



Kindergarten Readiness Activities

Central Early Childhood Direction Center
Resource Center for Independent Living



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INTRODUCTION

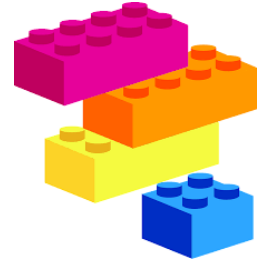
- It is important to make sure preschool children, including those with disabilities, **receive essential developmental and kindergarten readiness knowledge and competencies** (skills, knowledge, and abilities). This will help prepare them to meet school standards later in their educational careers.
- The New York State Department of Education outlines six areas, or Learning Domains, in which children should demonstrate certain skills before starting Kindergarten:
 - Personal Health and Safety Skills
 - Social and Emotional Development
 - Language Development & Communication
 - Cognitive Development/Intellectual Abilities
 - Approaches to Learning
 - Motor Development
- **No one single factor** determines whether a child is ready for Kindergarten. A child's development needs to be **evaluated on several fronts**, including:
 - A child's readiness to learn
 - Executive function skills
 - Communication and listening skills
 - How well your child gets along with others
 - Academic skills
- You can use the activities in this booklet to help support the development of the Learning Domains and to help prepare your child for Kindergarten.



ENTHUSIASM FOR LEARNING

Multipurpose Toys

- Provide toys that can be used in a number of different ways - blocks, crayons, paints, dress-up clothes, stuffed animals, and action figures.
- Adopt the “when you put out less, children do more with their toys” motto. Store toys in a storage bin and pull only a few out at a time.
- Allow for unstructured playtime.



Talk About Interesting Things You Have Learned

- The topics are unlimited – sports, science, art, cooking, etc.
- Tell kids about an interesting article or book you read or an educational program you watched. Explain in developmentally appropriate terms what happened and why you found it interesting.
- Discuss the ways you find new information about your interests.

Surround Children with Books

- Consistent access to books can increase a child’s motivation to read.
- Provide many types of reading materials – books, newspapers, magazines.
- Provide easy access to reading materials.
- Make sure your child has their own library card.
- Read together every day.
- Talk about the story and ask questions.

Build on Your Child’s Natural Interests

Show enthusiasm for what your children are interested in and provide opportunities to explore those interests through:

- Visiting Museums
- Reading Books
- Taking Trips
- Attending Educational Programs

Encourage Independence

- Enthusiastic learners have a sense of competence. Children develop competence from overcoming challenges on their own.





Ask the Right Questions

- Turn your child's questions around...
 "Why do you think _____?"
- Make questions specific.
- If you don't know the answer to a question – look it up together.
- Avoid the "pop quiz" type questions that only display knowledge. You want to engage your child, not just provide routine knowledge.

Encourage Children to Express Their Feelings and Make Choices

- Allow them to pick a side dish to go with dinner.
- Allow them to select their own extracurricular activities.
- Allow them to provide input on family decisions.

Focus on Learning

- Providing rewards for doing something can undermine the pleasure in the activity. This includes learning.
- Focus on the process not the reward. Take an interest in what your child is doing, not how well they are doing it.
- Allow your child's natural curiosity to lead the way.



Play Engaging and Creative Games

- Show and Tell
- Charades – ask your child to act out vocabulary or spelling words
- Telephone
- I Spy
- Simon Says

Language Activities

- Picture Talk – Make a scrapbook of favorite or familiar things by cutting out pictures.
 - Group the pictures into categories (example: things to ride on, things for dessert, fruit, etc.). Talk about the items and why they are grouped together. What is similar? What is different?
 - Create silly pictures – (example: a picture of a dog behind the wheel of a car) and talk about what makes the picture silly.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes.
- Tell me about... – Place familiar items in a container. Have your child remove the object and tell you what it is called and how it is used.
- Yes or No – Have your child think of a person. Try to guess the person your child picked by asking yes or no questions (Is the person family? Does the person wear glasses?). Switch roles and you pick the person and have your child ask you the questions.
- What does not belong? – Select a group of objects or pictures that are similar and one that is different. Have your child select what does not belong. Talk about the grouping, and the similarities and differences. Discuss why the object does not belong.
- Storytime Theater – Using stuffed animals, actions figures, or other toys, act out familiar or recently read stories.



Make Children the Conversationalists

- Talk about spatial relationships – Up, down, over, under, first, middle, last, etc.
- Encourage your child to give directions – Have them explain how to build a block tower, make a sandwich, etc.
- Talk about what TV shows your child is watching. Have them guess what is going to happen next. Talk about the characters. Act out a scene together.
- Use daily activities – Have your child describe the foods they are eating, the chores they are doing, the places they are going.
- While shopping, talk about what you will buy, how much you will need and what you will make. Discuss the sizes, shapes, colors, and weight of the food.
- Ask questions that require a choice – “Do you want an apple or an orange?” “Do you want to wear the red or blue shirt?”
- Ask clarifying questions – “Tell me more about _____.”

Model Conversation Skills

- When possible, give your full attention when your child is speaking.
- Make sure you have your child’s attention before you speak.
- Pause after speaking to give your child time to respond.
- Use clear and developmentally appropriate speech.
- Repeat what your child is saying to show you understand.
- Expand on what was said – “You want juice? I have juice. I have apple juice. Do you want apple juice?”
- Introduce new words and definitions in an easily understood context.



LISTENING SKILLS

Read to and with Your Child

- Ask questions as you read with your child.
- Ask your child to make predictions about what will happen next.
- Use favorite stories – pause and let your child fill in what comes next and/or change key parts in the story to see if your child notices.
- Have your child listen to stories at story times or through audio books.
- Read everyday items out loud and involve your child in the activity – your to-do list, recipes, grocery lists, your calendar, etc.
- Print out and read lyrics to your child’s favorite songs.



Talk to Your Child

- Narrate everyday activities.
- Model good conversation skills.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Teach active listening skills – Eye contact, nonverbal communication, repeating points back.
- Use a calm, non-threatening tone with your child.
- Never discourage your child from asking questions.

Play Games

- Make up silly rhymes.
- Story Chain – Have one person begin a story with a sentence, and then have the next person continue the story by adding a sentence. Have each person add a sentence until the story is complete. If your child is too young to continue the plotline, ask them questions to supply details.
- Listen to songs that have movements with the lyrics – Like Wheels on the Bus and Itsy-Bitsy Spider.
- Play Simon Says.
- Use puppets to relay instructions.
- Engage in role-play activities.

Turn Off or Reduce Technology

- Add or replace with concentration activities, such as:
 - Jigsaw Puzzles
 - Card Games
 - Crossword Puzzles or Word Searches



INDEPENDENCE

Provide Structure

- Create and keep routines
- Offer acceptable choices
- Pick your battles – be flexible when needed
- Provide structured and unstructured time alone for your child

Assign Responsibility –

Select activities that nurture independence, such as:

- Picking out clothes
- Getting themselves dressed
- Preparing breakfast or lunch, within their ability
- Preparing toothbrush and brushing teeth
- Setting the table or cleaning up after meals
- Putting away toys
- Cleaning room – dusting, making bed, putting away laundry
- Getting the bath ready, washing hair and body, putting on pajamas
- Putting away coats, backpacks, lunchboxes
- Taking care of a pet
- Allowing your children to find their own activity when they are bored



***These activities will often take a child extra time, so be sure to build enough time in your routine to allow your child to accomplish these tasks. Consider adding one or two new responsibilities at a time as your child progresses.

Model Independence

- Show examples of your own individual accomplishments – Focus on the dedication it took to accomplish the task.
- Model coping behavior – Failure is survivable.
- Allow your child to attempt to solve problems on their own first.



PLAYING WITH OTHER CHILDREN

Play Games

- Board games – children learn to take turns
- Group games – encourage cooperation
- Relay Races – practice teamwork
- Prop Play – provide props for dramatic play



Art Activities

- Make a Mural – Post a long sheet of paper on a wall and have the children design a scene to draw or paint.
- Buddy Tracings – On large sheets of paper have children trace the outlines of one another and then decorate. Discuss what the children couldn't have done without the other.
- Build Something – Using play dough, clay, or Legos have the children build or create something.

Toys to Share

Select toys that encourage cooperative play, such as:

- Musical Instruments
- Card games
- Puppets, dolls, and stuffed animals
- Children's books
- Puzzles
- Figures, cars, blocks
- Dress-up clothes



Problem Solving

When two children disagree, try implementing the following suggestions:

- Help your child understand the other child's point of view.
- Teach your child to stay calm – Do not hit, grab, or shove.
- Teach your child to use words to express feelings.
- Allow your child to solve issues, but remain close in case adult intervention is needed.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Tools for Fine Motor Skills

- Putty or Clay – Squeeze, stretch, and manipulate into shapes.
- Tennis Balls – Hold in hands and squeeze.
- Children’s Scissors – Practice cutting through items of varying thickness.
- Construction Paper – Fold paper in half, then into quarters, and so on. See how many folds your child can make.
- Variety of Writing Tools – Provide pens, pencils, markers, crayons, etc.
- Zippers and Buttons – Close and open a variety of fasteners.
- Jars with Lids – Open and close a variety of jars with lids that snap or twist on.
- Interlocking Construction Toys – Legos, Mega Blocks, Tinkertoys, etc.
- Spray Bottles and Squirt Toys – Use for bathtub play, warm weather play, add food coloring and make pictures in the snow, or help water plants.
- Sponges – Squeezing out the water strengthens the forearms.
- Bubble Packing – Have children pop the bubbles.
- Squeeze Toys – Provide foam toys, bulb syringe, empty glue/paint bottles.



Increasing Fine Motor Skills Through Activities

- Sorting – Have your child use any divided item (egg cartons, ice cube trays, etc.) to sort small objects (beans, beads, etc.). Children can use their hands or items like tweezers or tongs.
- Clothes Pin Activities – Have your child hold the clothespin with the pads of their fingers at the top. Have them practice picking up and transferring items from one spot to another. Attach clothespins to items and then pull them off.
- Cotton Ball Race – Using any item that you can squeeze and a puff of air comes out – use the item to blow the cotton ball. Set up a race to see who can blow their cotton ball across the finish line first.
- Finger Painting – Provide opportunities for your child to use their creativity.
- Make pasta or bead necklaces with your child.



Lastly, have fun and enjoy spending time exploring and learning with your child!

RESOURCES

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