



K



**On to
KINDERGARTEN**
early **LEARNING**
activity **GUIDE**



BEST BEGINNINGS
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

FIVE AREAS OF EARLY LEARNING

Experts have identified five areas of early learning that are essential to school readiness.



Physical Well-Being, Health
& Motor DEVELOPMENT



Social & Emotional
DEVELOPMENT



Approaches to LEARNING



Cognition & General
KNOWLEDGE



Communication, Language
& LITERACY

INSIDE:

General Preparation	p2
Physical Well-Being, Health & Motor Development	p6
Social & Emotional Development	p7
Approaches to Learning	p8
Cognition & General Knowledge	p9
Communication, language & Literacy	p10

General PREPARATION

Kindergarten is an exciting time for you and your child. Children must be 5 years old on or before September 1 to be enrolled in kindergarten.

- Develop and follow routines. (Attendance is a routine)
- Encourage your child to act independently.
- Teach your child to be responsible for belongings.
- Read aloud regularly with your child.
- Acknowledge and talk about feelings.

Attendance is an important part of school SUCCESS

Getting children ready and to school consistently can be difficult. Children who miss school or constantly arrive late have a harder time learning and becoming a part of their classroom routines. To make sure your child doesn't fall behind in school, come up with ways to help your family with time. The night before, consider helping your child lay out school clothes and have his backpack ready to go. Try giving yourself more time to get ready than you need or focusing on the time you need to leave the house to arrive on time.

Month BEFORE

- Stay in touch with your child's school about required paperwork.
- Send a note to the nurse and to the teacher if your child has allergies or special needs.
- If possible, visit the school and meet your child's teacher.
- Start your school routine early.
To reduce stress, start getting used to new times for waking and sleeping.
- Read books together about starting school.

Night BEFORE

- Prepare the clothes your child will wear to school.
- Make a school lunch.
- Help your child pack a backpack and leave it by the door.
- Go over the plan for the first day.
- Get your child to bed on time.
- Set an alarm.

First DAY

- Start the day with smiles and hugs!
- Be sure your child has a good breakfast.
- Pack lunch into your child's backpack.
- Take a photo of your new kindergartner.
- See your child off at the bus stop, or, if possible, walk your child to his or her classroom.
- Say good bye at the door.
- When you pick up your child, talk about the day.

The BEFORE photo of your kindergartner

- Can sit at a table
- Can listen to and follow one or two-step instructions
- Can begin to write letters of the alphabet
- Can manage behavior with help from adults
- Can recognize sounds of the alphabet
- Can count from 1-10



Children starting kindergarten are assessed by their teachers based on five areas, called educational domains. Think of these domains as the building blocks for your child's future success. This assessment will help your child's teacher learn more about your child and determine how to best guide and support her learning during the year.



Physical Well-Being, Health & Motor DEVELOPMENT



Social & Emotional DEVELOPMENT



Approaches to LEARNING



Cognition & General KNOWLEDGE



Communication, Language & LITERACY

While these may sound technical, these building blocks include many activities that you already engage with your child in every day.



Physical Well-Being, Health, and Motor DEVELOPMENT

WHAT ARE TEACHERS LOOKING FOR?

- Gross motor skills that use arms, legs, and/or torso
- Fine motor skills that use hands and fingers

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN MY KINDERGARTNER?

- Skips or runs with few falls
- Able to use stairs
- Staying balanced while bending, twisting, or stretching
- Kicks a large ball with some accuracy
- Cuts, draws, glues with materials provided
- Draws several letters or shapes
- Able to use buttons, snaps, Velcro, zippers
- Able to put together and pull apart blocks, beads, cubes

HOW CAN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS HELP?

Play outdoors, try different games with balls, do craft projects, and play dress up.

Social and Emotional DEVELOPMENT

WHAT ARE TEACHERS LOOKING FOR?

- Positively participates in group activities
- Regulates feelings and controls temper

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN MY KINDERGARTNER?

- Able to follow simple rules
- Participates cooperatively in large and small groups
- Creates and/or sets up activities that include more than one child
- Able to be part of the audience, as well as an active participant in group events
- Expresses emotions in safe and appropriate ways
- Shows ability to control temper, with guidance
- Seeks peaceful resolution to conflict
- Modifies behavior and expression of emotions for different environments
- Stops and listens to instructions before starting an activity

HOW CAN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS HELP?

Practice making decisions as a family, host play dates, play games in groups, emphasis sharing, and allow time for imaginative play.



Approaches to LEARNING

WHAT ARE TEACHERS LOOKING FOR?

- Shows curiosity and interest in learning new things and having new experiences
- Sustains attention to tasks and persists when facing challenges

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN MY KINDERGARTNER?

- Asks questions about new events and occurrences
- Looks for new information about personal interests
- Uses familiar materials in new ways (e.g., materials from nature in an art project)
- Pays attention when they are not the focus of attention
- Works on a task over a period of time, leaving and returning to it
- Shifts attention back to activity at hand after being distracted
- Accepts age-appropriate challenges and continues through frustration

HOW CAN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS HELP?

Ask open-ended questions, encourage imaginative play, read together about topics your child finds interesting, plant seeds together and watch them grow, feed pets together, and try more advanced games.

Cognition and General KNOWLEDGE

WHAT ARE TEACHERS LOOKING FOR?

- Understands numbers and counting
- Can sort, classify, and organize objects

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN MY KINDERGARTNER?

- Counts to 10 from memory
- Understands that when counting items, each item is counted only once and none are left out
- Uses games, toys, and coins in counting activities
- Uses basic numbers and counting operations (e.g., “I gave Chua one of my blocks. Now she has two blocks.”)
- Sorts objects into categories, classifying and comparing according to a characteristic (e.g., size, color)
- Recognizes, describes, duplicates, and extends a two-part pattern (e.g., A/B, circle/square)
- Describes how and why objects are arranged or sorted the way they are

HOW CAN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS HELP?

Play simple games with dice, sing songs that count up or down, ask math questions about daily life (e.g. How many crayons do you have?), look together for patterns in nature, and sort toys by different categories.



Communication, Language, and LITERACY

WHAT ARE TEACHERS LOOKING FOR?

- Uses receptive and expressive communication skills
- Demonstrates phonological awareness
- Demonstrates awareness of print concepts
- Demonstrates knowledge of letters and symbols

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN MY KINDERGARTNER?

- Listens to others in group conversations and discussions
- Responds to requests
- Pays attention to book reading/story telling for at least five minutes
- Understands prepositions in simple commands (e.g., put the bowl on the table)
- Expresses an idea in more than one way (e.g., “I like salmon very much” and “Salmon is my favorite food.”)
- Correctly uses words to indicate understanding
- Defines words, with assistance (e.g., “Firefighters put out fires.”)
- Identifies initial sound of words, with assistance (e.g., book begins with the /b/ sound)
- Hears and pronounces similar-sounding words (e.g., three and tree)

- Understands that English language is read left to right and top to bottom
- Recognizes difference between letters, words, and numerals
- Reads and writes own first name
- Reads several examples of environmental print (e.g., boys, girls, exit, cereal boxes)
- Recognizes and writes several upper case and lower case letters

HOW CAN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS HELP?

Read books together, talk together, ask your child to retell a story, play rhyming games, and help your child practice writing his name.



CONGRATULATIONS!

With a better understanding of the five areas of early learning, you can better prepare your child to succeed in school. You can learn more about each of these areas on our website. As a child's first and most influential teacher, you play an important role in their future. Don't be afraid to advocate for their needs and ask questions of any expert you encounter as they grow.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Remember that kindergarten readiness is not a race. Learning is a process that takes time, and your child will move at her own pace, growing in unique ways. Regardless of where your child is today, you have all the tools you need to help them. Read, Talk, Sing, Play together - these are the building blocks of a lifelong love of learning.

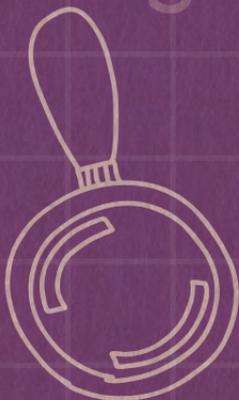


Look for these fun early learning activities booklets for your child! Each issue is full of age-appropriate ideas of things you can do at home to support your child's early learning. Video instructions for many of the activities can be found on YouTube.

@BestBeginningsAlaska

BestBeginningsAlaska.org





This publication was made possible by Grant Number 90TP0012 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.