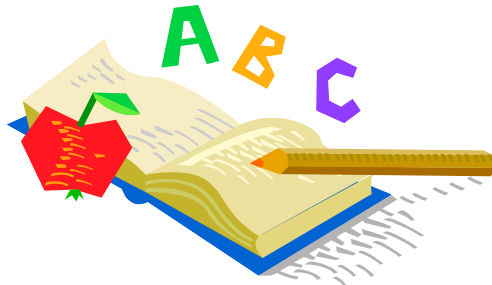


Strategies to Help Your Child Be Ready for Kindergarten



“A handbook that partners parent and child
for a successful kindergarten experience”

Clarice Margaret Riggio

May 2008

All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sand pile at school.

These are the things I learned:

- Share everything.
- Play fair.
- Don't hit people.
- Put things back where you found them.
- Clean up your own mess.
- Don't take things that aren't yours.
- Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
- Wash your hands before you eat.
- Flush.
- Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
- Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
- Take a nap every afternoon.
- When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.
- Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
- Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.
- And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK.

And it is still true; no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

(Fulghum, 2006, p.3)

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Getting Started

This handbook contains many of the key elements that a child will be exposed to in kindergarten. Giving a child some background knowledge and practice before he or she enters into the classroom environment only will help him or her to have a more successful overall experience.

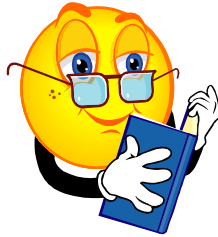
The handbook is organized so that it touches on the California Department of Education content standards for kindergarten. The strategies that will be addressed will target the following content areas: Language-Arts, Mathematics, History-Social Science, Physical Education, Science, and Visual and Performing Arts. The handbook will also assist in the area of social skills such as listening to others, following directions, taking turns, etc. Kindergarten has become quite academic, but it is also the year for social growth and exploration.

Let us now embark on an educational adventure. My hope is that this book will be a pertinent source of information for many.

***Please note, at the bottom of each page, after each strategy, the California Content Standards will be referenced in parentheses. For a complete list of all of the kindergarten standards, please visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>.**



#1: Read Aloud



On a daily basis, it is important as a parent or guardian to read a book aloud to your child. Books do not have to be purchased as the children's section of your local library has many wonderful selections. Make going to the library a rewarding experience for your child. Selecting a book should be fun and something that both parent and child look forward to. Also, asking family or friends for books instead of just toys for birthdays and other holidays can be a helpful way to increase your "home library."

In reading a selected book to your child, point out/comment on the following elements:

- 1) Who is the author? What is the author's job? (He/she writes the book).
- 2) Who is the illustrator? What is the illustrator's job? (He/she draws the pictures).
- 3) Identify the parts of the book: (front cover, back cover, title page, spine, etc.)
- 4) Explain to the child that we read from left to right.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Reading—Concepts about print (1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3), Reading Comprehension (2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)—literary response and analysis (3.0, 3.1, 3.3), listening comprehension, History & Social Science (K.1, 3) (know beliefs and behaviors of characters in stories).

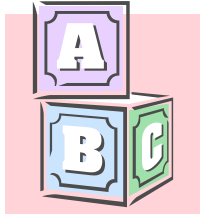
When you read to your child, try asking some of the following questions that are included on this handy checklist:

- What do you think this story is about?
- What will happen if _____?
- What do you see?
- What is happening here?
- Why do you think that is happening?
- How do you think _____ felt at the beginning of the story? Why?
- Is this story real or pretend?
- Why couldn't this story really happen?
- Which characters in the book did you like best? Why?
- If you could write a new ending, what would you change?
- Describe the _____. What was special about _____?
- What do you think?
- Name some of the _____.
- Do you think it was a good idea that _____? Why or why not?

(Portions of the above checklist have been modified and are compliments of J. Smith, Azusa Unified School District, Azusa, California).

*Some of the items may or may not be relevant to a book that you are reading with your child; however, more than likely, many will give you ideas of what to ask when reading. Good luck!

#2: My Name Letter Game



An important concept that will be covered in kindergarten is a child's ability to recognize and name all of the letters of the alphabet. A good way to assist with letter recognition is to first have your child practice writing his or her first name. A child's name is very important to him or her because it gives he or she an identity. Have your child write his or her name. Then, for each letter in his or her name, help him or her to think of a word that begins with that particular letter. Let your child first draw pictures for the words. After a few times of practice, encourage your child to write the words as well as just the pictures. If there are multiples of the same letters, do not duplicate a word. Rather, encourage your child to think of another word.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Reading—Concepts about print (1.0, 1.6), phonics, phonemic awareness, writing (1.0, 1.4). Visual and Performing Arts: Art—Creative expression (2.0, 2.5).

An example of “My Name Letter Game” can be seen here:

S--  socks

T--  train

E--  elephant

P--  peach

H--  hat

E--  egg

N--  nut

#3: Letter Memory Game



A popular childhood game is “Memory Game” where pictures are placed upside down. The object is for a child to not only match items, but to remember where various objects were placed. Playing “Letter Memory Game” with your child can help to increase his or her short-term memory and ability to recognize upper and lower-case letters.

What to do:

- 1) Cut out the (52) letter squares from the templates provided on the following pages.
- 2) Mix up all of the lettered squares.
- 3) Place the squares upside down, making sure that they do not overlap.
- 4) Play with your child (or have the child play with a friend or sibling), taking turns to try to find a match (i.e. A and a, B and b, etc).
- 5) Encourage fair play. The object is to obtain the most matches. However, it is more important that the child is aware of the association between capital and lower case letters.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Reading—Concepts about print (1.0, 1.6, 1.18), listening/speaking (1.0, 1.1), History-Social Science: K.1, 1)--(Following directions, memory, gamesmanship (i.e. the ability to take turns).

Capital Letter Squares

A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H	I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X
Y	Z				

Lower Case Letter Squares

a	b	c	d	e	f
g	h	i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p	q	r
s	t	u	v	w	x
y	z				

#4: My Letter Book



A really fun way to help your child to recognize and name each letter of the alphabet is to have him or her create his or her own individualized alphabet book. First, take any standard 8 and $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 inch notebook or even simply use computer paper (staple the sheets together when the book is complete). Designate each page to be a letter (A-Z) by having him or her write the particular letter, relatively large on the top of each page. Let your child look through old magazines that you may have around the house. With your supervision, have him or her cut out pictures of items that begin with each letter of the alphabet. Perhaps, focus on a letter to a couple of letters each week. This collage of letters book can really be something awesome for him or her to make. Also, it is great in having your child practice cutting and pasting, something that a kindergartener does on a daily basis.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts:
Reading—Concepts about print (1.0, 1.6), **Visual and Performing Arts: Art—**Creative expression (2.0, 2.2, 2.3), use of scissors, gluing.

#5: Contact Information



One topic that your child will be required to do in kindergarten is to write his or her full name, address, and phone number. Why not let him or her practice early so by the time kindergarten rolls around, he or she will already be familiar with this information? A child that knows his or her contact information is also a safe child in case they ever get separated from you. It is also a good strategy to help with writing (both words as well as numbers).

Name: Julie Jones



Address: 1234 Summertime Lane



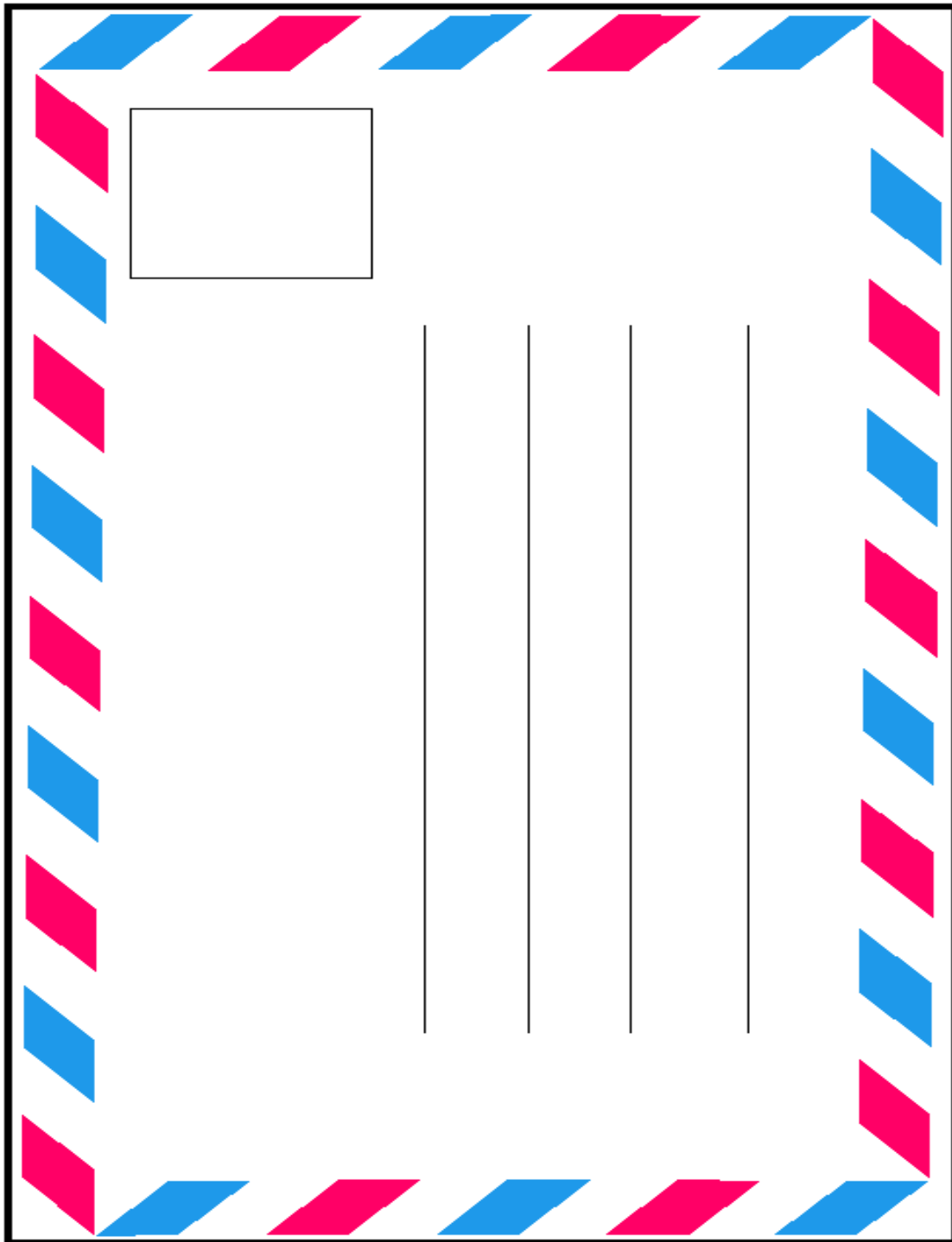
Los Angeles, CA 90000

Phone Number: (323) 555-5555



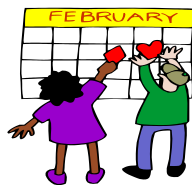
*Note: On the following page is a template where your child could use his or her address information to send someone a pretend postcard. He or she could create his or her own stamp, too. Perhaps, your child could write to you and you could write back! What fun it would be for him or her!

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Writing (1.0, 1.3), Mathematics: Number sense (1.0, 1.2)



Template courtesy of: <http://www.dltk-kids.com>

#6: Calendar Fun



The calendar will be an integral part of your soon-to-be kindergartener's day. Almost everyone has a calendar at home. Let your child examine it. Point out to him or her what month it is. Tell him or her that there are twelve months in the year. Say or sing the months of the year. Show your child that there are seven days in a week. Say or sing each day. Practice locating the date on the calendar. Say the entire complete date with your child. For example, say, "Today's date is Thursday, March 5, 2008." If the date is the 5th of March, have him or her point to the date and move his or her finger up to the corresponding day of the week. It is important that your child knows the difference between what *day* it is and what the *date* is. Ask your child questions. For example, ask him or her what the date was yesterday? What did you do yesterday? What will the date be tomorrow? What would you like to do/are you doing tomorrow? Lastly, have your child practice writing the date. Your child's kindergarten teacher will be quite impressed that he or she already has a firm understanding of the elements of the calendar.

*On the following pages are song selections to teach the months and days of the week. There is also a "Watching the Weather" chart. Each day that you practice the elements of the calendar, talk about the weather. Ask your child what the weather is like. Is it rainy, sunny, cloudy, snowy, etc.? Have your child draw a symbol in the box for the day's weather (i.e. ☁ for a rainy day).

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics—Measurement and Geometry (1.0, 1.3), Visual and Performing Arts: Music (creative expression)—(2.0, 2.2), Science: Earth Science (3b.)



Songs to help teach months and days of the week:

Courtesy of <http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems4.html>

The Months of the Year

(To the tune of "Three Blind Mice")

January, February, March,

April, May, June,

July, August, September,

October, November, December.

These are the twelve months of the year.

Now sing them together so we can all here.

How many months are in a year?

Twelve months in a year.

Today is Song

(To the tune of "Frere Jacques")

Today is _____.

Today is _____.

All day long, all day long.

Yesterday was _____.

Tomorrow will be _____.

Oh what fun!

Oh what fun!

Days of the Week

(To the tune of "The Addams Family")

Days of the week, (snap, snap)

Days of the week, (snap, snap)

Days of the week,

Days of the week,

Days of the week. (snap, snap)

There's Sunday and there's Monday,

There's Tuesday and there's Wednesday,

There's Thursday and there's Friday,

And then there's Saturday.

Days of the week, (snap, snap)

Days of the week, (snap, snap)

Days of the week,

Days of the week,

Days of the week. (snap, snap)



Watching the Weather



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1					
Week 2					
Week 3					
Week 4					

#7: Shape Hunt



A child at this age level will need to learn his or her shapes. Very easily, you can cut shapes out of paper and write the shape names on each. Explain how many sides each shape has (i.e. a triangle has three sides; a square has four, etc). However, for even more fun, take your child on a shape hunt! Whether inside, outside, or both, explore the world around you and see what shapes you and your child find. Make a list of all of the shapes/items (i.e. picnic table=rectangle, television screen=square, stop sign=octagon, etc).

Here are some ideas for some shapes to get you started:



Square => a window, a floor tile, a cracker, a slice of bread



Triangle => yield sign, half a sandwich (cut diagonally), a sail on a boat



Circle => opening of a glass, a cookie, a door knob, a doughnut, wheels



Diamond => a kite, a diamond on a playing card



Oval => a mirror, a spoon, an avocado



Rectangle => a table, a side of a house, a cabinet door, a picture frame

****Then, after the shape hunt, use the following shape cards for a shape sort. Also, included is a blank template to make your own pictures.**

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry—(2.0, 2.1), Science: Investigation and Experimentation (4d.), cutting

Shapes for Sorting

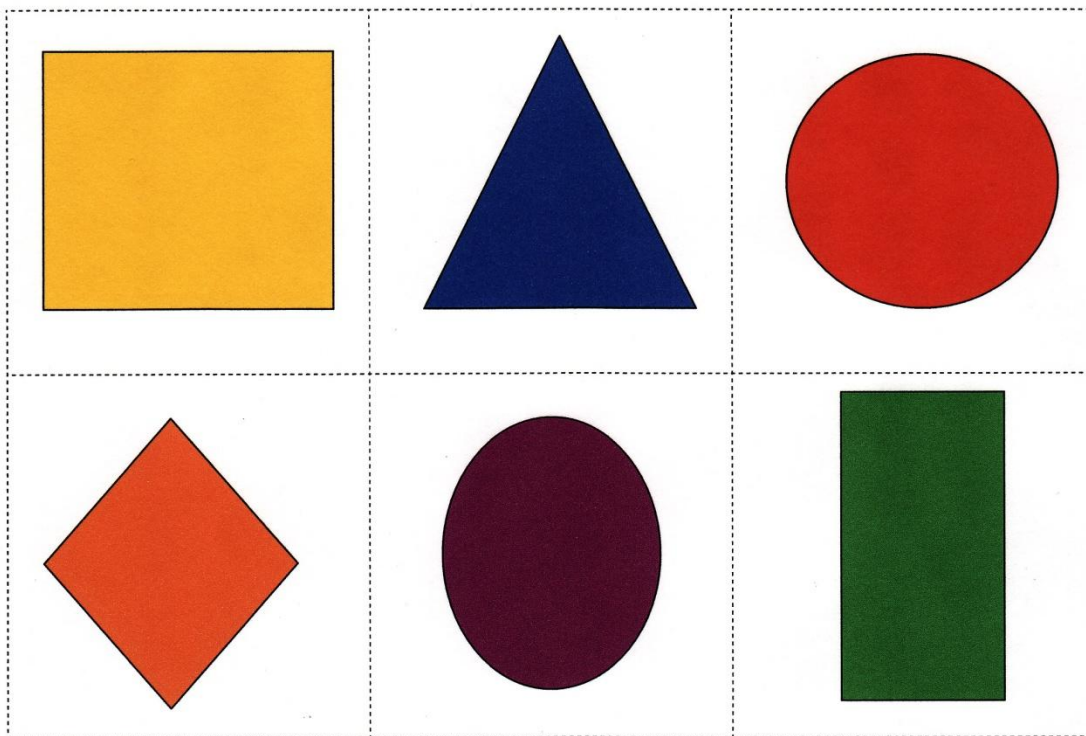
Materials needed:

- Pocket Chart
- Shape Category Cards
- Pictures for sorting

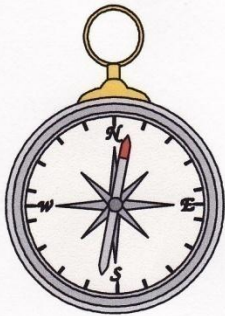
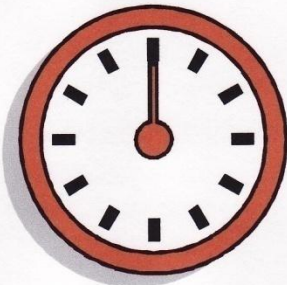
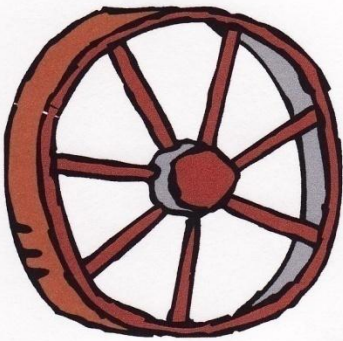
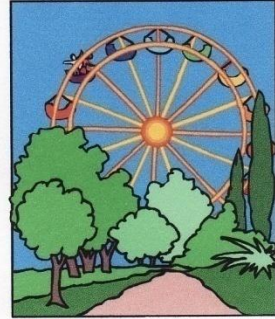
How to Play:

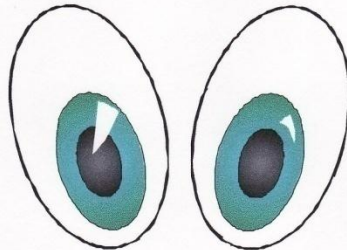
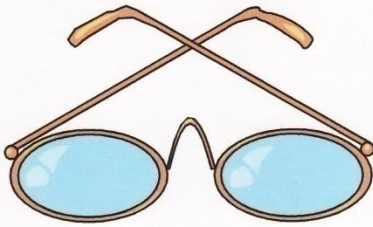
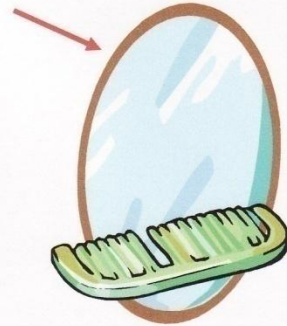
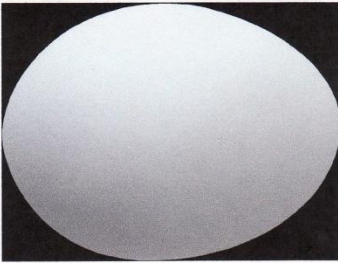
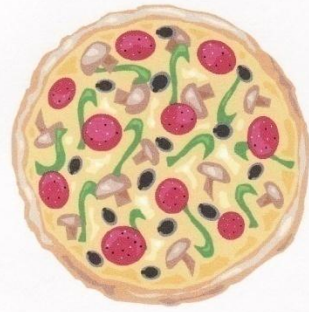
Place the six category cards across the top of the pocket chart. Look at each of the pictures for sorting. Place them under the correct category card (example: ice cream cone under triangle).

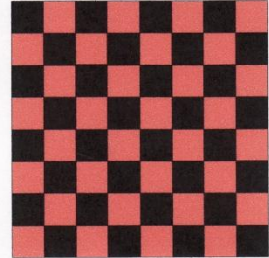
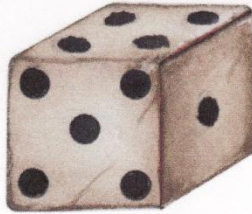
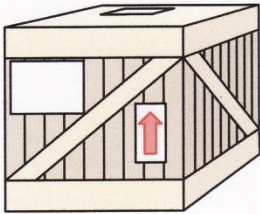
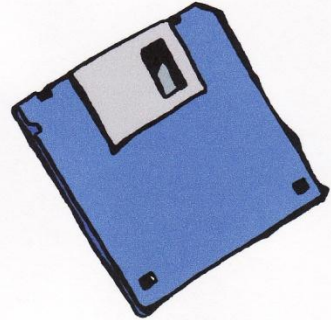
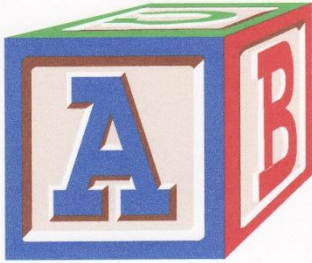
Category Cards

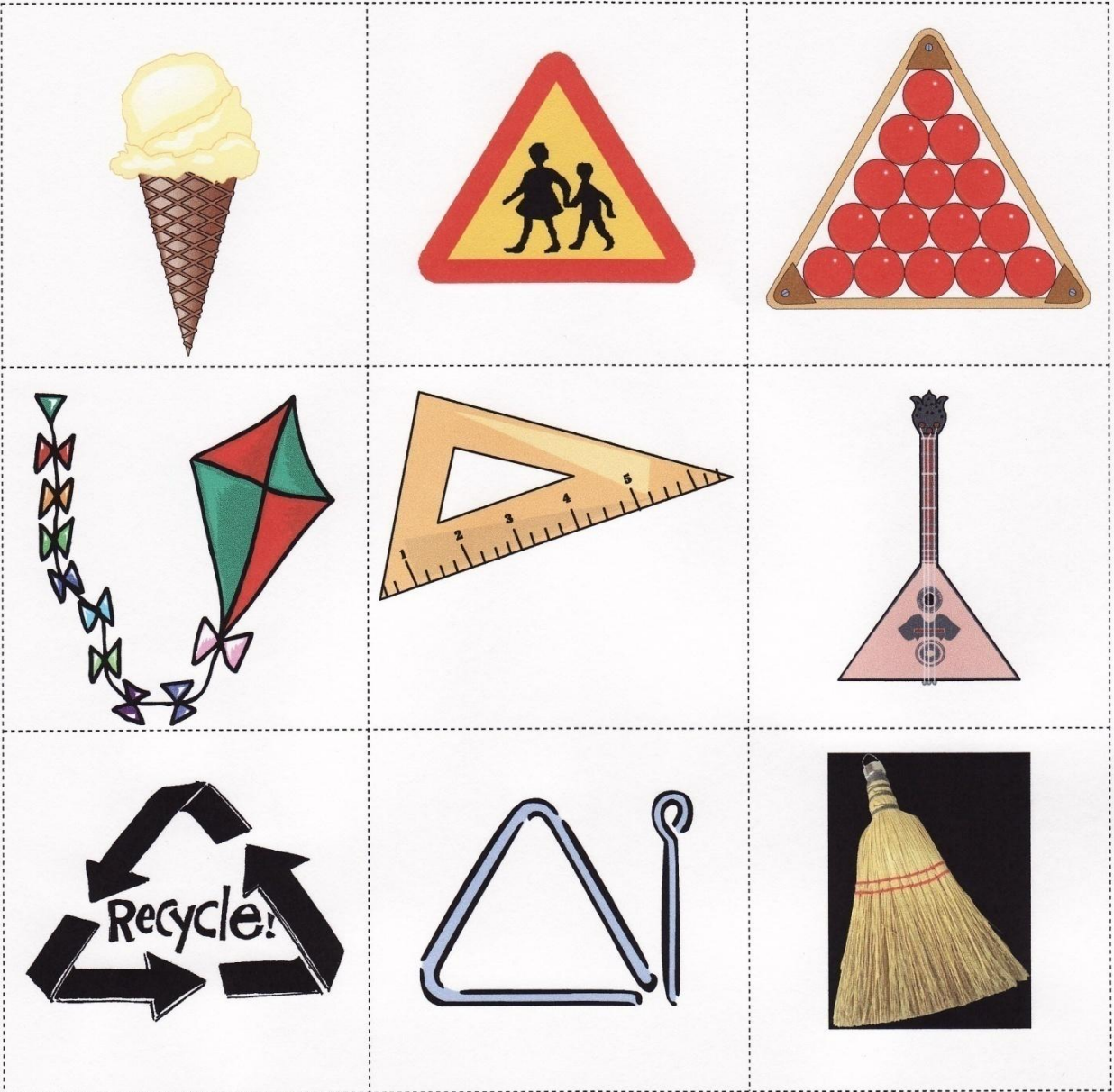


Sorting Cards



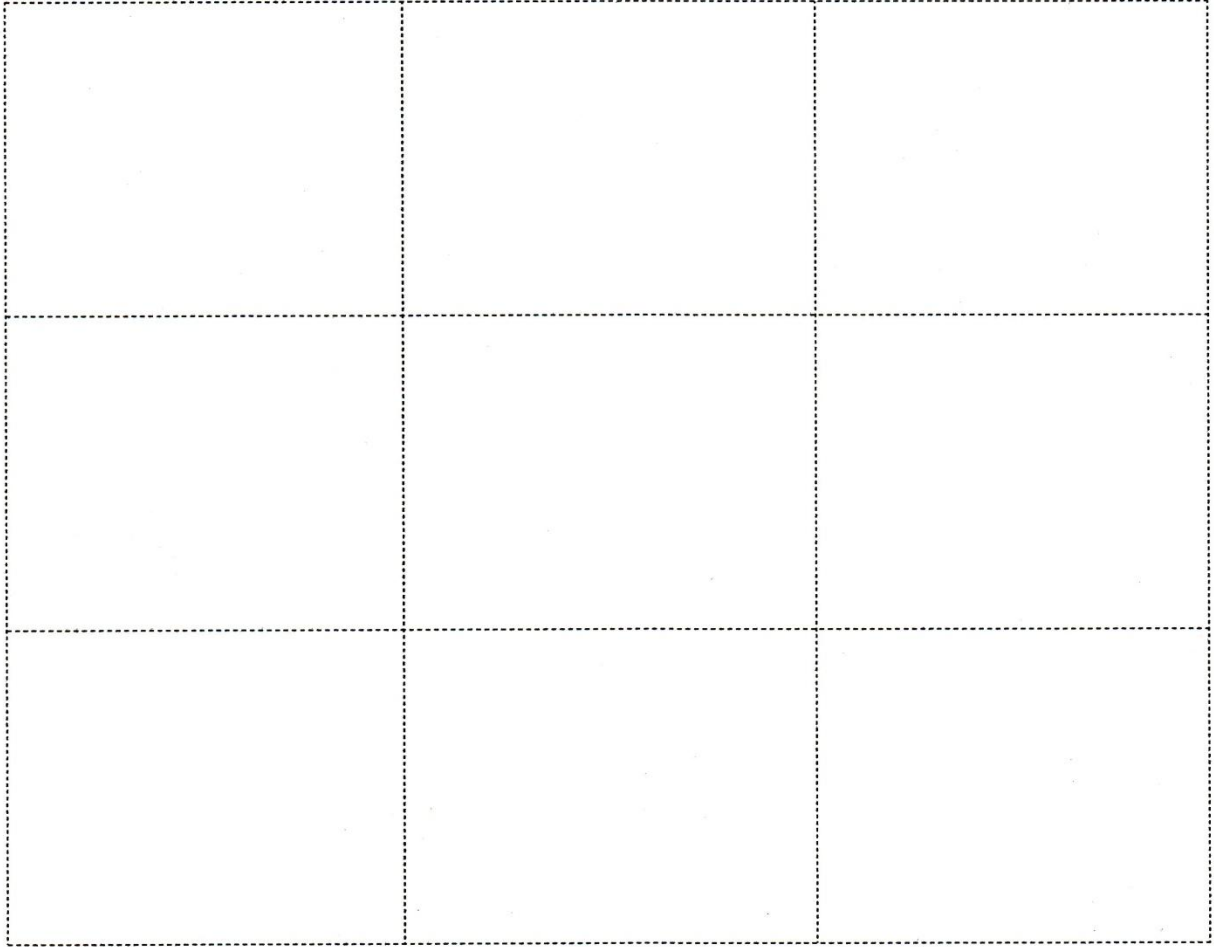












Template for Making Your Own Cards

Shape sorting cards & blank template are courtesy of:

<http://www.CarlsCorner.us.com>

#8: Patterning

1, 2, 3, A, B, C, 1, _____

Patterning can be so much fun for your child as well as it being a concept that is covered a lot in kindergarten. Patterns are really important in math. Look around your house at the many items that you have. These items can leave room for a vast amount of patterning ideas. You probably should begin with a simple **AB** pattern. For example, one Cheerio, one Fruit Loop, one Cheerio, one Fruit loop, etc. After your child masters this pattern (please use any items—i.e. Crayons, letters, numbers, etc.), move on to an **ABC** pattern (where you bring in three items—i.e. a macaroni, a bean, a cotton ball—**OR ANYTHING, FOR THAT MATTER!**). You may want to go your local arts and crafts store and get a container of stick-on foam shapes. Your child will love sticking them on paper and making pattern designs. They are also really inexpensive! As your child becomes more familiar with patterning, move on to more difficult patterns (i.e. **ABCD** pattern or a **DCBA** pattern, etc).

*Also, another idea, you can use Fruit Loops to have your child create a pattern bracelet. All you will need is a pipe cleaner and some cereal of choice. Creating a pattern bracelet will strengthen his or her patterning ability. Moreover, having him or her pinch his or her fingers together to place each cereal piece onto the pipe cleaner will mimic the act of holding a pencil. This will help your child to get stronger fine-motor skills as they will be developing the small muscles in their hands.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics: Statistics, Data Analysis, and Probability (1.0, 1.2), fine-motor skills (ability to hold a pencil)

#9: Size Order



A fun activity that you can do with your child is to have him or her put items in order from smallest to biggest (or biggest to smallest). You can use most anything as a manipulative. For example, take straws and cut them, making them various different lengths. Have them put the pieces of straws in size order. As an extension, you can even introduce a ruler and measure each straw piece (in inches). However, the main goal with this strategy is to strengthen your child's ability to recognize and order items.

*Note: Although straws would work perfectly for this activity, you could use practically anything. For example, you could use cups of varying sizes, shoes, links (linking them together to create chains of varying lengths), etc.

**Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics:
Measurement and Geometry (1.0, 1.1)**

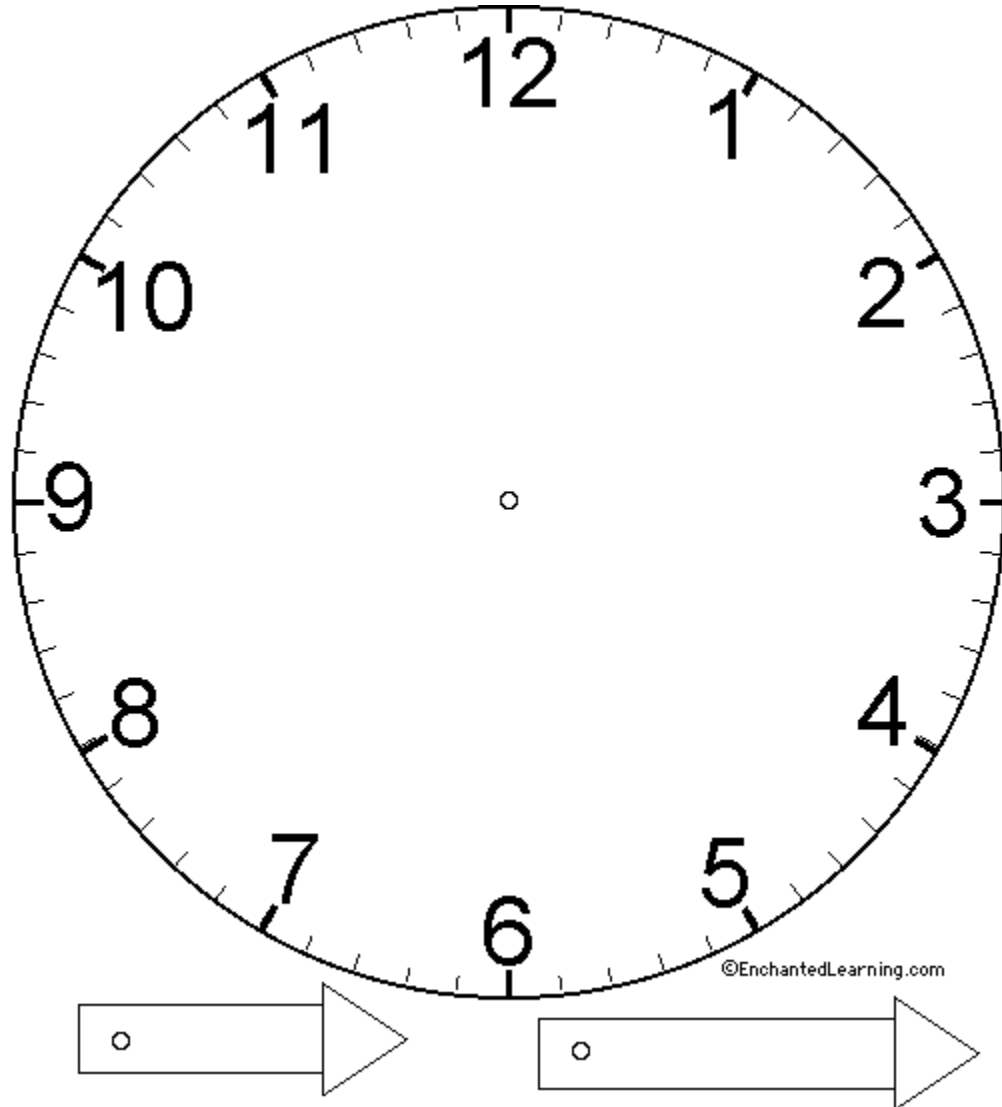
#10: It's Time!



In kindergarten your child will learn how to tell time to the nearest hour. Why not introduce this concept a bit in advance? Select any clock that you have in your home. Show your child the clock, letting him or her hold it. Explain that there are twelve numbers on the clock. Relate that there are two hands on the clock: the big hand and the little hand. Next, play the “Show me” game. For this game, you will need two clocks (one for you and one for your child). First, choose a time and show that time on your clock. **(A clock template is included on the following page that you can reproduce and cut out for this activity).** Then, have your child show you that time on his or her clock. Help your child move the hands on the clock. At first (and for several times after) do this skill along with your child. After much practice, select a time on your clock and say to your child, “Okay, show me ___ o’clock.” Without looking at your clock, have your child move his or her clock hands to show the specified time. When your child shows you their clock, praise him or her for a correct answer. Correct any errors when necessary.

Communicate with your child as to when morning is. Talk about some things that we do in the morning (i.e. wake up, brush our teeth, eat breakfast, etc). Have your child relate what he or she does in the morning. Please repeat for afternoon and night. Lastly, divide a piece of paper into three sections. Have your child illustrate what he or she does during the different times of day.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics: Measurement and Geometry (1.0, 1.2, 1.4), Language-Arts: Listening & Speaking (1.0, 1.2), Visual & Performing Arts: Creative Expression (2.0, 2.1, 2.2), cutting



Above is a clock template that your child can cut out. All you would need that is extra is a brad (brass paper fastener) to fasten the hands. This clock template is courtesy of: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/clocks/clock>.

#11: Sorting



In kindergarten, students are required to sort objects (i.e. by color, size, shape, etc). Your child can practice sorting at home. Your child can sort practically anything (i.e. toys, blocks, books, etc). A really fun way to practice sorting is to have your child help you put the dishes and silverware away at dinner time. Have him or her gather all of the forks and put them in one spot. Have him or her put the spoons in another, knives (with parental guidance), plates, etc. After he or she has sorted each item, have him or her practice counting how many objects there are in each group and then how many objects there are in all. This activity is also good for reviewing shapes (i.e. a napkin is square, a plate is circle, etc).

As a neat extension to this activity, have your child sort M & M's (or Skittles for those with allergies) by color. First, distribute M & M's to your child. Remind him or her not to eat the candies until you say that it is OK. Have your child sort the candies by color. Then, have him or her count how many of each color M & M there are. Let him or her record this information (write it down). Your child can even create a graph to display the information. Remind him or her when coloring each box on a graph to always shade from the bottom up. Ask your child questions about their results (i.e. The color that had the biggest number is your most amount of M & M's. Which color had the most? Least?)

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics: Algebra and Functions (1.0, 1.1), Statistics, Data Analysis & Probability (1.0, 1.1), Science: Investigation & Experimentation (4d.)

#12: Estimating



In kindergarten, your child will have to make estimations (i.e. how many cookies are in a jar) without counting the cookies. It can be difficult to take a guess when one is not sure exactly how many items there are. This can be a challenge, even for adults. Some people just have a better grasp on being able to guess better than others. However, you can practice estimating at home. This can be done as easy as giving your child a snack (i.e. fruit snacks, crackers, banana chips, etc.) and having him or her take a guess as to how many items there are. At first, your child's guess may be way off and that is OK. Let him or her guess and then actually count with your child as to how many items there are. It is also a good idea for the parent to guess too because you can explain how you made your guess. It will help your child learn the art of estimating. This skill also helps practice counting.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics: Number Sense (1.0, 1.2, 3.0, 3.1)

#13: Get Dressed:



Who ever knew that when you help your child get dressed you could be teaching him or her too? Clothing items leave so many things that you and your child can count (i.e. buttons, socks, shoes, stripes on a shirt, etc). Ask your child, “What should we put on first, second, third, and so on?” This will help him or her to focus on the concept of putting things in *order*.

Ordinal numbers are numbers that are put in order. Here is a list of the ordinal numbers for numbers 1-10:

1 = first

2 = second

3 = third

4 = fourth

5 = fifth

6 = sixth

7 = seventh

8 = eighth

9 = ninth

10 = tenth

Pairs is another concept that can be touched on when getting your tyke dressed. Explain to your child that a pair is something that comes in two's (i.e. pant legs, arms, feet, shoes, eyes, ears, earrings, etc). Count pairs with your child.

Getting dressed can touch on the difference between left and right (i.e. shoes, hands and feet), as well. Let your child pick his or her own clothes out, too. It may help him or her to become more self-sufficient/independent individuals.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics: Number Sense (1.0, 1.2), Statistics, Data Analysis & Probability (1.0, 1.1), Language-Arts: Listening & Speaking (1.0, 1.2), independency

#14: Silly Syllables



Knowing how many syllables there are in a word is a skill learned in kindergarten, but is something that can definitely be practiced earlier on. For example, simply when reading books with your child, take any of the words and see how many syllables there are. Begin by selecting a word (i.e. sailboat). Parent: say the word. Child: repeat word. Parent: clap the syllables (sail_boat). Child: Clap the syllables after the parent. Do this SEVERAL times. Practicing syllables does not have to be done only when reading, but can be done anytime. Maybe it can be a filler activity that is done between commercials when watching television. Here are some sample words, followed by the number of syllables located in parentheses:

Picnic = pic_nic (Clap, Clap) (2)

Restroom = rest_room (Clap, Clap) (2)

Yes = yes (Clap) (1)

Hotdog = hot_dog (Clap, Clap) (2)

Halloween = Hall_o_ween (Clap, Clap, Clap) (3)

School = school (Clap) (1)

Television = tel_e_vis_ion (Clap, Clap, Clap, Clap) (4)

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Reading: (1.0, 1.13),
Physical Education: Rhythmic Skills (1.17)

#15: Take it off

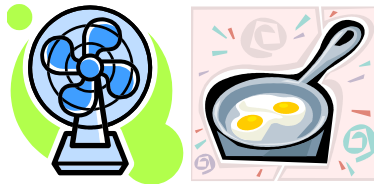


To assist your child with phonemic awareness, try playing “Take it off.” All you do is give your child a word (i.e. hat). Say to your child, “Take off the /h/ (‘huh’) sound and put on a /b/ (‘buh’). What word did you make? (bat)” This game can be played orally or you may want to get magnetic letters when initially introducing this game (magnetic letters can be purchased at your local dollar store) so that your child can visually see the transition when you take off one letter sound and replace it with another. Here are some sample words whose initial letter sound could easily be taken off and supplemented with a different sound:

Fox	Hit	Book	Man	Pen	Mat
Rat	Pit	Ring	Moon	Box	Sat
Win	Hen	Took	Can	Mit	Look
Pan	Men	Sing	Soon	Pin	Den
Fan	Fat	See	Bee	Bake	Cake
Rake	Fit	Wing	King	Lake	Make

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Reading (1.0)—Phonemic Awareness (1.17, 1.18)

#16: Rhyme Thyme



Rhyming is an essential skill that your child should practice because it will help him or her develop and strengthen his or her knowledge of the patterns that there are in words. Rhyming can often be a difficult skill to acquire. Therefore, a lot of practice will be beneficial. Explain to your child that when two words rhyme they have the same ending sound (i.e. R**AT** and F**AT**→ both have -**AT** at the end). Introducing your child to rhyming words will help to introduce word families. To practice this skill, on the following page are word cards. Help your child do a word sort of all the words that rhyme/fit into each appropriate word family. Be creative and think of some of your own words. However, for now, have fun sorting these! Please see the following page. *You can also use the word cards to challenge your child to use each word in a sentence.

*Here are some word family endings that you can use to make some of your own words: -an, -ap, -at, -ab, -ad, -am, -ack, -and, -ash, -ail, -ain, -air, -ake, -ate, -ale, -ame, -ay, -all, -aw, -ar, -ark, -art.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Reading (1.0)—Phonemic Awareness (1.10), Writing (1.0, 1.2)

Interactive Rhyme Cards

at

an

ap

ack

cat



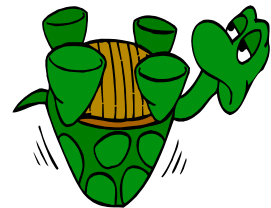
man



cap



back



rat



can



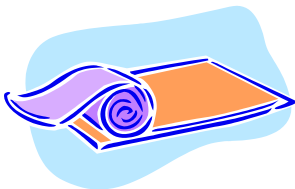
map



snack



mat



van



clap



black



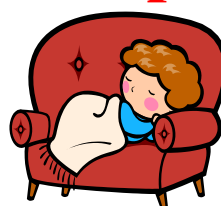
hat



pan



nap



sack



#17: Category Game



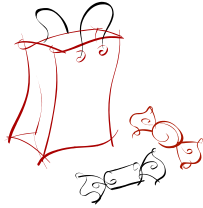
This game can be played practically anywhere as it needs absolutely no materials! The game is exactly as the title indicates. It deals with categories. First, you may start off by naming a category for your child (i.e. things that are soft). Then, have your child name items that would fit in that category (i.e. a kitten, a blanket, a feather, a sweater, etc). To change things up a bit, you may want to tell your child the items in the category and let him or her try to guess what the category is (i.e. blue, red, green, pink = the category is colors). Here are some example categories for your perusal. Do not limit yourself to these alone. Your mind can lead you to an infinite number of categories. Have fun!

Possible Categories:

- 1) Fruits
- 2) Vegetables
- 3) Colors
- 4) Animals
- 5) Rooms in your house
- 6) Pizza toppings
- 7) Songs
- 8) Pieces of clothing
- 9) Cartoon characters

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Listening & Speaking (1.0, 1.2), Science: Investigation & Experimentation (4d.)

#18: Segmentation



B A G

The purpose of this strategy is to help your child to strengthen his or her phonemic awareness skills. This strategy is extremely easy to do. For example, the parent will say, “The word is /b/ /a/ /g/ (saying the sounds, not the letters (‘buh’ ‘ah’ ‘guh’).” You can refer to this ‘fun’ style of talking as “robot talk.” Your child will then have to blend the sounds together to make the word (bag). This strategy is as simple as that. At first, stick to more simplistic words (i.e. **Consonant/Vowel/Consonant**) such as the following:

BOX

MAT

RED

CUP

YES

You can move into more difficult words when you feel that your child is ready.

**Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts:
Reading—Phonemic Awareness (1.9)**

#19: I See Something...



The “I See Something” game will help to increase your child’s listening comprehension, knowledge of colors, and will allow him or her to be explorers. It will also help to increase his or her vocabulary. To begin, say, “I see something (orange).” (You choose the color of something in the room). Your child will have to guess what it is. For example, he/she may say, “Is it _____?” Put a guess limit on (i.e. five guess attempts). You do not want your child to get frustrated so do not choose something that is so tiny (however, do not go to the other extreme either as choosing something that is extremely obvious). You want your child to be challenged, but to have fun, too.

If and when your little ‘scientist’ finds the object, talk to him or her about it (i.e. besides its color, is it large/small?, rough/smooth?, hot/cold?, etc.) If your child guesses correctly, perhaps have him or her pose the statement to you, “I see something _____.” The game can continue as long as you desire. Also, you could even substitute colors for number recognition. For example, “I see something with a number four on it. Can you find it?”

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language Arts: Listening Comprehension (1.0, 1.1, 1.2), Science: Physical Science (1a.), Investigation & Experimentation (4a., b.), Mathematics: Number Sense (1.0, 1.2)

#20: You're Outta There!



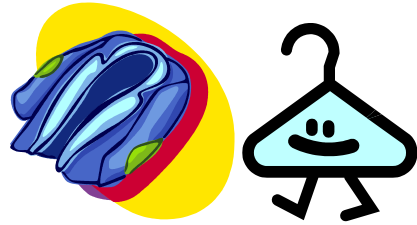
For this strategy, as much as it is important for your child to recognize categories, it is also important for him or her to see when something is not a part of a particular category. For this purpose, play “You’re Outta There!” All you need to do is say four items (in random order), three being a part of the category and one being the item that does not belong. Here are some examples with the item that does not belong highlighted in red: (the categories are from left to right).

Tree	Flowers	Baby	Grass
Boat	Plane	Car	House
Red	Ring	Yellow	Green
Bugs Bunny	Doctor	Teacher	Firefighter

When your child chooses the item that does not belong, have him or her share what the category is and why it does not belong. For example, from the table above (line 1: items outside/in a garden, line 2: transportation, line 3: colors, line 4: occupations).

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Science: Investigation & Experimentation (4d.), Language-Arts: Listening & Speaking (1.0, 1.2)

#21: I Can Do the Two-Step



In preparing your child for kindergarten, it is essential to see that he or she can follow simple-two step directions. Your child's kindergarten teacher will appreciate a learner who can be more independent, who can problem solve, and who can help themselves before asking for their assistance.

Ways that you can assist in this area is to give your child multi-step tasks. Some examples are as follows:

- > "Take off your coat and hang it up."
- > "Go to the bathroom and wash your hands."
- > "Blow your nose and cover your mouth when you cough."
- > "Clean off your plate and place it on the counter."
- > "Open your juice box and put the straw in it."



Within this strategy, encourage your child to practice putting his or her shoes on and tying them. Tying shoes can be complex and may not be a skill that he or she masters until the first grade, but it can be something that can be practiced. Your child's teacher will appreciate a child who could be a shoe tying buddy that can assist in tying friends' shoes.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Listening & Speaking (1.0, 1.1), independence

#22: Let's Play



Take your child to the park or schedule play dates with friends. It is very important that he or she gets the necessary interaction needed with peers of his or her own age. Even though it is great that you interact with your child as much as you do, it is also a must that he or she has the time to play with other soon-to-be kindergarteners. This will help him or her to not be so anxious when he or she is away from you. Playing with others will allow him or her to play fairly and cooperatively. It gives him or her the opportunity to see beyond his or her own egocentric world.

Observe your child as he or she plays with other children. If he or she gets into a disagreement with another child, ask him or her how he or she can solve the problem. Help him or her to understand the feelings of others (i.e. being happy/sad/angry) by making them accountable for their actions and behaviors. For example, "You hit Johnny. How do you think that made him feel?"

It is also great to see if you could take your little one on 'field trips.' Many places in your local community allow you to go on field trips. For example, your local doughnut shops or pizza parlors often allow you to come in and see how these foods are made. Your child would have a blast! Just call ahead a time and see what is available in your area. The zoo or museums are also fun, educational experiences.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: History/Social Science (K.1, 3), Physical Education (3.1, 3.4)

Contact information of a few places that you could go:



Discovery Science Center

2500 N. Main Street

Santa Ana, CA 92705

(714) 542-2823

*Admission: Open from 10am-5pm seven days a week. Adults are \$12.95, Children 3-17 are \$9.99, and those 2 years or younger are free.



La Brea Tar Pits

5801 Wilshire Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90036

(323) 934-7243

*Admission: Open Mon-Fri 9:30am-5pm and from 10am-5pm on weekends. Adults are \$7.00, those 5-12 are \$2.00, and those under 5 are free.



Los Angeles Zoo

5333 Zoo Drive

Los Angeles, CA 90027

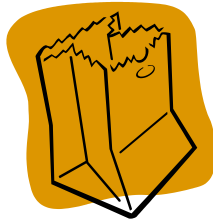
(323) 644-4200

*Admission: Open 10am-5pm seven days a week. Adults are \$10.00, children 12 and under are \$5.00, and those under 2 are free.



Papa John's--Corporate Number (please call to schedule a tour): (502) 261-7272.
Tours are usually free of charge.

#23: Puppets



When reading to your child, have him or her make simple paper bag puppets for characters from favorite stories. The level of difficulty is entirely up to you, but this project can be simple or extensive. All you ultimately need are paper bags (sandwich size), crayons or markers, glue, and construction paper. For those who are very creative, you can go all out with this project. However, the most important thing is for your child to have fun! After helping him or her make his or her puppets, he or she can act out the story as you read it. This can be a great thing to do on play dates as each friend can be a different character from the story. Perhaps, he or she can even act out the story individually. This will allow him or her to practice reading comprehension skills (how much did they remember?) and the ability to sequence events.

This strategy will strengthen your child's imaginative/creative play as well as his or her- ability to listen (to a shared reading) and to interact with others (i.e. which friend is what particular character and how is this decided?). It will also give your child the opportunity to color, cut, and paste by using common classroom tools.

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Language-Arts: Reading Comprehension (2.0, 2.4), Visual & Performing Arts (Theatre): Connections Relationships and Applications, (5.0, 5.2), Creative Expression (2.0, 2.3), (Art): Creative Expression (2.0,2.2)

#24: Locomotor Locomotion



It is important for your child to be physically fit. On a play date or at home alone with you, incorporate locomotor movements into free play, making sure your child has awareness of locomotor skills. Locomotor movements include the following:

- 1) Walking
- 2) Jogging
- 3) Running
- 4) Hopping
- 5) Jumping
- 6) Sliding
- 7) Galloping
- 8) Skipping

Make sure your child knows how to act out these skills. You could try doing a 'locomotor hunt' where the names of the above eight skills are hidden beforehand (i.e. around your yard, for example). * **Word cards are readily available to be cut out and are located on the following page.** With your child, locate each card and perform the movements. Incorporate the movements with music, too. Utilize other manipulatives (i.e. a ball) to have your child strengthen their hand-eye coordination. Bottom line, have a lot of fun and stress the importance of being active!

Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Physical Education: Standard (1, 1.15), Standard (2, 2.5), Standard (3, 3.2)

walk

jog

run

hop

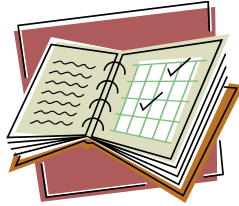
jump

slide

gallop

skip

#25: Establish a Routine



An important thing to do that will not only assist your child, but may help to make your life a little less stressful is to establish a routine and try to stick to it! Kindergarten will be your child's very first 'true' experience where routines are a key to a successful educational experience. Your child's teacher will try to perform daily activities at relatively the same time. Your child will get used to what comes next and they will enjoy the structure of their day. Likewise, incorporate your own routine at home. This is especially beneficial at least a month before your child's first day of kindergarten. Having a routine in play at home will make the transition to the routines of a classroom environment that much easier.

Things to include in a daily routine would be the following: waking up, getting dressed, meal/snack times, story time/shared reading, and daily activity: (i.e. using some of the strategies in the handbook!), play dates/outings, naps, bedtime, etc. *Modify your routine to best meet you and your child's needs, but tasks should be done at relatively the same times each day.

**Targeted California Content Areas/Skills: Mathematics:
Measurement & Geometry (concepts of time) (1.0, 1.2), organization,
ability to be independent**

Conclusions



One can see that there is a lot to do to get a child ready for kindergarten! I hope that this handbook is useful to you and yours in embarking into this exciting grade level. I may not have included every single strategy that is available out there that has the potential to prepare your child for kindergarten; however, the strategies included will be a good place to spring forth from.

Follow the handbook. Use it as your guide. Have a lot of fun and be as creative as you can be. A piece of advice: If you are excited about learning, your child will be also! Remember, **YOU** are your child's first teacher! I hope that you will have wonderful and rewarding educational experiences. Much success to you and your child! Happy learning!

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