guides are used by teachers to decide what is taught in class. They also are used by MDE to develop grade level tests. These tests are given to students in grades 3-8 as part of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP).

### **Parents can use the guides to:**

- Learn what their child should know and be able to do at the end of each school year.
- Ask how this information will be taught in school.
- Talk about their child's progress.
- Look at ways they can support their child's learning.
- Ask for things their child can do at home to support what is being taught in class.
- Understand the MEAP test results.



## Kindergarten Grade Level Content Expectations

### English/Language Arts

English Language Arts (ELA) is more than just reading and writing. It includes skills like speaking, listening, and viewing. ELA offers us a way to communicate. With ELA, your child can apply what she/he learns to solve real problems at home, school or in their neighborhood.

#### Word Recognition

*By the end of kindergarten, your child should be able to:*

- Easily recognize about 18 words he/she sees in and around the home. (His/her name, brand names, and logos.)
- Easily recognize a few basic words. (Go, the, and, is, etc.-- you can get a list from your child's teacher.)
- Follow the written text of familiar stories by pointing to known words.
- Be able to predict unknown words.

### Vocabulary

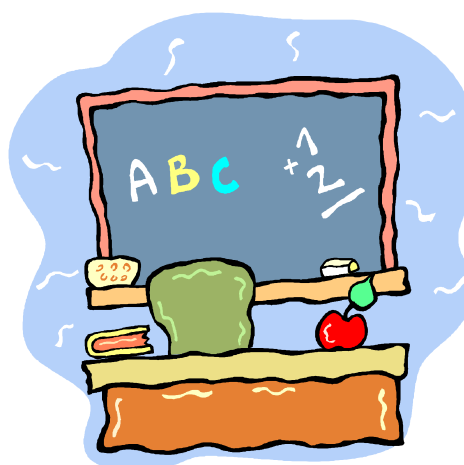
*By the end of kindergarten, your child should be able to:*

- Know the meaning of words he/she hears and sees often. (Ask the teacher for a grade-level vocabulary list.)
- Try to figure out the meaning of new words and phrases.

### Handwriting

*By the end of kindergarten, your child should be able to:*

- Form upper and lower case letters.
- Write from left to right and top to bottom leaving space between words.



Remember . . . children grow and learn at different rates. You and your child's teacher will be able to talk about any concerns you have related to your child's learning.



## What if There Are Concerns About My Child's Development?

### Parent Guide #13



#### When you have concerns about your child's growth and learning:

- Discuss your concerns with your child's doctor. Talk with people who know or work with your child (family, child care providers, teachers).
- If you still have concerns about your child's development (social, emotional, educational, and behavioral), talk with the building principal.
- If you think your concerns are affecting your child at school, then you can ask for a complete evaluation. Submit your request for an evaluation to the building principal, teacher or other staff person.
- Within ten (10) days of receiving your written request, the district will notify you and ask for consent to evaluate your child.
- The notice will explain why an evaluation is proposed, describe the assessment, and give you a description of the types of special education programs and services that may be available.
- Within 30 school days (after consent is given) your child will be evaluated. There will be an evaluation team assembled and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting will be held. The IEP team, that includes you, will determine if your child qualifies for special services.
- If the team cannot determine from the evaluation that a disability is impacting your child's education, then the district will notify you in writing and provide you with information about your rights. Ask a staff person at your child's school about this process if you don't

understand the information. Or, if you disagree with the IEP team's decision, you may also request, in writing, an independent evaluation.

- The evaluation will remain in your child's school file. The information included in the evaluation can help your child's teacher understand your child's needs.
- If your child qualifies for special services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed.
- Remember, you are part of your child's team, and your child's individualized plan should be based on his/her strengths and interests.
- Always make regular contact with your child's teacher and discuss his/her progress. Working closely with the teacher as a partner is the best plan for having the best educational experience for your child.

#### ***For more detailed information on your rights contact:***

*Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education (CAUSE), toll free:*  
(800) 221-9105 or  
[www.causeonline.org](http://www.causeonline.org).

*The Arc Michigan, toll free:*  
(800) 292-7851 or [www.arcmi.org](http://www.arcmi.org).

*Project Perform, toll free:*  
(800) 552-4821 or  
<http://www.wash.k12.mi.us/perform>.

*The Project Find website is still under development. Please visit the Early On Training and Technical Assistance website, <http://eotta.ccesa.org>, for updates on this website.*

## What Can I Do at Home?

### Parent Guide #18

**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 everyday.** 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. Math and science are learned by studying with materials that are fun to use.
- **ASK for help.** If you are concerned about your child's development in any area, call 1-800-*Early On*. An experienced, caring person can connect you with your local area and determine if more supports are needed.







# Fun Things To Do With Children

*(Free or Low-Cost)*

## **Play Centers at Parks**

Hawk Island Park  
1601 E. Cavanaugh  
Lansing, MI

Lake Lansing Park (North)  
6260 Lake Drive  
Haslett, MI 48840  
(517) 676-2233

McCormick Park  
High St and Putnam St  
Williamston, MI 48895

Patriarche Park  
1100 Alton Rd  
East Lansing, MI 48823

Rayner Park  
730 Ash Street  
Mason, MI

## **Nature Centers**

Beal Botanical Garden  
MSU Campus  
<http://www.cpa.msu.edu/beal/>

Children's Gardens and Butterfly  
House  
MSU Campus  
<http://www.4hgarden.msu.edu/>

Fenner Arboretum  
2020 E. Mt. Hope  
Lansing, MI 48910

Harris Nature Center  
3998 Van Atta Road  
Okemos MI 48864

Woldumar Nature Center  
5539 Old Lansing Rd  
Lansing, MI 48917

## **Museums & Historical Sites**

Impression Five Science Center  
200 Museum Drive  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(517) 485-8116  
<http://impression5.org/index.php>

Grand Ledge Area Historical  
Museum  
118 W. Lincoln  
P.O. Box 203  
Grand Ledge, MI 48837  
517-627-5170  
<http://www.gdledgehistosoc.org/>

Lansing Art Gallery & Education  
Center  
119 N. Washington Square  
Lansing, MI 48933  
517-374-6400  
<http://lansingartgallery.org/>

Michigan Historical Museum  
702 W. Kalamazoo Street  
Lansing MI 48915  
(517) 373-3559  
[www.michigan.gov/museum](http://www.michigan.gov/museum)

Nokomis Learning Center  
5153 Marsh Rd  
Okemos, MI

RE Olds Transportation Museum  
240 Museum Drive  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(517) 372-0529  
<http://reoldsmuseum.org/>

## **Located on MSU's Campus**

Abrams Planetarium  
(517) 355-4672  
<http://www.pa.msu.edu/abrams/>

Kresge Art Museum  
(517) 353-9834  
<http://www.artmuseum.msu.edu/>

MSU Museum  
(517) 355-7474  
<http://museum.msu.edu/>

## **Libraries**

Capital Area District Library  
Story times and special events  
[www.cadl.org](http://www.cadl.org) - for events calendar  
and library locations

East Lansing Public Library  
950 Abbot Rd  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
<http://www.elpl.org/>

## **All About Animals**

MSU Farms  
Visit website for farm locations-  
<http://tour.msu.edu/locations/farms>

Potter Park Zoo  
1301 S Pennsylvania Ave  
Lansing, MI 48912  
(517) 483-4222  
<http://www.potterparkzoo.org/>

Preuss Pets  
1127 N Cedar Street  
Lansing, MI 48906  
(517) 339-1762  
<http://preusspets.com/store/>