



# Getting Ready To Learn

*A Guide to  
Preparing Your  
Child for  
Kindergarten*



*Upper Grand District School Board  
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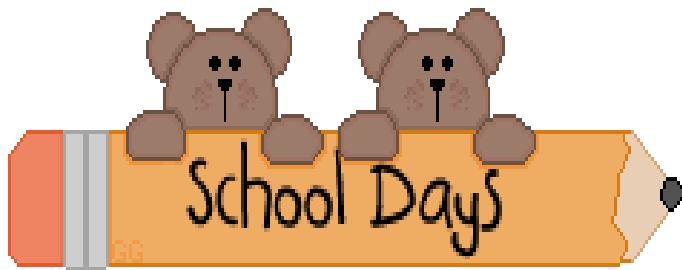
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## Stepping into Kindergarten

Starting school is a big step for your child and your whole family. It's a wonderful and exciting experience, but it also means a big change for you and your child.

We want to help you get off to a good start by giving you and your child information that will help you prepare. This booklet gives you:

- An overview of the kindergarten program.
- Suggestions for ways to help your child get ready for school expectations and routines.
- Information about how children learn and develop through play.
- Information about the Ministry of Education Kindergarten Expectations
- Activities to help make the most of those important learning opportunities at home.



**It's time for school!**

## Learning and Growing in the “Kinder-garden”

In Kindergarten:

- Teachers combine subject areas to create learning opportunities that resemble real life – for example, playing store as a way of learning letters, numbers and social skills.
- There are times when children are expected to sit quietly and listen – but most of the time, kindergarten classes are filled with sound and activity.

Every day, the teacher will spend time:

- With the class as a whole group.
- With students in small groups and one-to-one.
- Reading stories.
- Singing songs.
- Learning rhymes, chants or poetry.

The children will:

- Work on their own and in groups.
- Learn through play.
- Participate in indoor and outdoor physical activity.

The word Kindergarten comes from German and literally means “children’s garden.” It is a place where your child will grow and learn. You can expect your child’s kindergarten class:

- To be a stimulating learning environment.
- To reflect the program and to be alive with activity centers, artwork, toys, learning spaces, creative materials, books, letters and words, dress-up clothes, art supplies, calendars, child-size furniture, blocks, puzzles, games, paper, pencils, erasers and much more.
- To have computers, plants, pets, listening centers, sand and water tables.
- To have a variety of learning activities.



**What should I expect?**

In the average kindergarten class:

- Each child is slightly different in how he develops as he did when he learned to sit up, crawl, walk and talk.
- Children come from various racial and cultural backgrounds.
- Children may speak different languages.
- Children have different learning styles.

These differences are respected and celebrated. The kindergarten teacher designs a program with each child's unique learning needs in mind.

# How can I prepare my child for school?

## First Steps – Preparing for Kindergarten

How ready is my child for school? That's a question many parents ask. Generally, any child who is excited and enthusiastic about learning is well-equipped to do well in Kindergarten.

Think about how much your child has learned already. Before ever starting school, your child has learned some of the most important lessons of life.

- She knows the difference between herself and others, between family and strangers.
- He grasps the connection between cause and effect.
- She has a developing sense of time – past, present and future.
- He understands and can express spatial relationships – up from down, in from out, front from back.
- She can use the grammar of her language and has a large vocabulary of words.

These are tremendous achievements, and you were the teacher who helped your child accomplish them.

Your child will build on these skills during the early years of school. However, there are additional skills and knowledge you can help your child acquire during the next upcoming months that will ease the transition from home to school. They are listed at the back of the booklet in the form of a game you and your child can play. As your child takes each step in the game, provide a small reward – a stamp or sticker to indicate that step has been mastered and perhaps a small prize at the end.

## Dress for Kindergarten Success

When you're shopping for school clothes for your child, here are some tips in choosing the best wardrobe for "power learning".

- In the course of an average kindergarten class, your child will sit on the floor, jump, run, walk, bounce, stretch, crouch, bend and sit in a chair. Choose clothes and footwear that will be comfortable during all of these activities.
- Choose clothes, jackets, shoes and boots that are easy for your child to **independently** put on, take off and fasten. Spend time practising with him/her.



- Kindergarten children learn best when they are exploring, discovering, experimenting – in other words, getting messy. Choose clothes that are durable and easy to clean.
- Outdoor play is an important part of the kindergarten program. Your child needs outdoor clothing for all types of weather.

## **Sleep**

Sleep, like healthy eating and exercise, is important to a child's health and well-being.

- Both the amount and quality of sleep your child gets will influence her learning.
- Sleep, is important for healthy growth.
- A well-rested child does better at school, both in the classroom, with friends and in dealing with daily routines.
- They have more energy for play, a better appetite and feel better about themselves.



## **Breakfast, Snacks and Lunch**

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Prepare your child for the day by providing a well-balanced meal before he/she leaves for school. Snacks and lunch are an important part of the Kindergarten health and nutrition program.

- At school, children begin to learn about the value of certain foods for their growth, strength and general well being.
- The Canadian Food Guide discourages foods with high sugar, salt or fat content.
- It is suggested that children bring a light, nutritious snack. Fruits and vegetables or crackers and cheese would be considered to be a great snack.
- Litterless lunches and snacks help children understand about caring for our environment.

## **Making the First Day Great**

Do you remember your first day of school? Were you excited? Frightened? Sad? Your childhood memories about starting school and the feelings those memories bring back will influence how you feel about your child starting school.

*You may also have mixed feelings about your child starting school:*

- You may be feeling excitement for your child on one hand and a sense of loss on the other.
- You may be worried about how your child will cope with new routines.
- Your attitude toward the start of school can help set a positive tone. If you feel anxious or worried, try not to pass those feelings along to your child.

*Your child may also have some mixed feelings:*

- He may feel worried that his teacher won't know his name.
- He may feel that he won't know the children in the class.
- But, most likely he also views the start of school and his new independence as an adventure and a challenge, especially if he feels prepared and knows what to expect.

*The Upper Grand District School Board's Staggered Entry Process:*

- Is a special timetable during the first two weeks of September.
- Is designed to make the transition from home to school easier.
- Allows your child to interact with peers in a smaller group before they must interact with a larger, more formal group.
- Is designed to allow children to begin to learn routines.
- Allows the kindergarten teacher to get to know your child and his individual skills, needs, and interests.

***Here are some ways you can help your child have a good experience during the first few days of school.***

*Before the first day and in the weeks leading up to school:*

- Practise walking to school or to the bus stop often, so it begins to feel like a familiar routine.
- Attend the bus orientation and go over the bus safety rules a few times, if your child will be riding the bus.

*A few days before school starts:*

- Begin getting your child and yourself used to the bedtime and wake-up schedule that will be required during school.

*The day before:*

- Let your child pick out what she is going to wear on the first day of school.
- Let her choose a favourite outfit from clothes that are already “broken-in” and comfortable.
- Try to get your child – and yourself – off to bed a bit early, so you are both well rested in the morning.

*The first day:*

- Get yourself and your child up early enough to eat a calm, unhurried breakfast.
- Keep things as normal as possible – if your child normally has cereal for breakfast, make him cereal this morning.
- ***When you say good-bye to your child on the first day, make it quick, light and reassuring.*** She will be reassured by a warm hug and a reminder that you – or her usual caregiver – will be picking her up or waiting at home after school is finished. ***Try not to communicate your feelings of anxiety and separation.***

Many parents feel a temporary sense of loss when their children go off to school. If you are feeling that way, plan a special activity for yourself that you can look forward to during the first days of school.

## Exploration is the way: How kindergarten children learn

*Kindergarten classes have learning activities:*

- Teachers do direct teaching with the whole class – such as identifying letters of the alphabet and their sounds, demonstrating numbers, and illustrating science facts.
- Together, the class looks at the calendar every day as a way of learning about concepts such as days of the week, seasons, weather and special occasions.
- Students spend time putting pencil to paper – printing letters, words and numbers.

*Children learn best when they are:*

- Experimenting, doing things, taking on different roles, imagining and pretending – these are all important learning techniques.
- Discovering through play. This is also an important part of the kindergarten program.

When children are playing in the kindergarten class, they are not taking a break from learning. Through their play-like activities, children are learning important academic skills such as:

- Reading, writing, math and science.
- Problem-solving and creative thinking.
- Learning to get along with others.

At this stage, play is an important way of learning for your child. As he plays, he learns about the world and how it works, about other people and about himself.

## Step by Step

*Measure Your Child's Progress in Kindergarten:*

In Kindergarten, your child will receive two formal report cards, usually one in January/February and one in June. Your child's teacher will be continuously assessing your child's progress and will give you reports on how she is doing.

*How does the teacher assess how well your child is learning and meeting the provincial kindergarten expectations?*

- The most important method is through observation – watching and talking with your child. Every day, for example, your teacher will observe students' language development, and she will assess what

each child's responses tell her about that child's knowledge of language.

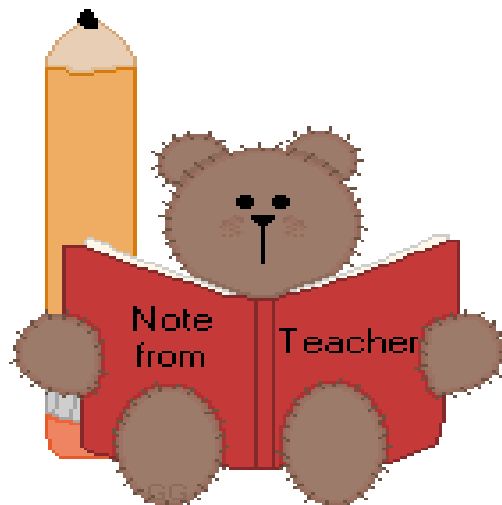
- Your child's teacher will also use many other strategies to assess your child's learning – such as small tasks and assignments. Each strategy gives the teacher another part of the picture about how and what your child is learning.

*What does the teacher measure?*

Young children go through many stages as they grow and learn. One of the things your child's teacher will be considering as she does her assessment is your child's stage of development. That is important information to help her plan a learning program suited to your child's needs.

*Each child develops in his own way. Some areas develop more quickly than others. Here are some things we know about kindergarten children:*

- Children see the world differently than adults. Teachers need to find out each child's level of mental maturity and make sure the learning program meets the students at their level.
- Since children's thinking at this age is closely tied to concrete objects and experiences, they learn best by doing. Telling is not teaching. Teachers help kindergarten children to learn from their own personal experiences.
- Since children make sense of their world through make-believe and play, some of their learning needs to resemble play.
- Since children develop mentally through a series of stages, they need time to learn and grow. It is not a race – speed of development is different for each child.
- Since children learn from their direct experience in the here and now, the most important goal of Kindergarten is to nurture their development. We place most emphasis on experiences that reward curiosity, thought, and imagination.



# UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## Language Objectives Kindergarten 1998

### ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

#### *Listening*

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- increase attention span (concentrate when required, tune-out distractions)
- listen courteously to the speaker
- identify and discuss characters in stories, plays, biographies, etc.
- describe/draw/role play from mental pictures formed from verbal descriptions
- follow oral directions

#### *Speaking*

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- show a desire to speak
- express ideas and feelings clearly and accurately
- learn to problem-solve to settle disputes
- ask questions for specific purposes

### READING

#### *Reading Skills*

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- show / tell that print moves left to right, top to bottom
- retell a simple story, matching story line to pictures in text
- read environmental print (Zehrs, signs, cereals, etc.)
- sort letters and numerals
- point to a short word or a long word on the basis of sound length
- orally repeat short books, poems, chants, etc. and “sounds like they are reading”  
- matching memory of a selection with the actual words on the page
- use finger to track print

## Language Objectives Kindergarten—continued

- select specific words in charts, etc. using a rote / matching strategy
- point to a letter vs. a word
- tell that words have boundaries and are separated by white spaces

### **Reading Skills (continued)**

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- orally select words that rhyme
- recite the alphabet in sequence
- point to the letters of the alphabet in and out of sequence (upper and lower case)
- name the letters of the alphabet in and out of sequence (upper and lower case)
- develop letter / sound match
- produce words starting with given sounds
- orally give words that are opposites
- generate positional words (i.e. below, above, beside, next to, under, etc.)
- independently select reading more frequently

### **Reading Comprehension**

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- describe main idea
- retell several events / information
- predict outcomes / what happens next
- describe information from a variety of contexts (visual or oral: media, pictures, print, etc.)
- describe / explain inferences, conclusions, cause and effect
- identify fiction and non-fiction materials

### **Reading (Non-fiction)**

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- select material from a previously perused book
- identify the Resource Centre as a place where many kinds of information are collected
- describe the arrangement of the Library Resource Centre, special shelves, and collections
- choose books by pictures, authors and subjects

## **WRITING**

### ***Written Output / Understanding of Media***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- express ideas in pictures: charts, graphs, diagrams, paintings, drawings, booklets
- keep a picture diary with captions dictated
- participate in making language experience charts to preserve original expression and emotional responses
- demonstrate interest in having ideas written down
- trace or print individual letters or groups of letters
- print own name, signs, labels, captions
- copy a “story” which has been printed from his/her dictation
- demonstrate a personal interest in printing to convey messages
- use a variety of media (e.g. computer software, tapes, filmstrips)
- respond to media material, verbally / non-verbally (e.g. paint pictures in response to a filmstrip, describe feelings after a video)

### ***Spelling***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- recognize that marks, symbols, etc. represent print
- recognize that drawing and writing are different tasks
- reproduce letters and numerals by copying
- attempt to spell familiar words or words of interest (inventive spelling)
  - uses initial sounds b (ball)
  - uses distinct sounds bl (ball)
  - adds letters to make words “longer: bli (ball)
  - starts using some vowels in words (may or may not be correct)
- learn to spell special or “theme” words or words from content areas

### ***Grammar in both Speaking and Writing***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- use pronouns correctly
- use verb tenses correctly (past, present, future)
- use comparative language (big, bigger, biggest)

### ***Handwriting***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- have proper grip, position paper properly, use spacing appropriately
- print upper and lower case letters
- print using the letter formation used by the teacher

# UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## Mathematics Objectives Kindergarten 1998

### ***Number Sense and Numeration***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- sort and classify objects into sets according to specific characteristics (e.g. colour, size, shape)
- match objects by one-to-one correspondence (e.g. one cup to one saucer)
- estimate and count to identify sets with more, fewer, or the same number of objects
- count orally to 30, and use cardinal and ordinal numbers during play and daily classroom routines (e.g. identify first, second, and third places in a race)
- recognize and write numerals from 1 to 30
- demonstrate awareness of addition and subtraction in everyday activities (e.g. in sharing crayons)

### ***Measurement***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- use simple measurement terms correctly (e.g. tall / short, / big / small, empty, / full, heavy / light, tomorrow / yesterday)
- order three or more objects according to size or mass (e.g. the Three Bears)
- use non-standard measuring devices appropriately (e.g. string, scoops, sugar cubes, sand timer)
- use some standard measuring devices appropriately (e.g. tape measure, balance scale, thermometer, clock)
- identify the values of some coins

### ***Spatial Sense and Geometry***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- use language accurately to describe basic spatial relationships (e.g. above / below; near / far, in / out)
- identify and sort three-dimensional objects (e.g. cans, blocks, balls, cones)
- identify and sort two-dimensional shapes (e.g. circle, square, rectangle, triangle)

### ***Patterning***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- recognize patterns in everyday life
- identify / reproduce / transfer simple patterns (e.g. red blocks alternating with blue blocks, clap-clap-stamp)
- create and extend simple patterns using a variety of materials or actions (e.g. pop-sicle sticks, pebbles, stickers, counters)
- recognize patterns in numbers (1, 2, 3; 21, 22, 23; etc.)

### ***Data Management and Probability***

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- place some specific types of objects (e.g. shoes, favourite foods) on concrete graphs and pictographs
- compare information on objects, using two categories (e.g. rough, smooth)
- use simple grids correctly (e.g. in games such as bingo, tick-tack-toe)
- use language of probability (e.g. chance, might, lucky)



## **Science and Technology – Overall Expectations**

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- Demonstrate curiosity and a willingness to explore and experiment
- Demonstrate understanding of and care for the natural world
- Demonstrate an awareness of the characteristics and functions of some common materials
- Demonstrate understanding of strategies for planning and organizing
- Recognize and use some common forms of technology

## **Arts – Overall Expectations**

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

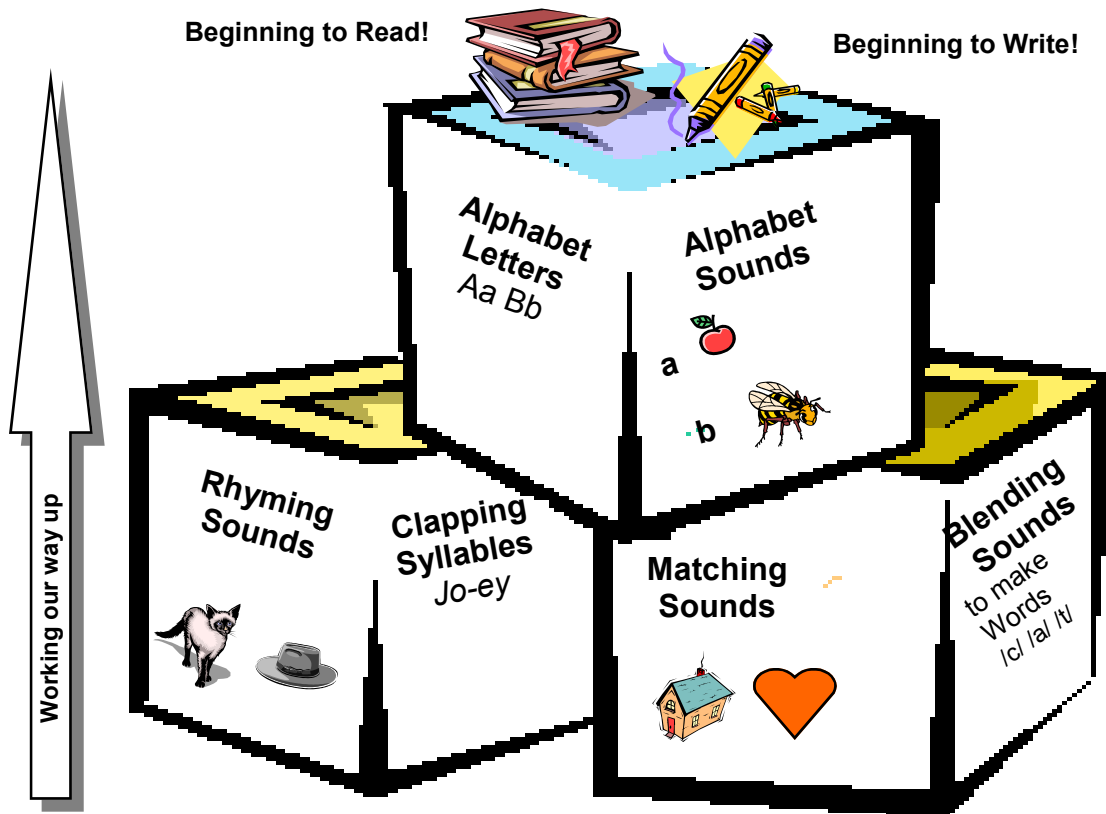
- Express ideas and feelings through a variety of media
- Experiment with techniques and materials
- Demonstrate basic knowledge and skills gained through exposure to the arts and activities in the arts
- Co-operate and collaborate with others on artistic projects
- Communicate their responses to music, art, drama, and dance
- Demonstrate awareness of new abilities they develop through arts activities, and express pride in their own work
- Demonstrate awareness of some simple art forms from various cultures
- Identify and describe some basic elements of art forms

## **Personal and Social Development – Overall Expectations**

*By the end of Kindergarten, children will:*

- Demonstrate a positive attitude towards themselves and others
- Demonstrate independence and a willingness to take responsibility in learning and other activities
- Demonstrate an awareness of health and safety practices
- Perform tasks requiring balance and co-ordination, precision, and perceptual skills
- Identify and use social skills
- Demonstrate awareness of their surroundings, both natural and human-made
- Demonstrate awareness of patterns in their daily lives

# The Building Blocks to a Strong Foundation of Reading and Writing Success



## The Upper Grand District School Board's Early Literacy Program

*Each school in the Upper Grand District School Board presently has an early literacy teacher. Among other roles, the primary role of this teacher is:*

- To provide early literacy support to every child in Kindergarten.
- To work in collaboration with the kindergarten teacher and program to ensure that the foundational skills, that are critical to early reading success, are well in place.
- To collaborate with parents through dialogue, suggestion of activities and in some cases provision of materials that will assist parents in supporting their child's program and development.

## Supporting Your Child's Learning

### Talking about the events of the day

Use the first day of school to start some routines that will help make sure the whole school year is great. One of these is to talk with your child every day about what happened at school.

*Because young children are often not talkative about school when they are at home, here are some questions that can help to start the discussion:*

- Tell me about the story your teacher read today.
- Name two good things that happened today.
- Tell me about your special friend or someone you met today.
- Where did you go at activity time? What did you like best?
- What are you looking forward to doing next time?

### Play is your child's homework

- Watch your child at play – your observations will give you insight into how she prefers to learn.
- All play – in fact, anything your child is doing – can be a learning experience.

Here are some ideas to help you make the most of those opportunities during the next months as you prepare for the start of school

### Fun and Learning in a Cozy Corner

- Read to your child every day and ask questions to develop understanding.
- Reread favourite books encouraging your child to chime in.
- Provide opportunities for children to enjoy a variety of types of books (stories, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, alphabet books, information books, taped story and books).
- Talk to your child in complete sentences and often.
- Listen carefully to what your child says.
- Ensure that your child has a wide range of experiences to talk about with you and others.

How can I help my child learn?

## **Fun and Learning in the Kitchen**

- Pour the milk so each glass has the same amount.
- Tidy a cupboard by arranging boxes from tallest to shortest.
- Set the table for the family, counting the spoons, forks, knives, etc.
- Share an apple by cutting it in halves or quarters.
- Choose the best sized bowl for leftovers.
- Cook together measuring ingredients.
- Have writing and drawing materials available (paper, markers, pencils, crayons, chalkboards, magnetic letters).
- Let your child see you writing your grocery list, reading a recipe.
- Make letters in playdough or salt.

## **Fun and Learning in the Bathtub**

- Find out things that will float or sink and talk about why.
- Learn about suction from eye droppers and plastic syringes.
- Provide an egg whisk to propel a toy boat along the water.
- Provide plastic containers and measuring cups to allow for measuring.
- Have fun in the bath with foam alphabet letters.

## **Fun and Learning in the Outdoors**

- Give your child a magnifying glass to inspect things up close – bugs, leaves, grass, dirt.
- Use water and paint brushes or sidewalk chalk to make letters and numbers on sidewalks, fences etc.
- Use a plastic jar to collect and measure the rainfall.
- Encourage your child to collect rocks, leaves, shells or flowers.
- Look for shapes in the outdoors – squares, triangles, circles, etc.

### **Fun and Learning in the Hallway**

- Counting as you walk up and down stairs.
- Say nursery rhymes as you walk along (i.e. 1,2 Buckle My Shoe).
- Say a rhyming word with each step.

### **Fun and Learning in the Car**

- Sing songs and say familiar rhymes to develop awareness of rhyme, words and sounds. Examples include: Pat a cake, Pat a cake, Mary had Little Lamb, Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star and The ABC song.
- Draw attention to the sounds in words (house, mouse - those rhyme; big bumblebee – those words start with “buh”).
- Play I Spy games using rhyming words, or first letter sounds.
- Make silly rhyming words that rhyme with your name.
- Listen to CD’s, taped stories, songs, nursery rhymes.
- Spell the letters of familiar signs (i.e. S-T-O-P spells stop).

### **Fun and Learning in the Playroom / Family Room**

- Encourage your child to act out familiar stories using toys and props.
- Play games like “Go Fish” and “Concentration” with alphabet letters.
- Clap the syllables in your child’s name, names of family members, food, etc.
- Play with lego, puzzles, building toys, board games.

*Recognize that each child is unique and develops at his/her own rate. Here are some things to try! You can put a stamp or sticker on each paw print when you have finished that step . When you've completed all the steps, you'll be ready to start school!*



Tell your first and last name.



Tell the first and last name of each of your parents.



Know the way to school if you will be walking to school, or the way to the bus stop if you will be taking the bus.



Print your name. It's okay for your mom or dad to print your name at the top of a piece of paper and for you to copy it underneath.



Say the colours in a small crayon box.



Tidy up your toys when you're finished playing.



Clear your own dishes from the table.



Go to the bathroom, flush the toilet and wash your hands by yourself.



Put on your shoes and **tie your shoelaces**. *Tip for parents: help your child learn to tie shoes by allowing him/her to sit on your legs and tying your laces.*



Take off your sweater or jacket by yourself. Then put it back on. Zip or button it back up.



Listen quietly when someone reads you a story or



Sing and say the Alphabet Song. ABCDEFG (clap) HIJKLMN (clap) OPQ (clap) RST (clap) UVW (clap) XYZ (clap). Now I never will forget. How to sing my alphabet.