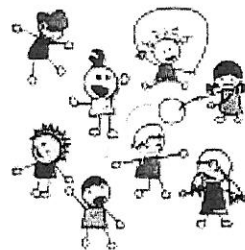
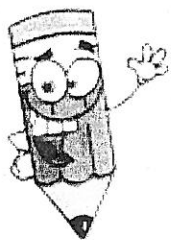
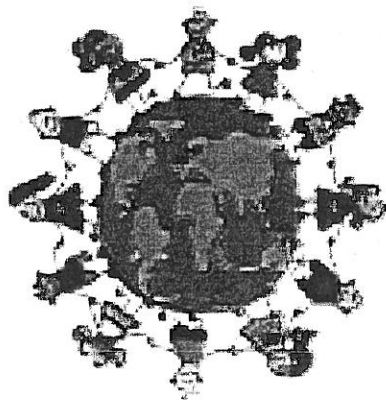


# Kindergarten Curriculum

## Night



# All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten

by Robert Fulghum

Most of what 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 sandpile at Sunday 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 everyday some.  
Take a nap every afternoon.  
When you go out into the world,  
Watch out for traffic,  
Hold hands and stick together.  
Be aware of wonder.

What is Reading Workshop?

Reading Workshop is a research-based approach that addresses the needs of all students in a classroom. Reading Workshop begins with a focus lesson where the teacher explicitly models a strategy or skill. After the focus lesson, the students read independently to practice that strategy or skill.

During independent reading, students are reading "just-right" books that are matched to their individual abilities and interests. The teacher confers with students during independent reading to be sure they are successful in their practice or to provide 1:1 instruction around any particular needs. Sometimes, the teacher may work with a small group of students who have similar needs during independent reading.

Finally, Reading Workshop ends with a group share to summarize the important understandings of the lesson.

The structured nature of Reading Workshop builds a predictable routine and guarantees opportunities for differentiated instruction and intervention.

Sample strategies and skills that Kindergarten readers are working on include:

- Getting to Know Our Classroom Library
- How to Take Care of Books
- Choosing a Just Right Book
- Respecting Other Readers
- Partnerships
- Retelling
- Learning about Story Elements

Reading Workshop is one part of balanced literacy. The other parts of this include: Writing Workshop, Phonics/Word Study, and Read Alouds.

## Checklist for Parents of KINDERGARTENERS

*These skills usually develop when a child is in kindergarten.  
Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions.*

- My child listens carefully to books read aloud.
- My child knows the shapes and names for the letters of the alphabet and writes many uppercase and lowercase letters on his own.
- My child knows that spoken words are made of separate sounds.
- My child recognizes and makes rhymes, can tell when words begin with the same sound, and can put together, or blend, spoken sounds.
- My child can sound out some letters.
- My child knows that the order of letters in a written word stands for the order of sounds in a spoken word.
- My child knows some common words such as a, the, I, and you, on sight.
- My child knows how to hold a book, and follows print from left to right and from top to bottom of a page when she is read to.
- My child asks and answers questions about stories and uses what she already knows to understand a story.
- My child knows the parts of a book and understands that authors write words and text and illustrators create pictures.
- My child knows that in most books the main message is in the print, not the pictures.
- My child predicts what will happen in a story and retells or acts out stories.
- My child knows the difference between "made up" fiction and "real" nonfiction books and the difference between stories and poems.
- My child uses what he knows about letters and sounds to write words.
- My child writes some letters and words as they are said to her and begins to spell some words correctly.
- My child writes his own first and last name and the first names of some friends and family.
- My child plays with words and uses new words in her own speech.
- My child knows and uses words that are important to school work, such as the names for colors, shapes, and numbers.
- My child knows and uses words from daily life, such as street names and the names for community workers—teacher, mail carrier, etc.



# BUILDING A Reader At HOME

## Explore Books!

Give your child an opportunity to explore books. Visiting a library or bookstore gives your child a chance to find topics and books that interest them.

## Read, Read, Read!

Make sure to read for at least 30 minutes per day! Students can read independently, aloud to an adult, or back and forth with a partner.

## Ask Questions!

- Predictions
- Characters
- Main Idea
- Problem
- Solution
- Retell Story
- Genre
- Moral

## Make it Fun!

Reading shouldn't be a chore. Intentionally read with your child/discuss books but also research topics and do book activities together.

## Be an Example!

Children learn by example, so let your child see you read whether it be a book, newspaper, cookbook, etc.

## Pick Good Fit Books!

A book that is a good match for your child should meet the following requirements:

- Purpose for reading
- Interest
- Can they understand what they are reading? Can they retell the story?
- Do they know most of the words?

## For Beginning Readers:

- Point out and read words in natural settings – stores, streets, etc.
- Memorize sight words
- Visualize the story in your head
- Ask questions before, during, and after
- Don't immediately tell an unknown word to your student. Instead, ask them to:
  - Sound out the word
  - Break the word into parts
  - Try a different vowel sound (long/short)
  - Use illustrations for clues
- Skip the word, re-read sentence, and go back – what word would make sense?

## For Advanced Readers:

- Notice interesting, new vocabulary words, and make it a challenge to use them in conversation
- Read with expression
- Explore non-fiction books and their text features (diagrams, table of contents, etc.) along with other genres as well
- Compare and contrast books
- Discuss connections to literature
- Think of new titles for books
- Explore multiple books from the same author

# Stages of Writing

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1. Scribbling - this is writing!
2. Early representation
3. Detailed drawing - child told story with detail
4. Something stands for words
5. Symbols stand for words
6. Random string of letters with pictures
7. Uses print around her/him
8. Sound symbol
9. Approximate spellings



 <p>Scribble stage (Starting point any place on the page)</p>	 <p>Scribble (Left-to-right progression)</p>	 <p>Mock letters (Can be personal or conventional)</p>
 <p>Letter strings (Left-to-right and progressively downward)</p>	 <p>Groups of letters with space in between to resemble words</p>	 <p>Picture labeling (Matching beginning letter to sound)</p>
 <p>Copies environmental print</p>	 <p>Uses first letter of a word to represent the word</p>	 <p>Uses beginning letter and ending letter to represent the word</p>
 <p>Hears media sounds (Writes word with beginning, medial, and ending letters)</p>	 <p>Phrase writing</p>	 <p>Whole sentence writing</p>

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## Pre-Writing Activities

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These activities can be used at home or in school. They prepare children for the more complex skills needed for handwriting.

- **Hand and finger strength is enhanced by using play dough and clay**
- **Pencil grasp is helped by:**
  1. Picking up small pieces with tweezers
  2. Stringing beads
  3. Lacing cards
  4. Playing with pegboards
  5. Putting golf tees in Styrofoam
  6. Moving coins, beads and buttons from one container to another with index finger and thumb
  7. Using coloring books of a favorite item or character. Use only crayon stubs to color with.
- **Bilateral coordination. Learning to coordinate two sides of the body should be a smooth and automatic movement and integrates both sides of the brain. Example: One hand holds the paper, the other writes.**

**Improve by:**

  1. Cutting
  2. Stringing Beads
  3. Folding Paper
  4. Sky writing (write in the air using large movements)
  5. Standing cross crawl (crossing over left and right elbow to opposite knees)
  6. Drawing lazy 8s (infinity sign) in the air



- **Visual-motor coordination:** Ability to coordinate visual and motor systems smoothly. Using your eyes and body together efficiently and automatically.

**Improve by:**

1. Throwing a beanbag at a desired target
2. Tossing a Koosh ball or beach ball to the teacher or a peer while answering a question
3. Drawing lazy 8s in the air
4. Puzzles
5. Legos
6. Blocks
7. Drawing and Coloring
8. Cutting
9. Tracking
10. Pick up Sticks

**To cement letter formation:**

- Writing letters in finger paint or shaving cream
- Trace and feel letters made out of sandpaper
- Practice air writing favorite letters or words, use alternate arms, both arms, feet
- Write in sand or salt trays or in sand outdoors
- Write on erasable magnetic boards

**Getting started on paper or other surfaces:**

- Start out writing on a vertical plane (paper on refrigerator, dry erase or chalk board mounted)
- When you transition to a horizontal surface make a slant board from a 3" notebook, clamp paper to it and turn it sideways so the top of the paper is elevated 3". Fade away to the horizontal plain by using thinner notebooks

# Writing Workshops

## Foundational Beliefs

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1. Children need to write often and a lot
2. Children choose their own topics to write about
3. Children get to know a variety of genres
4. Children have intention and plans
5. Editing is separated from the composing process
6. Children learn through direct teaching from the whole class and on literacy conferences



# Writing At Home

- Write letters and cards to family members and friends, and encourage them to write back!
- Encourage your child to write stories about their favorite things.
- Keep a journal of Summer activities.
- Read comics in the newspaper and let your child create their own.
- Create a newspaper and write articles about weekly activities.
- Use fun writing tools such as markers, gel pens, crayons, pencils, etc.
- Let your child create a shopping list before going to the store.
- Gather kids in the neighborhood to write a play.
- Advanced readers and writers might enjoy Mad Libs, while parents could create their own version of Mad Libs for beginning readers and writers.
- Take turns writing back and forth to your child! Leave a note by their bed or in their lunchbox.
- Play word games such as Wheel of Fortune and Hangman. Hangman is an especially great way to pass time in a doctor's office or restaurant!
- Have a place in your home where you display your child's writing!
- Encourage your child to plan their writing and revise drafts before publishing!
- Publish your child's writing! Not only does it make them feel special, but it also makes a wonderful keepsake. StoryJumper.com allows you to order hardcover books of your child's writing! You could also use programs such as Microsoft Photo Story to publish a digital version of their book! Simply scan in your child's drawings and record them reading their story. Publish and you can immediately send it to family and friends or burn to a disc to watch on television!

## Parent Ideas to Promote Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Skills

Parents,

With a little fun and attention to these skills, you can make a big difference! Research says that Phonemic Awareness skills are the biggest predictors of reading and writing success...and you can make the difference!

### Phonological Awareness:

1. Read rhyming books, pointing out words that rhyme. Do you hear how they sound the same at the end of the word? Do you see how my mouth does the same thing at the ends of the words?
2. Make up rhyming games (they can be real or nonsense words)
3. Clap the syllables in words
4. Count the number of words in an oral sentence.
5. Count the number of words in a written sentence from a book.

### Phonemic Awareness: Segmenting and Blending are opposites of each other and fun to do!

1. Practice segmenting words! This is the building block to spelling!
2. Practice blending words! This is the building block to reading!

Practice both segmenting and blending by having fun! Here, we say the sounds in a word, not the letter names. Speak in "secret code" with your child. See examples below:

Child (c) "What are we having for dinner?"

Parent (p) p-ee-t-s-a Child blends the sounds into the answer (pizza)

Note: If your child has difficulty blending all 5 phonemes (sounds) together, simplify it into 2 auditory clues like this: p--eetsa

C: Where are we going?

P: g-r-a-n-d-m-a-s Child blends sounds into the answer (grandma's)

Note: If your child has difficulty blending all 8 phonemes (sounds) together, simplify it into 2 syllables: grand---mas or onset-rime: gr---andmas

I a the see

no of to play

me too one two

three said over she

he we little like

they are you now

look

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# Help Me Hold the Crayon

There are easy ways to help your child. Even if you're not a teacher, and don't hold the pencil correctly yourself, you can still be a very good influence on your child. Here's how:

1. Choose the correct writing tools.
2. Show your child how to hold them.
3. Be a good example.



## How do I choose the correct writing tools?

- As soon as your child is past age 3 or the putting-things-in-mouth swallowing stage, give him or her little broken pieces of chalk or crayon and lots of big sheets of paper for loose scribbling/drawing.
- Little pieces of finger food also encourage finger skills.

## Why little pieces?

Little pieces develop fingertip control and strength. They encourage the precise pinch that's used for crayons and pencils. Notice how well your child uses his/her fingers with little pieces. There's research to show that starting with small pieces encourages the correct grasp.

## What about regular crayons and pencils?

They're fine, but you must show your child how to hold and use them. Save the pencils for later. Pencils are sharp pointed sticks and really aren't appropriate for beginners. Fat pencils and crayons are too heavy for little hands.

## When should I start?

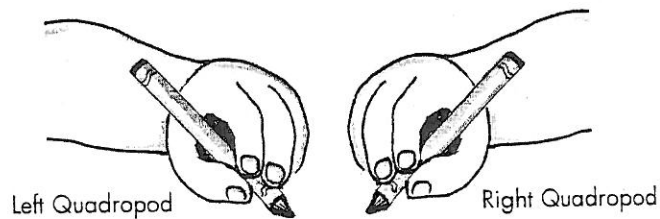
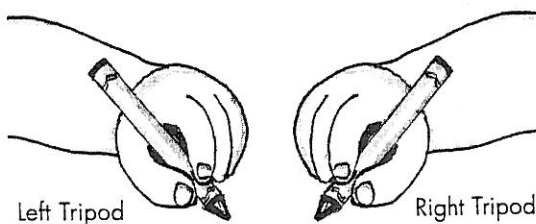
Right now. You can start showing your child how to use crayons as soon as your child wants to color.

## How do I show my child?

1. Teach your child to name the first 3 fingers – the thumb, the pointer, and the tall man.
2. Move them – Give a thumbs up and wiggle the thumb. Have your child point with the pointer finger and then put the tall man beside the pointer finger.
3. Make a big open O pinch – this positions the thumb and pointer correctly.

## What is the correct grip?

Here's a picture. Notice that there is a choice. Some children like to pinch with the thumb and pointer. That's the tripod (3-pinch with thumb and pointer, pencil rests on tall man). Others like the quadropod (4-pinch with thumb and pointer/tall man together, pencil rests on ring finger).



## What else can I do?

1. Pick up and Drop it! This is a fun way to practice placing the fingers correctly. Help your child pick up the pencil and get all the fingers placed. Then drop it! See if your child can put all the fingers back in the right place again. Repeat two or three times.
2. Aim and Scribble. Make tiny stars or spots on paper. Teach your child how to aim the crayon and land on a star to make it shine. Help the crayon hand rest on the paper, with the elbow down and the hand touching the paper. Help the helper hand hold the paper. Now just wiggle the fingers to scribble.
3. Show your child how to hold and move the crayon to make different strokes, back and forth, up and down, round and round.

# How Children Learn in *Everyday Mathematics*



Think about the master chefs you see on television—how do they acquire their knowledge and skills? No one starts out chopping onions at high speed, inventing their own dishes, or running a restaurant! Chefs develop their cooking expertise over time, starting with basic skills and easy recipes. Gradually, they practice these skills, learn important food science concepts, and gain experience by cooking in different restaurants.

In a similar way, *Everyday Mathematics* is based on the idea that children build understanding and develop skills as a result of many meaningful and connected learning experiences. Mastery of mathematics concepts and skills comes with repeated exposure and practice, not after just one lesson. This enables children to make new connections and build on the mathematical content they already know while gradually learning more difficult and challenging content. Think of this process as climbing a spiral staircase—with each twist of the stairs, the previous steps still can be seen but you are farther and higher.

To help children develop mastery, you may notice that the mathematical content in this program is taught in a repeated fashion, first with informal exposure and then through more formal and directed instruction. For example, children will have many different hands-on experiences with subtraction—they will take items away from a set, count backward on a number line, and make up number stories—before they learn pencil-and-paper procedures for subtraction.

The design of *Everyday Mathematics* allows your child to gain a more genuine understanding of mathematical concepts, a much more solid mathematical foundation, and exposure to the entire scope of mathematics each year.

How can you help? Because children revisit concepts when they practice at home, you can support your child by helping with Home Links and playing math games together when they are sent home.





# Content Emphasized in Kindergarten



In *Everyday Mathematics*, children develop a broad background by learning concepts and skills in all these six content strands. The Kindergarten program emphasizes the following content.

## **Number and Numeration**

Counting every day in different ways and from different numbers—by 1s, forward and backward, and by 5s and 10s; reading and writing numerals; comparing numbers through daily routines, games such as *Top It* and *Monster Squeeze*, and other activities; exploring different ways to represent numbers (equivalent names for numbers) using manipulatives, words, drawings, and operations

## **Operations and Computation**

Exploring addition and subtraction through concrete activities, games, and number stories; developing and sharing multiple strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems including counting and using fingers or other objects, all of which are still very acceptable and useful, using the +, −, and = symbols to write number models for number stories

## **Data and Chance**

Collecting, organizing, displaying, and analyzing classroom data through the daily Weather, Temperature, and Survey Routines as well as through games and activities; working with data and graphing in activities such as graphing dice rolls; exploring probability through games and by describing the likelihood of events as *for sure*, *maybe*, *no way*, *likely*, *definite*, *impossible*, or *possible*

## **Measurement and Reference Frames**

Making direct measurement comparisons followed by using nonstandard units of measure (such as their own feet and hands), all of which lay the groundwork for understanding the need for standard units of measure and learning proper measurement techniques; learning coins and their values; developing an understanding of time measures (day, week, and month); and temperature measures through daily routines (Calendar, Daily Schedule, and Temperature)

## **Geometry**

Exploring 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes with manipulatives—such as pattern blocks, attribute blocks, and building blocks—and through games like *I Spy*; exploring line symmetry

## **Patterns, Functions, and Algebra**

Identifying, creating, and extending sound, movement, and visual patterns; exploring number patterns on the Growing Number Line and Class Number Grid; using rules to sort objects, make patterns, and play “What’s My Rule?”

See the Content by Strand Poster for an overview of how the mathematics strands and activities are interwoven throughout the year.

# Supporting Your Child in Mathematics



Children develop positive feelings about mathematics when they have fun experiences “doing math things” with their family members. Here are some ideas to help you support your child’s mathematical learning.

## **Have a positive attitude about the mathematical abilities your child already has.**

Parents are impressed and proud when their children recognize letters and write their names. Your child’s developing math abilities (recognizing numbers, counting and representing quantities with pictures or numbers, identifying shapes, learning days of the week, and so on) deserve just as much admiration and praise as their developing literacy skills.

## **Read Home Links.**

Teachers periodically send home Home Link pages. They include Family Notes that describe what your child is learning so you can help. They also suggest fun and easy math activities you can do at home. Consider keeping these pages in a special folder to refer to time and again.

## **Think aloud when you use math.**

Notice the times you use math each day, and share your thinking aloud with your child. For example, let your child know how you decide which coins to give a cashier. (*I need to keep my quarters, so I’m going to give her two dimes and a nickel.*) Share the calculations you do during activities. (*Last week I ran a mile in 11 minutes, and this week it took me only 9 minutes, so I’m 2 minutes faster!*) You’ll be surprised at how interested your child is in math.

## **Play games.**

Children learn best through play. In addition to the math games your child’s teacher sends home, teach your child the traditional games you played as a child. Many of them use counting or mathematical thinking, such as hopscotch, hide-and-seek, go fish, and checkers.

## **Use numbers in practical ways.**

Numbers can be used to solve problems and to get things done. When two children have a disagreement, write down a number between one and ten and have the children try to guess the number. The child who makes the closest guess “wins.” When you are grocery shopping, give your child simple directions involving numbers. (*Put five apples in the cart. Find Aisle 7. Choose enough oranges for our whole family.*) You can also use numbers to keep track of things. (*Your library books are due in two weeks. Let’s mark that date on the calendar.*) Whenever you can, let your child help with tasks that involve numbers.

## **Give hints, not answers.**

Always give your child a chance to think through a problem rather than give your child an answer he or she might not understand. Everyone likes to be able to “get it” or solve a problem on his or her own. The more your child is able to do this, the more confident he or she will become.

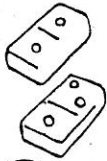
# Everyday Materials for Mathematics at Home



Children enjoy repeating school math activities at home and often explore these ideas further in the comfort of the family environment. In addition, your child's teacher may send home suggestions for activities that you and your child can do together. Here is a list of materials, many of which you probably have already, that lend themselves to math exploration at home. Some families collect small items in plastic bags and place them in a "Math Materials" box or shopping bag.

## For counting and exploring numbers

- ◆ pennies, buttons, and beads
- ◆ beans, pasta (macaroni, rigatoni), and peanuts in the shell
- ◆ popsicle sticks
- ◆ dominoes and game chips
- ◆ small plastic figures such as dinosaurs
- ◆ muffin tins and egg cartons (to count into)



## For measuring

- ◆ measuring cups and spoons
- ◆ small and large milk cartons, plastic bottles
- ◆ materials to scoop and measure, such as sand, rice, tiny noodles, dry beans
- ◆ tape measure, ruler
- ◆ kitchen or bathroom scales
- ◆ egg timer or wind-up timer



## For exploring shapes

- ◆ containers and boxes of various shapes (shoe boxes, cereal boxes, oatmeal containers, paper and plastic cups)
- ◆ blocks

## For sorting

*Collections of different sizes, colors, shapes, thicknesses, and so on:*

- ◆ buttons
- ◆ coins (including foreign coins)
- ◆ old keys
- ◆ shells, seeds, and rocks
- ◆ blocks
- ◆ hardware (screws, nuts, and bolts)
- ◆ stamps
- ◆ small toys (cars, doll accessories)



## For finding patterns

*Scraps of:*

- ◆ fabric
- ◆ wallpaper
- ◆ wrapping paper
- ◆ decorative trim for sewing



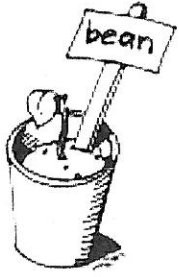
## Other items to have at home

- ◆ a growth chart
- ◆ a chalkboard and chalk
- ◆ a small white board with erasable pen
- ◆ a deck of playing cards
- ◆ a clock your child can set with help

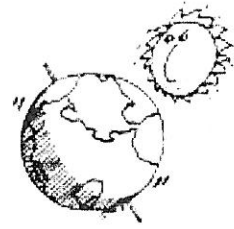
# BUILDING Math Skills At HOME

**With a little creativity, you can make math lots of fun! Here are some easy things that you can do at home to help your child with math.**

- There are many games that you probably already have at home that encourage development in math: Yahtzee (basic addition), Connect Four (problem solving,, developing strategies), Puzzles (spatial awareness), Card Games (have players flip cards and greatest or least number wins), Candy Land (make your own game cards and use math facts instead of colors), Monopoly (money), Battleship (coordinate graphs), etc.
- Talk about the calendar with your child. Make it exciting by looking forward to special events. It is fun for them to count the weeks and days until birthdays or to see what day of the week a specific holiday will be on this year.
- You can help your child learn to count money by playing store with them. Use real coins and let them be the "cashier".
- Use an empty egg carton as a counting tool to practice addition and subtraction skills up to 10. Simply place an object in slots and use the empty slots to count up to/from 10.
- Notice the clock. Tell them that they can play a game at a certain time. Begin with easy times (7:00) and get progressively more difficult (7:30 and 7:45).
- Bake with your child. Read the instructions on the back of the box and allow them to measure ingredients.
- You can develop a better understanding of fractions by discussing equal parts with your child. Any time you bake a frozen pizza, it is an opportunity to let them understand what  $\frac{1}{6}$  means.
- Making flash cards of basic addition or subtraction facts can be an easy way to practice. You can make it a game by seeing how many they can answer in a minute. If they improve their score over time, reward them.
- You can make pot holders on a small loom. This is a good way to practice making and extending patterns.
- Any time there is a project at home that involves measuring inches or feet, let your child help! This allows them to understand that the concepts they are learning in school have real world applications.
- Point out shapes and discuss them. If you see a "YIELD" sign, discuss that it is a triangle and ask your child how many sides would be on 3 "YIELD" signs.



# Kindergarten Science



## Observing with Senses

- \*Make purposeful observations of the natural world using appropriate senses.

## Pushes and Pulls

- \*Describe the position of an object.
- \*Describe the direction of a moving object.
- \*Demonstrate pushes and pulls on objects that can move.
- \*Observe that objects initially at rest will move in the direction of push or pull.
- \*Observe how pushes and pulls can change the speed or direction of moving objects.
- \*Observe how the shape and mass of an object can affect motion.

## Basic Needs of Living Things

- \*Recognize that living things have basic needs.
- \*Identify and compare living and nonliving things.
- \*Describe how Earth materials contribute to plant and animal life.

## My Earth

- \*Identify Earth materials that occur in nature (rocks, soil, sand, and water)



# Kindergarten Social Studies



## **Who am I ?**

- \*How are children alike and different?
- \*How can we learn about the past?
- \*Why is it important to get along with others and be responsible?

## **Where am I?**

- \*Where am I ?
- \*What do maps and globes show us?
- \*How do we describe places and locations?
- \*How do we use gifts from the Earth?

## **How do I get what I need and want?**

- \*How do I meet my needs and wants?
- \*Why do people trade?

## **How do I get along with others?**

- \*Why can't I do whatever I want?
- \*Why are responsibility and fairness important in getting along with others?
- \*How do people solve problems?

## **What is a family?**

- \*What is a family?
- \*How are families alike and different?
- \*How is school like a family?

# Alliance for Childhood

The Alliance for Childhood promotes policies and practices that support children's healthy development, love of learning, and joy in living. Our public education campaigns bring to light both the promise and the vulnerability of childhood. We act for the sake of the children themselves and for a more just, democratic, and ecologically responsible future. For more information visit our web site: [www.allianceforchildhood.org](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org).



Photograph by Dody Riggs

## Time for Play, Every Day: It's Fun — and Fundamental

There was a time when children played from morning till night.

They ran, jumped, played dress-up, and created endless stories out of their active imaginations.

Now, many scarcely play this way at all. What happened?

- Over four and a half hours per day watching TV, video game, and computer screens;<sup>1</sup>
- Academic pressure and testing, beginning with three-year-olds;
- Overscheduled lives full of adult-organized activities;
- Loss of school recess and safe green space for outdoor play.

Decades of research clearly demonstrate that play—active and full of imagination—is more than just fun and games. It boosts healthy development across a broad spectrum of critical areas: intellectual, social, emotional, and physical. The benefits are so impressive that every day of childhood should be a day for play.

*What's the smartest thing a young child can do with a computer or TV? Play with the box it came in! Computers tend to insist on being just computers, programmed by adults. But an empty box becomes a cave, a canoe, a cabin, a candy shop—whatever and whenever the child's magic wand of imagination decrees.*

### THE BENEFITS OF PLAY

Child-initiated play lays a foundation for learning and academic success. Through play, children learn to interact with others, develop language skills, recognize and solve problems, and discover their human potential. In short, play helps children make sense of and find their place in the world.

- **Physical development:** The rough and tumble of active play facilitates children's sensorimotor development. It is a natural preventive for the current epidemic of childhood obesity. Research suggests that recess also boosts schoolchildren's academic performance.<sup>2</sup>
- **Academics:** There is a close link between play and healthy cognitive growth. It lays the foundation for later academic success in reading and writing. It provides hands-on experiences with real-life materials that help children develop abstract scientific and mathematical concepts. Play is critical for the development of imagination and creative problem-solving skills.<sup>3</sup>
- **Social and emotional learning:** Research suggests that social make-believe play is related to increases in cooperation, empathy, and impulse control, reduced aggression, and better overall emotional and social health.<sup>4</sup>
- **Sheer joy:** The evidence is clear—healthy children of all ages love to play. Experts in child development say that plenty of time for childhood play is one of the key factors leading to happiness in adulthood.<sup>5</sup>



Photograph by Larry Canner

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD PLAY

- Reduce or eliminate screen time: Give your children a chance to flex their own imaginative muscles. They may be bored at first. Be prepared with simple playthings and suggestions for make-believe play to inspire their inner creativity.
- Curtail time spent in adult-organized activities: Children need time for self-initiated play. Overscheduled lives leave little time for play.
- Choose simple toys: A good toy is 10 percent toy and 90 percent child. The child's imagination is the engine of healthy play. Simple toys and natural materials, like wood, boxes, balls, dolls, sand, and clay invite children to create their own scenes—and then knock them down and start over.
- Encourage outdoor adventures: Reserve time every day for outdoor play where children can run, climb, find secret hiding places, and dream up dramas. Natural materials—sticks, mud, water, rocks—are the raw materials of play.
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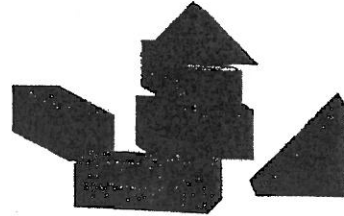
Voice and Fax: 301-779-1033

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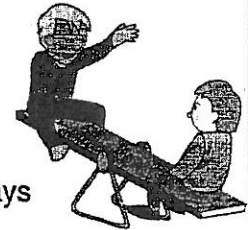
## Blocks

1. Block building is **language** – vocabulary, concepts, dramatic play, and questions.
2. Block building is **math** – classification, measurement, volume, area, sequence, number, fraction, height, weight, depth, and length.
3. Block building is **science** – gravity, stability, weight, trial and error.
4. Block building is **perception** – design, balance and patterns.
5. Block building is **social development** – cooperation, group planning, and feeling competent.
6. Block building is **physical development** – grasping, balancing, eye-hand coordination and visual perception.



## Gym and Outdoors

1. Gym experiences stimulate **language** and link words with action.
2. Movement enriches **math concepts** of number, direction, distance, speed and position.
3. **Physical activity** develops flexibility, strength, rhythm and balance.
4. **Social skills** grow as children take turns, observe and cooperate with others.
5. **Problem solving** skills are reinforced as children figure out different ways to enjoy the equipment.
6. Running, climbing, jumping, rolling and throwing expand **self-awareness, self-concept** and **self-discipline**.



## Role Play

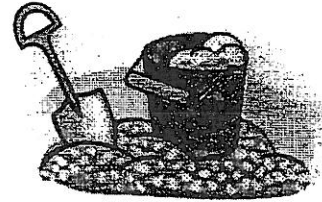


1. Pretending – selecting props, defining roles, and deciding plot – expands **speech and language**.
2. As children distribute and play with materials, they will increase awareness of **number concepts**.
3. **Social skills** develop as children play many roles, understand another point of view, cooperate and share material.
4. Role play increases children's **independence** and allows them to manage their environment.
5. Role play is important for **emotional growth** because it provides a legitimate outlet for feelings.
6. Dressing up, arranging props, and exploring the role play area enhance **physical development**.



## Sand and Water

1. **Language** develops as children discuss play, sharing ideas and materials.
2. **Math** skills develop and grow as children measure, pour and develop concepts of more, less, equal, light, heavy, full, empty.
3. Sand and water play helps to develop an **understanding** of conservation. Changes in size don't mean changes in amount.
4. Hand coordination and sensory awareness **develop** as children dig, sift, pour, mold and splash.
5. Sharing space and materials **strengthen** social skills.
6. Sand and water offer **opportunities** to problem solve, create and explore.



## Books

1. Books expand vocabulary and stimulate **language**.
2. Books strengthen the **understanding** of symbols, letters, numbers and words.
3. Exposure to literature creates excitement in **books and reading**.
4. Looking at books develops **visual discrimination**.
5. Listening to stories develops **auditory discrimination**.
6. Stories and poems expand **memory** and enhance awareness of **rhythm**.
7. Handling books reinforces **left to right eye** movements needed for independent reading.



## Music

1. Music provides an incentive to verbalize. It enhances the development of **speech and language** by introducing new words, increasing memory, and exposing children to rhythm, pitch, and rhyme.
2. Music expands **math skills** through counting rhymes, recognition of patterns, and repetition.
3. Music encourages movement which strengthens **coordination** and creates an awareness of self in space.
4. Music promotes **listening skills** and the ability to follow directions.
5. Making musical instruments strengthens **scientific** understanding of how sound is produced.
6. Music is pleasurable, it promotes **relaxation**, enhances moods, and releases energy.





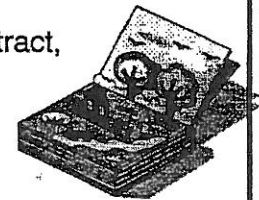
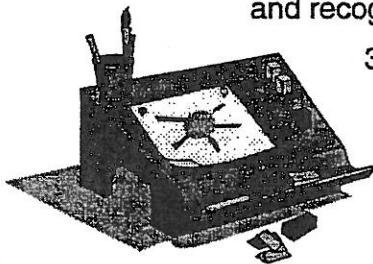
## Play Dough



1. **Language** develops as children talk about play, as questions and communicate needs.
2. **Math skills** increase as children compare shapes, measure sizes and count.
3. **Hand coordination** develops as children pound, poke and mold the dough.
4. **Social skills** grow as children share space and materials.
5. **Problem-solving** skills expand as children explore and create.

## Table Toys

1. **Language** develops as children express ideas, ask questions and describe their play.
2. **Math skills** increase as children learn to order, pattern, sort, add, subtract, and recognize whole/part relationships.



3. **Eye-hand coordination** develops as children work with table toys and increase skills needed for writing.
4. As children identify similarities and differences and fit pieces together, they begin to develop **visual skills** needed for reading.

## Art

1. Art expands **language** as children learn new words for materials and concepts and describe their actions.
2. Art develops **math skills** as children use space, arrange, match, and classify.
3. Children **express feelings** and **ideas** creatively through open-ended use of materials.
4. Pasting, cutting, painting, and drawing develop **eye/hand coordination**.
5. Sharing materials, exchanging ideas, and describing results enhance **social development**.





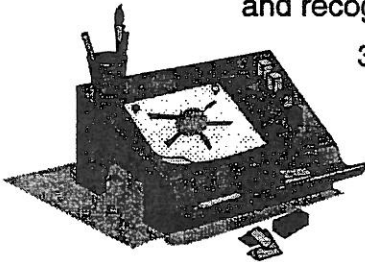
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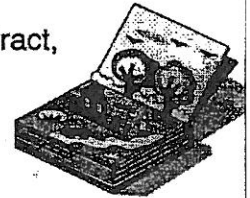
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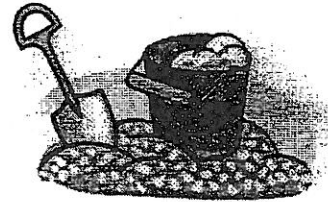
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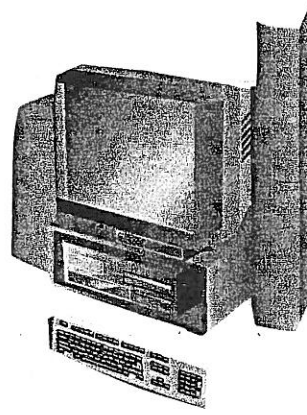
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## *Screen Time: Some thoughts for parents*

### **What is screen time?**

- Television, video, DVD
- Computer
- Playstations, X Boxes, Nintendo...
- Game Boys



### **How much is too much?**

American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- No screen time for children under two
- Older children no more than one to two hours a day of quality television and other screen time

### **Why restrict TV? What problems can occur with excessive screen time?**

- *Language development delays*- children learn to talk and use language correctly by practice and interaction with real people.
- *Motor development delays*- children's gross and fine motor development needs movement and exploration of the environment. Children's brains grow with movement.
- *Visual development delays*- too much staring at a screen with the eyes in a fixed position can delay visual development. Moving hands and body lays the foundation of visual-motor and near point skills.
- *Social skill delays*- children do not learn to play with others while looking at a screen. Screen time is so entertaining, children sometimes fail to develop good social skills if they always have the option of interacting with a screen.
- *Cardiovascular health*- children need outdoor play in the fresh air to strengthen their bodies and especially cardiovascular systems.

### **What parents can do to help?**

- Reduce screen time with enforceable house rules
- No "screens" in the bedroom
- No TV during meals
- Watch good shows with your children, then turn off the screen and talk
- Monitor violence

### **References:**

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*Preventing Early Learning Failure.* By Bob Sornson, 2001 ASCD., Alexandria, Virginia. "Kids and TV" Parenting Magazine, April 2002.

# Conscious Discipline

Developed by Dr. Becky Bailey

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive emotional intelligence and classroom management system that integrates all domains of learning (social, emotional, physical, cultural and cognitive) into one seamless curriculum.

Conscious Discipline is a longtime leader in the integration of classroom management with social-emotional learning, utilizing everyday events as the curriculum and addressing the adult's emotional intelligence as well as the child's. Conscious Discipline empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children.

Conscious Discipline is evidence-based and was named as a national model for character education by the Florida State Legislature.

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