



Ready, Set - Kindergarten!

Family Guide for Preschool – Kindergarten Development



Gaining the Basics
for Reading, Writing,
& Speaking

One of six guides to help
with readiness for school



Carolina
Family
Engagement
Center

Equity, Opportunity & Excellence in Education

Readiness is not just ABC's or counting or knowing colors. Families need to be aware of ALL areas of their child's development – physical, emotional, language and reasoning. Children have a great ability to learn and grow. Adults provide the best support for their child when they encourage their individual abilities and readiness to learn.

For preschoolers and kindergartners, the highest form of research and learning is through play. Make it fun!



As you work to help your child learn the skills and gain the experiences needed to succeed in school and beyond, let him choose the books you read to him, let her learn colors and counting while in the grocery store. Readiness for school is not knowledge but developing in a child a willing attitude and positive view of learning.



There are six areas of growth and experience that research tells us are involved in helping a child progress and succeed.

SIX AREAS OF GROWTH AND EXPERIENCE



The individual way each child learns
(Approaches to Play and Learning)



How a child feels about himself/herself, develops relationships, and controls emotions
(Emotional and Social Development)



Their motor development, nutrition, health/safety
(Health and Physical Development)



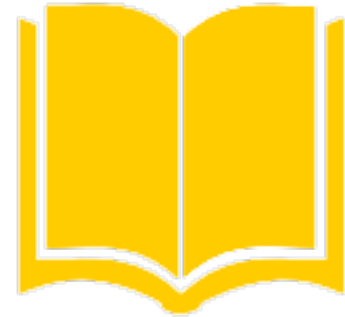
Gaining the basics for reading, writing, and speaking
(Language Development)



Exploring shapes, patterns, numbers, comparisons
(Mathematical Thinking)



Learning to think, make decisions, solve problems
(Cognitive Development)



This guide is one of six that offers a brief introduction to each area and provides a sample of the experiences and skills children need in order to be prepared to move through preschool, at three-, four-, and five-years of age.

Every child progresses at a different rate and so the developmental indicators included here describe what a child generally achieves by the END of each age level.

All adults caring for children wear many hats. You must be a playmate, nurse, maid, coach, and teacher. This document is designed to help by giving:

- Examples of the experiences and range of skills your child should learn and be able to do at each level of development in gaining the basics for reading, writing and speaking
- Activities on how you can help your child at home
- Additional resources for information and help

These experiences and skills are drawn from the South Carolina Early Learning Standards (https://www.scchildcare.org/media/55097/SC_ELS-second-edit.pdf) and the South Carolina College- and Career- Ready Standards (<https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/>).

Both guidelines were developed by numerous experts in learning, based on years of research, and after review and comment by the public.



Learning to Communicate



Young children use listening and talking to gain new information from and about their surroundings. As preschoolers engage in play they learn to ask questions, communicate ideas and emotions, and begin to understand people, places and events.

These Ready, Set steps include:

Preschool

- Speak in longer sentences with accepted grammar.
- Use more than one word for the same object or for parts of objects (dog, beagle or arm, leg).
- Make up names to things using words they know (store man for clerk, dog doctor for vet).
- Carry on conversations and ask questions about things that interest them.
- With help, make comments and ask questions on the topic under discussion.
- Describe experiences and retell short stories.
- Relay messages

Age 4 Kindergarten

- Speak in full sentences that are correct grammatically most of the time.
- Use a growing vocabulary with many kinds of words to express ideas clearly.
- Repeat familiar songs, chants, phrases in books or rhymes.
- Carry on conversations that involve taking turns.
- Complete a thought or idea when communicating with others.
- State points of view, likes or dislikes.
- Figure out the meaning of words based on how they are used (for example: boots and sandals refer to types of shoes).
- Adjust speech to meet surroundings and social expectations (speak quietly in library, be polite to adults).
- Carry out simple directions and directives.
- Relay messages correctly.

Age 5 Kindergarten

- Practice taking turns, listening to others, and speaking clearly.
- With help, use words and phrases learned through talk and text; ask and answer questions about known and unknown words.
- With help from the teacher, recall or collect information to ask or answer questions, both alone and in a group.
- With help, use nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions.
- Use appropriate images, drawings to support discussions and presentations.
- Identify a speaker's purpose.



Foundations For Reading



At this age, children begin to talk and communicate more with both words and objects, pictures, drawings. The most important thing to remember is that “reading” is much more than sounding out words! Reading is the result of many small skills that build one upon the other. Actually, early reading skills begin with ongoing interactions that involve two-way talk and eye contact that are a part of the daily routine. Preschoolers love to hear and tell stories. Reading aloud to your child and discussing the books will help the child to begin to understand the language and organization of stories.

These Ready, Set steps include:

Preschool

- Engage in “reading” independently (choose a book or magazine, turn pages but not always in order, tell a story).
- Show an interest in books and other reading material and reading activities.
- Listen to books and discuss the story or information given.
- With help, look at pictures and ask questions and talk about the information.
- With help, predict what will happen next in a story.
- Know and name some letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name.

Age 4 Kindergarten

- Engage in “reading” independently (choose a book or magazine, turn pages but not always in order, tell a story).
- Use and share books and magazines while playing.
- Begin recognizing some letters in words.
- Listen to and talk about increasingly difficult books.
- Ask more focused and detailed questions about pictures or a story.
- Discuss a story and predict what will happen next.
- Know and name many letters of the alphabet.
- Match sounds at the beginning of a word with the letter matches (sees the letter B and says “ball”).

Age 5 Kindergarten

- Engage in “reading” independently, turning the pages correctly and using the pictures to tell a story or repeating familiar lines or phrases.
- Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, front to back.
- Practice rhyming, matching words with similar beginning sounds, and blending sounds into words.
- Use letter sounds and word analysis to figure out words.
- Learn “sight” (frequently used) words (me, you, see, run).
- Use the pictures and other text to figure out new words.
- Read simple texts accurately and with understanding of the meaning.



Foundations For Writing



Children begin to “write,” using drawing, scribbles, and symbols to tell a story or describe an event. These scribbles and pictures have meaning for your child, even if they are unrecognizable to you. As your child develops, he will use more and more actual letters and by the end of kindergarten, she will work at basic punctuation and English grammar.

These Ready, Set steps include:

Preschool

- Use pretend writing that copies real-life situations (make marks to take a restaurant food order, for example).
- Show they know that written words are made up of letters (point out the first letter of their name from a sign or list of letters).
- Play with writing letters and make letter-like forms.



Age 4 Kindergarten

- Use known letters and letter-like forms to write their name and some words.
- Try to connect spoken words with the letters in the written words (write M for mommy).
- Imitate adult writing that they see.
- Begin to use some letters in their writing.
- Understand that letters make words and words make sentences.



Age 5 Kindergarten

- Learn to print lower and upper case letters.
- Recognize that print moves from left to right and that there are spaces between words.
- With help, use drawings, letters, or dictate words in order to “write” a story or description.
- With help, plan, edit, and strengthen writing in such ways as adding details and arranging events in their order.





Learning At Home



Your child is learning all the time, not just at school or child care, so how can you help them learn to develop their skills in talking and writing? Here are a few suggestions.

Surround your preschooler with books; put them around the house, in the car, take one or two when you have to sit somewhere.

On a tight budget? Search for used books at a thrift store such as Goodwill, at dollar stores and other discount stores. Try garage sales. Start a book swap with friends or check online sites for books costing as little as 1 cent.

Use books on your computer or smart phone for books. For example, <https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/> has books that you can read to your child or they can listen to the narration. This site's books are written and told in many, many languages; the perfect site for a child learning English.

Read, read, read and read some more to and with your child. Ask questions about the pictures; ask her what might happen next. Have him make up a story about one of the characters. Let your child know how much you enjoy reading.

Help him find beginning sound in words; find words with similar sounds from within a rhyme, song or familiar story.

Use everyday activities to increase your child's vocabulary. In the store, point out letters and words. Riding in the car use road signs, billboards, store names. Point out words in TV commercials, also on food containers while making dinner.

Make word puzzles. Print your child's name in large letters on a piece of paper, cut the page into "puzzle" shapes and let them work to put the letters in order. Do this with family names, friends' names, short words.



When reading to your child, don't worry about the reading level of the book. Just let her pick out a book with a subject she might like and try it. This is a great way to introduce him to new words. If the book is boring or too hard, move on, no harm done.

Whatever you do together, talk about it with your child, using adult language, no babytalk. When you eat meals, take walks, or go to the store, talk with him. These and other activities give the two of you a chance to ask and answer questions. "What do you see on the street?" What did you learn from your teacher today? Challenge her by asking questions that need more than a "yes" or "no" answer.



Give your child time to think after you ask a question. Let her make choices between two or three selections. Again, give him time to consider his decision. (You're tired and in a hurry but your child needs time.)

Listen to your child's questions patiently and answer them just as patiently. If you don't know the answer to a question, have him join you as you look for the answer in your smart phone or in a book. He will then see how important it is learning new information.

Using large cutout letters or letters from an alphabet puzzle, spread the letters on the floor. Have your child find the first letter of the word you call out (use animals, types of vehicles, foods, action words, for example). Then, use the letters to make one syllable words.

Let your child see her name often. Point out and have him pick out the letters of his name from store signs, books, and product names.

Provide paper, crayons, and pencils so your child can "write" stories and retell experiences about things that happened at play or in school. Let her use words, drawings, and spoken explanations in her "writing." Go over the stories with him, and praise him for completing each task.

Go to the public library and let your child select books that she is interested in reading with you. While at the public library, ask about the programs they have for preschoolers such as story time and crafts. Learn about any summer reading programs. Some libraries have on-line stories and games for children. Check out their website or call.

But keep in mind - books are the best way to help your child prepare for reading and writing. Limit their time on the computer and smart phone to 15 minutes a day.



Additional Information



For a day-by-day calendar of suggested activities and books, go to www.daybydaysc.org. The calendar is available online free or a printed copy can be ordered from the S.C. State Library for a fee. This site also has lists of books for specific activities (story time or bedtime) and on topics (going to the dentist, loss of a pet).

The U.S. Department of Education also has information and activities for helping your child become a reader at <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/index.html>.



See <http://www.pbs.org/parents/> for insights into child development, and for fun learning games see <http://pbskids.org/> from Public Broadcasting. The games are also available on your smart phone from the app store enter “pbs kids” for several different types of games.

Another site, <http://www.jumpstart.com/academy/preschool> for kindergarten has an app for your computer; on your smart phone it’s “jumpstart.” It offers a number of apps with games for sounds, rhymes, letters, beginning reading. You must register your child on its site. The app has free and paid activities.



“22learn” also has a number of phone apps with learning games for ages 3-7. Each app has 4 to 6 games on such topics as letters, alphabet, and sight words.

If your child is enrolled in a school, ask if it belongs to brainpop jr. or starfall. These sites have all types of activities for learning. If the school is a member, the sites are free, otherwise they have a fee.

Your county’s public library is a great source of information (in person or on-line). Check the catalog for “phonics” and “alphabet books” under the “subject search.” The list includes books to help parents teach, as well as books and videos for helping children to learn. Some county libraries have a button on their home page, “children’s resources,” that take you directly to appropriate suggestions. Also, don’t forget to check out their programs for children.

For Spanish speaking children, www.fredisalearns.com/free-lessons/ helps young children with basic English. Don’t forget <https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/> with its many language options.

But keep in mind - books are the best way to help your child prepare for reading and writing. Limit their time on the computer and smart phone to 15 minutes a day.

Have concerns about your child’s physical or mental development? Take a look at <https://www.familyconnectionsc.org/journey-begins/early-learners/> for more developmental milestones, an explanation of screenings for needed services, and connections to those services. The site and phone conversations are available in Spanish as well as English.





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The Carolina Family Engagement Center is located in and coordinated through the University of South Carolina's SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) in the University of South Carolina's College of Education. Contact them at <https://cfec.sc.gov/> or 1-800-868-2232 or 1-803-777-7658.

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