

**Superior-Greenstone  
District School Board**

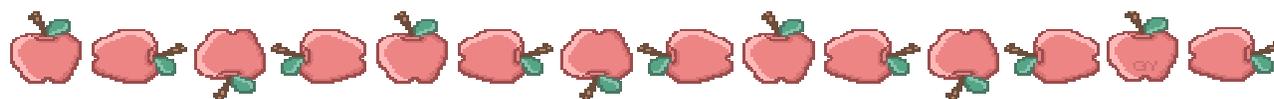
**Where ...**

*Kids Come First*



***Kindergarten Teacher  
Handbook (Pilot Draft)***

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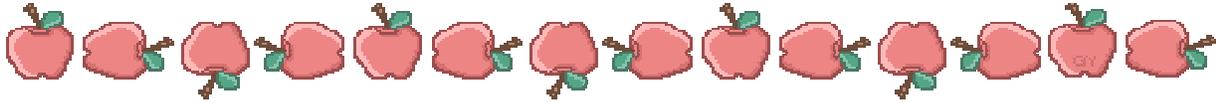


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# *Introduction*



This Superior-Greenstone District School Board Kindergarten Teacher Handbook has been prepared by a committee of classroom teachers, vice principals/coordinators, community resource people and board resource personnel who believe that Kindergarten is crucial to future success in school. The years of early development establish the foundations for learning emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually.

This handbook is intended to provide suggestions and practical techniques for ensuring a successful transition to school for all students. It outlines the methods that will help the teacher to provide positive, comfortable and reassuring experiences for our early learners.

Children are the focus of this handbook. It is their developmental stages, needs and interests that must be the key to their learning. The committee believes that children need to feel that school is a natural extension of their home environment and has provided many ideas to help the teacher gather information about each child so that the very first school experiences are built on their own experiences.

The primary focus of this handbook is literacy and numeracy. The documents released in 2003 by the expert panels for reading and math provide educators with essential information regarding instruction in both of these areas. These documents form the fundamental beliefs about reading and math that are captured in this handbook. It is imperative that teachers inspire positive attitudes towards literacy and numeracy during the first years of a student's education.

Children learn through play. The intent of this handbook is to help teachers realize that they are doing wonderful things for students and that social learning is as important as academics in Kindergarten. Play provides a stress free way to learning and kindergarten teachers can provide rich experiences by encouraging the development of literacy skills and early math skills through play.

All children are unique and have different needs. This handbook provides tried and true suggestions for teachers to support student learning. We hope that this document proves to be a valuable resource.

# *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*



*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 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 you 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 into 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.*

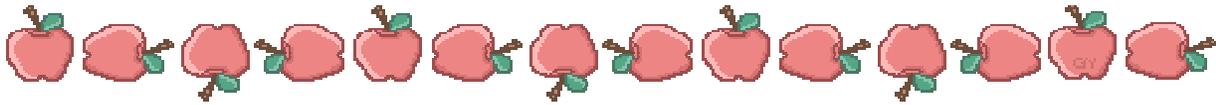
*Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living.*

*Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if we all – the whole world – had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess.*

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

*~ By Robert Fulghum ~*

# *Welcome to Kindergarten*



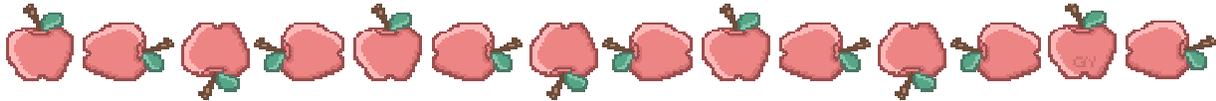
Early childhood is a very important period in human development. Independence, decision-making, creativity, the ability to relate to others, and feelings of self-worth all begin in early childhood. What young children learn at this stage will have a major impact on successful learning experiences in school and on personal development.

The kindergarten program not only helps prepare children for future school experiences, but also provides a foundation for later success. The purpose of kindergarten is to provide learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of children and encourage a positive attitude toward lifelong learning. The average four year old is energetic, fidgety, attention seeking and helpful. He attempts things that only he knows how to do. She has a short attention span and learns to express her feelings. He needs affection and praise. The kindergarten program is developed to support and encourage the uniqueness of each and every child in the classroom.

Young children begin learning in a variety of environments before they enter school--in their homes, in day care programs, and in the community. They arrive in kindergarten from different backgrounds and with a variety of experiences. Some children have already been developing some of the areas described in the kindergarten program. Most children will achieve these in their kindergarten years, while others will continue to develop them during the primary school years. Young children benefit from programs that help them explore the world around them and guide them through the transition from home to school.

Welcome to Kindergarten!

# *Welcome to Superior-Greenstone District School Board*



The Superior-Greenstone District school board has 10 very unique elementary schools in ten small communities in Northwestern Ontario. In the majority of the elementary schools, there are split JK/SK classes. As our enrolment continues to decline, we are finding that the JK/SK split is becoming a reality in our larger schools as well.

It is important to remember that the JK students in a JK/SK split are not SK students and we should not have the same expectations for them that we do for the SK students. Research (Pianta and Cox) indicates that 48% of JK students struggle with adjustment issues for the first month of school. This is normal, expected behaviour. The research also found that students with transition issues can sometimes be labeled by their teachers and treated differently than other children. This can have a negative snowball effect on the child's future performance in school.

In JK classes, teachers in our board report that they have about half of the class who take some time adjusting to JK, and demonstrate this through tears, shyness or other behaviours. This is important information for our smaller schools to have and to be able to pass onto parents because often in our smaller communities we have JK/SK classes with 5 students in each grade. Instead of 10 out of 20 JK students having adjustment issues, the smaller class might have only 2 or 3 students having adjustment issues. It is very helpful for the teacher to know this is normal and to pass that information on to the parents.

# Child Development



Regardless of the child development theory which you believe in, and there are many, we can agree that all children do not come to school at the same stage of readiness.

Developmentally appropriate education is based on knowledge of the typical development of children within an age span (age appropriateness) as well as the uniqueness of each child (individual appropriateness).

Children are not empty containers to be filled with information, but active participants who can construct their own knowledge from experiences in their environment.

Children bring varied levels of knowledge to any learning situation based on hereditary and environment.

In our inclusive classrooms, where the abilities of all children must be considered, teachers help children construct this learning using the strengths that each child brings to any situation. By understanding how each child learns, teachers are able to help them in ways that suit their particular learning style.

When there are concerns: awareness of the various stages of development will help you to identify when a child might benefit from a professional assessment (example: a child seems to be “stuck” in a stage for a long time with no progress). Use the school procedure in this situation.

## **General Development Sequence – Toddler Through Preschool**

The following presents typical activities and achievements for children from two to five years of age. It is important to keep in mind that the time frames presented are averages and some children may achieve various developmental milestones earlier or later than the average but still be within the normal range. This information is presented to help parents understand what to expect from their child. (Source: Healthy Place.com)

### **AGE 2**

#### **Physical Development**

Walks well, goes up and down steps alone, runs, seats self on chair, becoming independent in toileting, uses spoon and fork, imitates circular stroke, turns pages singly, kicks ball, attempts to dress self, builds tower of six cubes.

#### **Social Development**

Solitary play, dependent on adult guidance, plays with dolls, refers to self by name, socially very immature, little concept of others as “people”. May respond to simple direction.

**Emotional Development**

Very self-centered, just beginning a sense of personal identity and belongings, possessive, often negative, often frustrated, no ability to choose between alternatives, enjoys physical affection, resistive to change, becoming independent, more responsive to humor and distraction than discipline or reason.

**Intellectual Development**

Says words, phrases and simple sentences, 272 words, understands simple directions, identifies simple pictures, likes to look at books, short attention span, avoids simple hazards, can do simple form board.

**AGE 3****Physical Development**

Runs well, marches, stands on one foot briefly, rides tricycle, imitates cross, feeds self well, puts on shoes and stockings, unbuttons and buttons, build tower of 10 cubes. Pours from pitcher.

**Social Development**

Parallel play, enjoys being by others, takes turns, knows if he is a boy or girl, enjoys brief group activities requiring no skill, likes to “help” in small ways – responds to verbal guidance.

**Emotional Development**

Likes to conform, easygoing attitude, more secure, greater sense of personal identity, beginning to be adventuresome, enjoys music.

**Intellectual Development**

Says short sentences, 896 words, great growth in communication, tells simple stories, uses words as tools of thought, want to understand environment, answers questions, imaginative, may recite few nursery rhymes

**AGE 4****Physical Development**

Skips on one foot, draws “Man”, cuts with scissors (not well), can wash and dry face, dress self except ties, standing broad jump, throws ball overhand, high motor drive.

**Social Development**

Cooperative play, enjoys other children’s company, highly social, may play loosely organized group games – tag, duck-duck-goose, talkative, versatile.

**Emotional Development**

Seems sure of himself, out-of-bounds behavior, often negative, may be defiant, seems to be testing himself out, needs controlled freedom.

**Intellectual Development**

Uses complete sentences, 1,540 words, asks endless questions, learning to generalize, highly imaginative, dramatic, and draw recognizable simple objects.

## AGE 5

### **Physical Development**

Hops and skips, dresses without help, good balance and smoother muscle action, skates, rides wagon and scooter, prints simple letters, handedness established, ties shoes, girls small muscle development about 1-year ahead of boys.

### **Emotional Development**

Self-assured, stable well-adjusted, home-centered, likes to associate with mother, capable of some self-criticism, enjoys responsibility. Likes to follow the rules.

### **Social Development**

Highly cooperative play, has special "friends", highly organized, enjoys simple table games requiring turns and observing rules, "school", feels pride in clothes and accomplishments, eager to carry out some responsibility.

### **Intellectual Development**

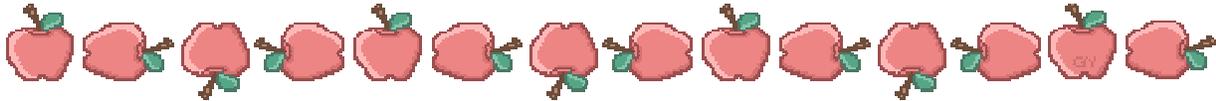
2,027 words, tells long tales, carries out direction well, reads own name, counts to 10, asks meaning of words, knows colours, beginning to know difference between fact and fiction-lying, interested in environment, city, stores, etc.

## Some of the Developments in School Readiness Components Between Birth and Age 5

(Zero to Six: The Basis for Adult Success – Source: Applied Research Branch)

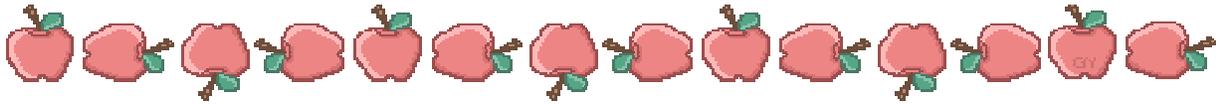
Age	Motor Development	Emotional Health/Positive Approach to New Experiences	Social Knowledge and Competence	Language Skills	General Knowledge and Cognitive Skills
Two months	sucking and other survival reflexes, little voluntary control	unable to differentiate self from other	no concept of being able to influence another	reflex crying when nervous system is over stimulated	no understanding of cause-and-effect
One year	independently mobile using non-walking methods, can walk holding onto something, able to grasp items using thumb and forefinger	can differentiate primary caregiver(s) from others, will use caregiver as a secure emotional and physical base for exploration	understands that others can act and be acted upon, engages in games with familiar adults, imitates others	skills at using gestures, e.g., holds up arms to be picked up. Imitates words, first spontaneous and deliberate word uttered around age one	engages in task variation and deliberate experimentation, has some sense of cause-and-effect in a specific situation
Two years	able to walk and climb stairs, eye-hand coordination sufficiently developed to allow manipulation of large objects	increasing self-confidence, will move a considerable distance from caregiver when exploring	interested in playing along side other children, but not actually with them in a joint activity	can string two or three words together in a simple sentence, e.g., "look truck"	begins to move from reliance on replica objects, e.g. a doll, in pretend play to use of substitute objects, e.g., a pillow for a "baby"
Three years	skilled at climbing and jumping, fine motor coordination sufficiently developed to allow manipulation of large objects	beginning to regulate own behaviour, tries to handle emotions such as frustration but still needs adult help and guidance	interested in playing with other children. Has difficulty sharing because of difficulty taking the perspective of another	has some basic idea of grammar, e.g., adds "s" for a plural, asks questions, forms multi-word sentences	shows some basic understanding of categorization, e.g., can sort by colour or by shape, but makes mistakes
Four years	can control a pencil and cut with scissors	can control own emotions, such as anger or frustration, in many situations with minimal adult assistance	plays with other children. Is able to take turns and engage in cooperative activities	can join simple sentences together to describe a past or present action or experience	reliably sorts by colour or shape, but not by both simultaneously
Five years	able to write letters, turn book pages without tearing them	has some ability to stop and think before deciding how to act, is curious about the world outside the home	has basic peer relationships skills, e.g., knows how to enter a group	can hold a prolonged conversation and express ideas	by the end of the year, can sort by both colour and shape simultaneously

# *Boys and Girls – They Really Are Very Different*



There has been an increasing amount of research conducted in examining the differences between boys and girls. It is known that there are significant differences neurologically between the sexes and these differences have profound implications on how boys and girls learn. In fact, by the age of 6, girls are from six months to one full year or more ahead of boys neurologically. Boys who were born late in the year are at special risk. The differences in skills as a result of this are especially evident in fine motor and language areas. While it is important to realize that all students have individual differences, there are some important generalizations to consider:

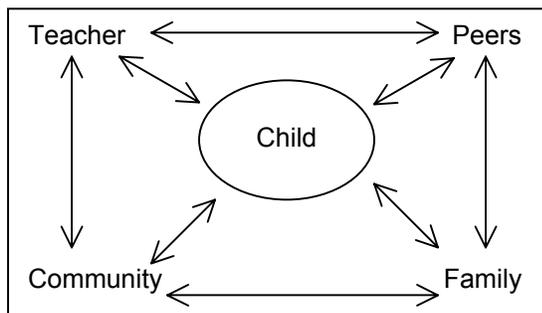
1. Auditory teaching doesn't work for boys – they hear poorly and cannot attend for more than a few moments at a time thus they often miss instructions or can't process them quickly enough.
2. Behaviours that are biologically inherent in boys are not acceptable in schools.
3. Boys thrive on movement, energy, competition, and need extra assistance in areas of weakness like reading, writing, organization and following directions.
4. Boys respond well to an integrated approach to literacy where the emphasis is less on the technical aspects of learning to read and write and more on the process of becoming a reader and writer – drama provides a good medium to deliver this approach.
5. Use a range of teaching techniques and involve students in learning activities by encouraging their participation.
6. Be flexible and fair – boys are significantly less compliant and they are much slower to pick up social cues and develop impulse control.
7. Protect boys – they are the “fragile sex” and are more vulnerable to stress.



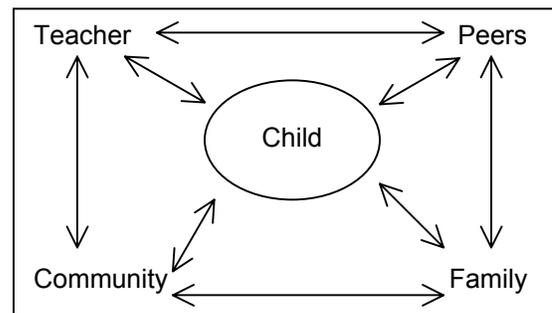
## Transition from Home to School

Ongoing relationships with families are an integral part of children's junior and senior kindergarten years.

### Linked Environments Model of Transition



*Junior Kindergarten*



*Senior Kindergarten*

Source: Page 7 – *Successful Kindergarten Transition* (Robert C. Pianta and Marion Kraft-Sayer)

#### 1. February Junior Kindergarten Registration

Parents and child should meet principal, J.K. teacher, tour the school and view the kindergarten classroom in progress. A Superior-Greystone District School Board handbook is given to the parent(s) outlining the expectations for Junior Kindergarten along with the Literacy pamphlets.

2. Junior Kindergarten teachers should arrange for the new J.K. students to come for a classroom visit (45-minutes) in small groups. Parents are encouraged to stay if a child is not comfortable. The child will meet a few new friends, J.K. teachers, and become familiar with the classroom (i.e.: painting/crafts, play, story time, finger plays).

Suggestion: Take a photograph of the child, which can be used to personalize his/her coat hook, shoebox, and journal/reader book for September.

#### 3. April/May Fair Start

J.K. teachers should be present to administer tests and to meet the children for a second time so that the child becomes familiar with the teacher/tester.

#### 4. May – School Open House

Send invitations to new J.K. registrants to invite them to attend your school's open house and view displays.

5. A two-week staggered enrolment begins in September by bringing J.K. students to school in small groups to facilitate an easier adjustment to a changing environment. Parents are encouraged to bring their children and to pick them up. This allows for a relaxed and smoother transition from home to school.
6. For September's Meet-the-Teacher Night, children bring their parents to school to view their classroom and school. Learning centers and materials are on display for parents to view. Teachers are available to answer any questions about the kindergarten program.
7. J.K. teachers should send regular monthly newsletters home informing parents of school events in the classroom.
8. Encourage parents to participate in class activities, i.e., craft day, Christmas concert, Halloween party, skating days, tours, hikes, etc.
9. Thank parents personally or via a letter from the students for any assistance or contribution to your program.
10. S.K. teachers are encouraged to visit J.K. classrooms throughout the year to meet the students they will be teaching the following year.
11. J.K. teachers are encouraged to introduce their students to their S.K. teacher in June prior to leaving for the summer.
12. J.K. and S.K. teachers are a team within the school and should meet regularly for programming and sharing.
13. Remember secretaries and custodians are a Kindergarten Teacher's best friends. Reward them and treat them kindly always.

# *The Big Day*



## **Saying Good-Bye**

Parents play a huge role in making the transition from home to school a positive one. In many cases a parents' anxiety about their little one going to school is what has the greatest impact on the child. Many of our teachers report that the long parent good-byes are what cause the most disruption of all. Clear communication to parents really helps.

## **The First Day at Kindergarten**

The teacher should welcome the children into the kindergarten classroom and gently introduce them to the kindergarten environment. The children should be given time to become acquainted with each other and with classroom activities and materials. Gradually, children gain a sense of belonging when they become familiar with school routines and layout.

## **Bus Ride / School Walk Practice**

Many young children may feel anxious about how they will arrive at school. Getting ready for the trip to school is an important step. Offering a first riders program for bussed students can give children and giving parents the opportunity to rehearse the journey can be very beneficial for students. Rehearsal of the walk to and from school and introductions to who is going to accompany the child can also help with the anxious child.

## **School Visits**

The School Visit is really the key to understanding what school will really be like. Outside of the formal programs offered by the school, parents should be encouraged to visit the school with their child as often as they need to, in order to make their child feel secure in this new

environment. Research (Pelletier, OISE) indicates that children are most often upset because they are unsure of:

- What is going to happen next
- Where they put things
- Who their teacher is
- What they are supposed to do

### **Suggested Books**

Parents should be encouraged to read to the child about Kindergarten before the child attends. Suggested books include:

- Spot Goes to School By: Eric Hill
- Will I Have A Friend By: Miriam Cohen
- The Kissing Hand By: Audrey Penn
- Chrysanthemum By: Kevin Henkes
- Leo the Late Bloomer By: Robert Kraus
- Franklin Goes to School By: Paulette Bourgeois

### **Will I Have Friends?**

Research indicates that one of the biggest anxieties for children before they start school is wondering about friendships. If children know a few of the other children who will be at school, it makes the adjustment to kindergarten much easier.

### **Readiness Skills**

We find that many parents are working with students on early readiness skills before they come to JK. Research (American Educational Research Association, 1998) states:

“A National Survey of public school kindergarten teachers indicates that very few teachers consider specific skills such as knowing the alphabet or being able to count to 20 critical for kindergarten entry. Instead, the majority of these kindergarten teachers consider children ready for school if they are well nourished and rested, can communicate their needs verbally, will show enthusiasm and curiosity about approaching new activities and can take turns with others.

There is a wide difference in the development of children entering kindergarten. There are some general guidelines that should be communicated to parents prior to the start of school, that indicate a child’s readiness for kindergarten.

Children are usually ready for kindergarten if they can:

- Leave their parents without too much difficulty
- Go to the bathroom alone
- Play well with and respect other children
- Follow simple directions and rules
- Resolve some conflicts with classmates without needing the teacher
- Work independently for at least five minutes
- Sit and listen to a story for ten minutes
- Talk in complete sentences

We need to communicate these things to parents so that while they are working on counting and the alphabet, they are also supporting the child in his/her social development.

### **When The Child Is NOT Adjusting**

Expectations in school are significantly different from those in preschool or home. The Kindergarten transition period is a critical time in child development and impacts the child's feelings about school. The teacher, parents and child need to work together to make the transition smooth.

Communication between home and school are crucial when a child is having a difficult transition. Kindergarten teachers in our board have come up with many different strategies to support students in the transition period which include:

- Allowing the child some down time in class
- Using a picture symbol schedule so that all children know what is coming next
- Ensuring that parents understand that adequate rest has a big impact on school success and suggesting an earlier bedtime if fatigue seems to be an issue
- Modifying the schedule (if it is whole days, maybe the child will attend part of the day and gradually build to a full day)
- Staggered Starts ease all children into the program (there are still transition issues)
- All students starting at once means the transition issues happen early in the year
- Healthy eating, snacks and lunches contribute to school success
- Acknowledging that for some children there is more than one transition, they are going to school and to a new daycare situation after school: Look for routines that offer as few transitions as possible for the child
- Good communication between home and school are essential to developing an effective partnership for success
- Celebrating success...make a big deal when the child stays longer than usual or reaches an important milestone
- Teachers may suggest alternative timetables, for example two or three days per week and build to a full week, as the child is ready.

- Listening to the child's perspective...sometimes adults look for a big reason for a transition difficulty and it is a very simple, easy to fix thing that is bugging the child (the lunch room is scary so I don't want to go to school)
- Be patient and supportive
- Be open to new approaches...there is no one size fits all model!

### **When Children Aren't Ready for Kindergarten**

How do we support the students who are old enough to enroll in school but not developmentally ready to succeed. There are two approaches that have been used by parents and schools, which included delaying entry and retaining the child in kindergarten for an extra amount of time. These two approaches make sense in light of the research which states that "the youngest children tend to lag behind their classmates" (Reany, 2000). This study found that the youngest children had lower reading and mathematics knowledge and skills on average than their older counterparts. Older kindergartners (those born January-September) were more likely to persist at tasks, more eager to learn and better able to pay attention.

Zill, Loomis and West (1997) found that delayed entry did have a positive impact on students and concluded that waiting the extra year before starting kindergarten does not harm the children and may help MOST of them.

In contrast, researchers discovered that children who repeated kindergarten were doing worse than their peers in grades 1 and 2 and they feel it is due to the negative feedback children receive for being retained. Retained students were much more likely to have problems concentrating, to perform below their capabilities and to act up and disrupt the class. (Zill, Loomis and West, 1997). The conclusion of this research is that retention does not help, but in fact, can make matters worse.

Research indicates that delayed entry into kindergarten has a better chance than kindergarten retention of helping an at risk child avoid future school failure.

Delayed entry is not the fix in every case because one of the main purposes of kindergarten is to foster social development. If the child's entry is to be delayed, IT IS CRUCIAL that the child is involved in effective preschool programs that allow for social development.

The research on delayed entry and retention suggests that neither practice offers an ideal way to assist children who are not ready for school, in fact research (Coley, 2002) asserts that to reduce inequalities in students' success in kindergarten, society must address the differences that exist among children before they start school. The Ontario Early Years programs, Fair Start Screening and Parent Education programs are working to address these issues.

The parent and teacher need to work closely together to monitor the child and to make the best decisions to support the child's growth and development. In some cases the parent and teacher may decide that a delayed entry or retention is the best solution for a particular child, however this decision must be constantly reviewed and monitored by both the teacher and the parent.

Further information: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/web/98097.asp>

## **Conclusion**

There will be JK students and parents who arrive at school on the first day with tears, this is a big adjustment and we need to acknowledge and respect their feelings. We also need to form partnerships with parents so that the first years of school set a positive tone for future experiences. Most of the first day tears turn into excited smiles within the first few weeks. When the tears don't stop, we need to work together to find an appropriate approach for each situation.

# Cool Kindergarten Hints



1. *Student in a Bag*  
**Materials:** large paper bag, paintbrush, favourite book, favourite snack, pictures of family and pets, favourite CD and cookbook  
**Directions:** Teacher shares items from her/his paper bag and explains significance of each item, helping the children get to know him/her as a person. Each child has a turn to bring in his/her own bag to share with the other students.
2. *Star of the Week*  
**Materials:** Laminated stars, Star of the Week class book, drawing paper.  
**Directions:** A student is picked to be the student of the week. The child's name is put on the star and displayed on the bulletin board. A page is scribed about the student in the Star of the Week class book (blank pages 14 x 17 sheets with a bristle board cover). Students draw a picture of the student and the pages are bound and given to the star to take home. A star is also given to the student to take home to share with parents. The Star of the Week class book is sent home to share with parents.
3. *News Circle*  
**Materials:** Chart paper for modeled writing.  
**Directions:** At circle time, the leader of the day leads the class in news, and then picks the next person to share news. When finished, the leader thanks the student for sharing the news. The teacher may model writing and record the students' news on chart paper.
4. *Home Reading Program*  
**Materials:** Books, coupon includes student's name, title and author of the book, happy or sad face to colour indicating the student's preference of the story.  
**Directions:** Students choose a book to take home for someone to read to them. At the end of the month, students spend their coupons on toys and games.
5. *Washing Hands*  
**Materials:** Soap, water, paper towel.  
**Directions:** Children soap hands to the count of 15, washing the front and back of the hands and between the fingers, before they rinse. Children count verbally to 15, reinforcing numerals 1 to 15.
6. *Name Tags on Desk*  
**Materials:** Laminate 4 x 8 pieces of tag board, with alphabet letters, numbers 1 to 10, and names of students on card.  
**Directions:** Teacher tapes the card to the desk for students to refer to when printing names, letters and numbers.

7. Writing Books  
**Materials:** blank sheets of 14 x 17 paper stapled and covered with bristle board sheets, name on book.  
**Directions:** Child has blank pages for printing letters, numbers, drawing pictures and writing stories. Lined paper may inhibit printing skills at the kindergarten level.
8. Thank you Draw  
**Materials:** Slips of paper with thank you printed on them.  
**Directions:** Students are given a thank you note when caught in the act of doing something good. The thank you notes are put in a jar and collected until Friday. On Friday, a few names are drawn out for prizes. Next week start over again.
9. Pencil Draw  
**Materials:** Pencils, other goodies from the dollar store, big plastic jar.  
**Directions:** Students get to choose a prize from the pencil draw jar on Fridays' if their name is drawn. Throughout the month, names are rotated and all students receive a prize. When games are played (i.e., bingo) prizes are also given from the pencil draw.
10. Book Bags  
**Materials:** Cloth book bag with school logo, leveled books.  
**Directions:** Students put leveled books into their reading bags for their level of achievement in reading. The book bags are storied in their cubbies for guided reading, independent reading, and reading buddies.
11. White Boards  
**Materials:** 4' x 8' sheet of bathroom board found at hardware and lumber stores.  
**Directions:** To cut boards into 12" x 12" pieces. Great to use as white boards with erasable markers for working with letters, numbers and words.
12. Date Stamp  
**Materials:** Date stamp.  
**Directions:** Use a date stamp on all assigned work at the kindergarten level. It is helpful in creating student portfolios when work is dated and can be compared to see if improvement has been made.
13. Positive Praise  
**Materials:** Quiet voices.  
**Directions:** Positive praise, without a lot of noise, is given when someone does something great. Everyone puts their hands together and claps silently three times, holding their thumbs up after each clap and quietly saying "Great Job".
14. Today I Learned...  
**Materials:** Markers, chart paper.  
**Directions:** Teacher completes the sentence with one important fact that is taught that day. At the end of the day, the fact is read again together three times. The students are told to repeat it to the parents when they are asked what did they learn in school today. Both students and parents benefit from the exercise.

15. *Bring Your Teddy and Read Day*  
**Materials:** Teddy bears, books.  
**Directions:** Each student is to find a comfortable reading spot around the room to read with their teddy for 15 minutes. Sometimes pillows can be brought for reading day.
16. *Write a Chapter*  
**Materials:** Chart paper, markers.  
**Directions:** Each class collectively writes a chapter and sends it on to the next class. The chapters begin with the kindergarten classes and the book is passed on until all classes have participated in the writing of the book.
17. *Guest Readers*  
**Materials:** Guest readers  
**Directions:** Guest readers come to the school and read to all kindergarten classes. The objective is to help children have a better understanding that all people need to be readers.
18. *Point and Read*  
**Materials:** Plastic fingers with red fingernails, coffee stirrers, stickers, chopsticks.  
**Directions:** Young readers are encouraged to point to the words they read using a variety of visual props, such as plastic fingers. Sometimes stickers are put on their pointer fingers to help them point and read.
19. *E-mail*  
**Materials:** E-mail addresses of parents.  
**Directions:** Teacher corresponds with parents via e-mail addresses notifying them of upcoming events and other important information. With e-mail, parents and teachers can communicate readily.
20. *Positive Rapport*  
**Materials:** Fancy writing paper.  
**Directions:** Teacher writes a letter to the parents of the kindergarten students pointing out the good qualities of their child and saying how much he/she enjoys their student in the class. Positive communication is important to parents.
21. *Safekeeping Box*  
**Materials:** Box with a lid labeled "Safekeeping Box".  
**Directions:** Toys are put in the safekeeping box until home time, if children are playing with an item when their attention is needed for something else. At the end of the day they can retrieve the item.
22. *Twinkle your Fingers*  
**Materials:** Hands raised in the air with moving fingers.  
**Directions:** Say poem and do actions: "Twinkle your fingers and give a little clap, Twinkle your fingers and roll them in your lap". This poem is helpful when students' attention is needed.

23. Muffins for Mom, Doughnuts for Dad  
**Materials:** Muffins, doughnuts and juice.  
**Directions:** Parents are invited to read to kindergarten students one day a month, and refreshments are provided.
24. Talking without Sound  
**Materials:** Verbal instructions.  
**Directions:** When students are distracted and not listening to instructions, the teacher says they can keep talking, just without sound. When too many students are talking, the teacher explains that it takes the teacher's words away. The teacher continues to talk without sound. When the class becomes quiet, the teacher's voice returns.
25. Zip-lock Bags for Reading  
**Materials:** Leveled books, zip-lock bags.  
**Directions:** Each child is given a zip-lock bag with their name written on it, to take leveled books home to read to parents. A reading log is inserted into the bag where the parent can record the title of the book read and initial the title, if the child reads the book to the parent.
26. Shoe Holder Mail Box  
**Materials:** Shoe Holder that has a pocket for each shoe.  
**Directions:** Pictures of students are put on each pocket so that each student has their own mailbox. Papers that need to go home are put in the mailbox and students check their mailbox on a daily basis.
27. Bear's Bag  
**Materials:** Teddy Bear, writing materials, crayons, backpack, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear" book.  
**Directions:** Students take bear and the backpack home to read the book, write a story, or draw a picture. Students' share their experiences with the class, the following day.
28. Word Wall Pointers  
**Materials:** Pointers, plastic hockey sticks, witch's broom.  
**Directions:** Children can read the words on the word wall using a variety of pointers that can be theme related. A variety of pointers provide variety to help build word recognition skills.
29. Alphabet Soup  
**Materials:** Poker chips, bowl, markers, ladle.  
**Directions:** Students scoop out a few letters from the bowl of alphabet soup. The letters and sounds are identified. Students can draw a picture that begins with the letter they chose.
30. Leader of the Day  
**Materials:** Nametags laminated, 3 x 7 inches.  
**Directions:** The names are rotated daily, giving each child the opportunity to be the Leader of the Day. The leader lines up first for entry and dismissal, begins the sharing

time every morning and performs special chores for the teacher that day (i.e., bringing papers to the office).

31. *Zip the Lips*

**Materials:** Verbal Response “Are your Lips Zipped?”

**Directions:** Before walking down the hallway, the children are asked, “Are your lips zipped?” The children are encouraged to walk down the hall quietly without disturbing other classes.

32. *Student of the Month*

**Materials:** Student of the Month Award Certificates.

**Directions:** A child is selected from the class to receive a Student of the Month award. The parents are invited to the Student of the Month Assembly to see the child receive the award. A picture of the child is displayed in the hall until the next child is selected.

# *The Value of Play*



Play is a challenging concept to define because it is so multi-faceted. Perhaps the best definition is that it is the spontaneous activity of children. Researchers have agreed upon certain characteristics of play behaviour, namely that it is; intrinsically motivated and self initiated, it is process oriented, it is non-literal and pleasurable and it is exploratory and active<sup>3</sup>. Regardless, there is no doubt about the value of play to children. What is intuitively known by teachers and is supported by countless studies is that play is a necessary component for a child's physical development, social and emotional development and cognitive development. To a child, play is learning ... it is their life. Therefore, as noted in the Ontario Ministry of Education document, *The Kindergarten Program 1998*, play certainly has a "legitimate and important role to play in Kindergarten". The document continues by pointing out that "play provides opportunities for learning in a context in which children are at their most receptive" and that "it is important that teachers develop an understanding of how children learn through play ...to allow them to plan productive play activities that have specific learning goals and to provide appropriate and stimulating resources". Thus, the impetus for including play in the Kindergarten program is clear and the intent of this section of the handbook is to categorize the stages and types of play and provide some suggestions to help guide teachers in their planning considerations around play.

Based upon research from the 1930's from Mildred Parten, which is still used today, play can be grouped into six main categories that mirror children's social development. These categories are:

- Unoccupied Play – this is where the child is not engaged in play but may be watching others
- Solitary (Independent) Play – the child plays separately from others, with no reference to what others are doing
- Onlooker Behaviour – where the child will watch others and may talk to them but doesn't join in
- Parallel Play – the child may play with similar objects as others in close proximity to them, but not actually with them
- Associative Play – where children play with others without the organization of a play activity
- Cooperative Play – where children coordinate their behaviour with others, including adults, and are communicating within the group

For kindergarten children we usually see the stages of associative play and cooperative play in place; however, it is not unusual to see children engaging in the earlier stages of play as well. The classroom should be organized so that small group play is encouraged. It is also important to remember that children of similar ages may vary considerably in terms of their social interactions.

The types of play that children engage in is truly amazing but can be summarized into general categories and is related to the materials involved. There can also be considerable overlapping depending on the nature of the activity. Some categories include:

- Quiet Play – this type of play would be encouraged by picture books, colouring, puzzles, bead-stringing
- Active/Physical Play – this type of play requires space and can be encouraged with balls, ropes, music, bicycles, slides, swings
- Creative/Expressive Play – this is where children can create and use their imagination – it can be encouraged with paints, clay, music, puzzles, playdough
- Cooperative/Social Play – this is where children play together and can include ball games, hide and seek, races, tag, playing dolls
- Dramatic/Imaginative Play – this is make believe where children may dress up and pretend to be someone else
- Manipulative Play – this develops coordination and may include painting, cutting, blocks, puzzle

### **The Teacher's Role in Play**

The teacher has different roles to play:

- Play is child initiated and the teacher can be invited to play
- The teacher models play and encourages student play
- The teacher extends play
- The teacher scaffolds the learning for play

As teachers observe their students they will develop a profile of the student's strengths and areas for development and they can help provide opportunities for play that will accommodate these areas. It is important to note that all play should not be structured by the teacher rather the children should be free at times to devise their own activities. Teachers can facilitate the play by providing the materials and then allowing students to decide how they will work with it. They can also suggest alternatives and encourage alternative approaches. Other suggestions include:

- use "open-ended" toys, such as clay and blocks as opposed to media generated toys which lead to a single purpose
- relax the controls – minimize your involvement (while being aware of safety concerns)
- accept the alternative – encourage innovation and unique ideas
- foster perseverance – encourage the students to complete tasks on their own
- include visual and auditory stimuli in the classroom
- provide appropriate, planned outdoor play opportunities
- rotate the toys available for play so students don't get bored
- encourage role playing and pretend games
- act out stories that you have read in class
- encourage creative movement during physical education
- value the child's play and tell them

Play Today

~ by Leila P. Fagg ~

You say you love your children and are concerned they learn today?  
So am I -- that's why I'm providing a variety of kinds of play.

You're asking me the value of blocks and other such play?  
Your children are solving problems;  
they will use that skill every day.

You're asking what's the value of having your children play?  
Your daughter's creating a tower;  
she may be a builder someday.

You're saying you don't want your son to play in that sissy way?  
He's learning to cuddle a doll.  
He may be a father some day.

You're questioning the interest centers; they look like just listless play?  
Your children are making choices;  
they'll be on their own some day.

You're worried your children aren't learning and later they'll have to pay?  
They're learning a pattern for learning;  
for they'll be learners always.

Resources Referenced:

1. Ministry of Education. *The Kindergarten Program*: Toronto, MOE, 1998
2. National Network for Child Care. Types of Play/Kinds of Play.  
<http://www.nccc.org/Curriculum/better.play.html>
3. Packer Isenberg, Joan and Quisenberry, Nancy. PLAY: ESSENTIAL FOR ALL CHILDREN. <http://www.udel.edu/bateman/acei/playpaper.htm>

# *Educational Centres and Workstations*

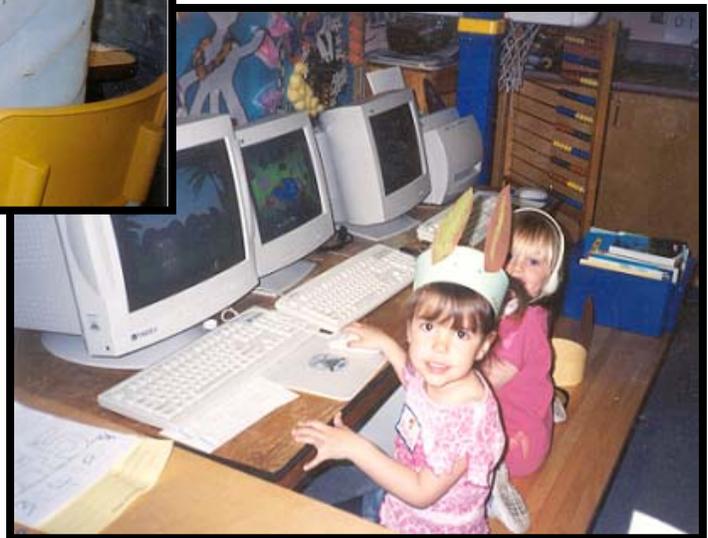


## **What are Workstations?**

Workstations allow students to be actively involved in a variety of activities where they practice and apply the concepts teachers have taught them.

## **What are Centres?**

Centres are designated areas where children are involved in meaningful play of their choice, i.e.: dramatic play, blocks, water table, etc.



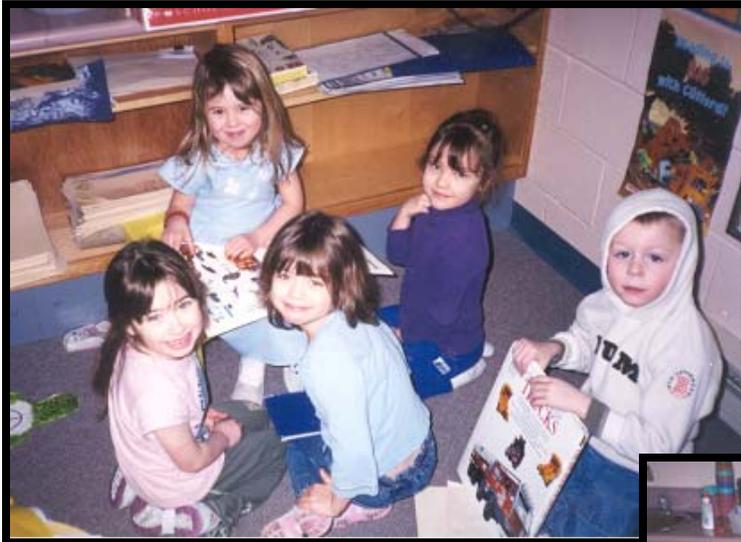
## **Why Use Centres and Workstations?**

- They allow teachers more time to instruct students individually as well as in small groups.
- They allow teachers to integrate different curriculum strands
- They are an excellent way to use concrete materials that are appropriate for student's developmental level
- Students are given the opportunity to practice skills and concepts individually and with their peers
- Students are given choices to meet their own individual learning style and interests
- Students learn to work independently and as a group

## Getting Started with Centres and Workstations

### Questions to Consider When Developing Centres and Workstations in the Classroom

- How much time will it take the teacher to set up centres and workstations?
- Are activities meaningful and support the kindergarten curriculum?
- Do centre/workstation activities allow students to practice and apply skills that have already been taught?



- How will students be assessed on the centres/workstations in which they participate?
- Are materials and resources available for centre and workstation activities? What will need to be collected/purchased?
- Where will centres and workstations be set up in the classroom and where will materials be stored?

- How many students will be allowed to work at each activity and how will you communicate this to the students?
- Do activities meet the needs of all students in the class?
- Can students complete tasks independently so that the teacher could be working with others?
- Do activities build on familiar experiences of the students?
- Are centre and workstation activities fun and interesting to students of this age?



### Introducing Centres and Workstations

There are many different ways that teachers could set up centers and workstations in the classroom. (See Management of Centres) Once classroom rules and routines are established, the teacher should model centre rules and routines. The teacher should model:

- How rotation between centres and work stations will be conducted
- What to do when students need help (i.e. ask another student)

- When to interrupt the teacher (i.e. ask three before me)
- What to do when they are done
- Working quietly and independently in a group
- Using and caring for materials
- Storing finished and unfinished work (i.e. Portfolios, work boxes, etc.)
- Cleaning up routines
- Grouping of students

### Debriefing and Review

After each Centre and Workstation Block there should a debriefing period. Teachers may ask the following questions:

- What went well today?
- How did your group work together?
- What could be improved? How could we prevent it from happening again?
- What did we learn today?
- How did we learn it?

### Management of Centres and Workstations

There are many different ways to manage and rotate centres. The following are a few suggestions:

#### 1. Rotation System

The teacher must establish centre and work stations groups. Students move systematically through the centres and workstations and the teacher has control over when and where students work. All students are given the same opportunity to work at centres for the same amount of time. Rotation cards can be colour coded and displayed on a chart using magnets, tape or pins. Centre and workstation pictures and names can be used and attached to the opposite side of the group cards. The teacher can then easily rotate students through the centres and workstations by moving their group cards forward in a rotation cycle (down one space, bottom moving to the top).

#### 2. Rotation Wheel

A wheel can be used to display the rotation. Use two circles and divide them into sections for each group. The outer circle contains the centre names and pictures. The inner wheel contains the group names, numbers or colours. The teacher turns the inner circle to rotate the groups.

### 3. Centre Board

Use a bulletin board, poster board or a magnetic board to display centre picture and names and group names, colours or numbers. The groups are mounted in the chart and the centre pictures are rotated from left to right.

### 4. Pocket Organizer

Use library pockets or envelopes cut in half for each centre and glue this onto poster board. Pockets are labeled with centre names and craft sticks can be used for rotation. Use coloured craft sticks for groups or write student names on the craft sticks if students move individually from each centre. The teacher can easily move craft sticks to a new pocket each day and more than one stick can be in each pocket.

### 5. Self Selected Centres and Workstations

The teacher provides a class list, or a sheet with student pictures copied onto it. The list is posted at each centre and when students have completed the centre, they cross their name or picture off. This allows the teacher to determine who has not completed a centre at a glance. This also gives students ownership and responsibility for completion of centres.

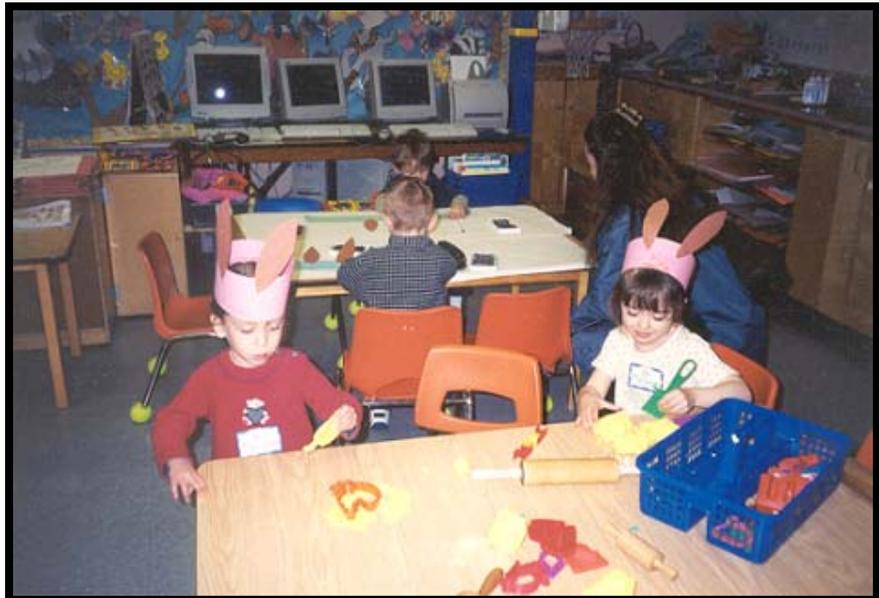
### A Variety of Activities

Some centres and workstations may stay up all year long, depending on space and interest and ability of students. Other centres may be changed routinely such as literacy centres, mathematics stations, science and technology, craft centres. Centres and workstations that may stay all year may be:

- ★ Alphabet games
- ★ Math games
- ★ Writing Centre
- ★ House
- ★ Blocks
- ★ Manipulatives
- ★ Sand Box
- ★ Water Table
- ★ Reading
- ★ Music/Listening Centre
- ★ Puppets
- ★ Computers
- ★ Puzzles

These centres can usually be done independently by students,

whereas workstations will need some degree of instruction and modeling by the teacher.



## Ideas for Workstations

Many workstations have a literacy focus to them. The following are a few suggestions of literacy workstations that could be set up in a kindergarten classroom.

**Newspaper ABC** - The children circle specific letters, numbers or words on a piece of newspaper.

**ABC/Word Eggs** – Write a capital letter on one half of a plastic egg and the lower case letter on the other half and have students put the halves together. You may also choose to use rhyming words, compound words, etc.



**Sensory Table** – Use saltboxes, sand paper, white boards, paint, chalkboards, gel bags to write letters and words.

**Build a Word** – Use magnetic letters, letters in a pocket chart or an overhead projector to make words.

**Listening Centre** – Using tape recorders or walkmans, have students listen to books or music on tape.

**Rebus Writing** – Students can make rebus stories using clip art, stickers or stamps.

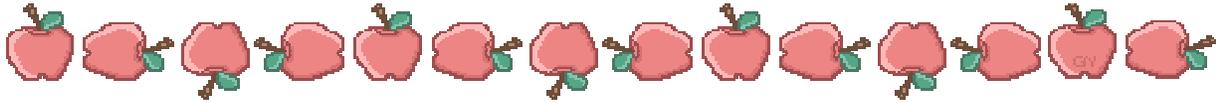
**Question Survey** – Place clipboards at the writing centre. Children can carry them around to write on as they survey the class. The teacher could make up a question and design a recording sheet for the survey.

**Reading Centre** - The teacher could set up bins of books divided into levels, authors, themes, etc., for students to read. It is fun to provide props, pointers, reading glasses and hats for the reading centre. It is also important to make it comfortable.

References:

1. Marge Southall, *Literacy Centres: Who, What, Where, When and Why.* Ontario Kindergarten Conference: Summer 2003.
2. Diller, Debbie. *Literacy Work Stations – Making Centers Work.* Stenhouse Publishers 2003.

# Mathematics in Kindergarten



In The Kindergarten Program policy document, there is a section on Mathematics. It has Overall Expectations and Expectations in Specific Areas. They are as follows:

## Overall Expectations

By the end of Kindergarten, children will:

- demonstrate understanding of sets and whole numbers;
- measure and compare the length, weight, mass, capacity, and temperature of objects, and demonstrate awareness of the passage of time;
- identify the characteristics of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects;
- recognize and use patterns;
- collect, display, and interpret data in daily activities;
- show willingness to persevere in solving problems;
- seek further information, assistance, or materials when necessary.

## Expectations in Specific Areas

### Number Sense and Numeration

By the end of Kindergarten, children will:

- sort and classify objects into sets according to specific characteristics, and describe those 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 10;
- 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 two 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:

- identify and reproduce 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., Popsicle sticks, pebbles, stickers, counters);

### 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*).

In the Early Math Strategy, *The Report of the Expert Panel on Early Math in Ontario, 2003*, there is a section devoted to the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics. It is divided into components: **characteristics of the early mathematic learner** and **characteristics of an effective early grades mathematics program**. The following notes about Early Math are taken right from this document.

### **Characteristics of the Early Mathematics Learner**

There are many elements such as “recognition of the developmental aspects of learning, the importance of building on prior mathematical understanding, and the essential fact that children learn mathematics primarily through “..... **doing, talking, reflecting, discussing, observing, investigating, listening and reasoning**” (Copley, 2000, p. 29).

Young children have a natural inquisitiveness about mathematics, and teachers can build on this inquisitiveness to help students develop the positive attitudes that often occur when one understands and makes sense of a topic. The mathematics that children bring to school should be valued and utilized in the classroom. Children need to see mathematics as sensible, and they do so when the mathematics they are learning in school connects with their intuitive sense of mathematics and with the understanding of mathematics that they bring with them to the classroom.

Children arrive at school with intuitive mathematical understandings. A teacher needs to connect with and build on those understandings. This is done through the use of mathematical experiences that allow students to explore mathematics and to communicate their explorations in a meaningful dialogue with the teacher and their peers. As well, the activities that teachers provide need to be appropriate to the developmental stages of the students. (Early Math Strategy, 2003, p. 7-11)

### **Characteristics of an Effective Early Grades Mathematics Program**

The **framework for effective teaching** includes opportunities for guided mathematics, shared mathematics and independent mathematics.

An effective mathematics learning environment is an environment that:

- promotes positive beliefs and attitudes towards mathematics;
- values prior knowledge;
- makes connections between that knowledge, the world of the child, and the strands and actions of mathematics;
- encourages the establishment of a community of mathematics learners;

- focuses on important mathematical concepts or big ideas (counting, operational sense, quantity, relationships and representation);
- explores concepts through problem solving;
- includes a variety of learning resources;
- is supported by the strong roles of teacher, principal, and senior administration;
- is supported by the home.

Meaningful mathematics instruction begins by engaging children's mathematical thinking, allowing children sufficient time to solve problems, and focusing on the use of incidental and integrated learning as well as programmed learning.

In classroom community of mathematics learners, students will:

- see, hear, and feel mathematics;
- learn mathematics through doing and talking about it;
- have enough time to solve problems and share with others;
- be active and enthusiastic about learning mathematics.

Effective mathematics programs provide children with opportunities to have deep and sustained interaction with key mathematical ideas. Teaching that uses big ideas or key concepts allow students to make connections instead of seeing mathematics as disconnected ideas. Problem solving is more than the application of skills. Problem solving in a classroom generally begins with the teacher presenting the problem, students exploring and working on a solution to the problem, and then teacher and students consolidating and reflecting. Teachers need to recognize that problem-solving processes develop over time and can be significantly improved by effective teaching practices.

Parents, teachers, and children are all partners in the learning process. Opening channels of communication with the home sends the message to children that the mathematics at school is worthy and important.

Resources to support early grades learning of mathematics are essential. Concrete materials provide students with tactile experiences to help them model, describe, and explore mathematics. Good lessons using manipulatives do not just happen; they need to be thoughtfully prepared. The following concrete materials should be part of an effective mathematics classroom:

**Recommended for every classroom** – attribute blocks, base 10 materials, playing cards, connecting cubes (1cm, 2 cm, 1.8 cm & 2.5 cm), instructional clock, dice, geoboards, graduated beakers, hundreds chart, hundreds board, hundred carpet, materials for sorting and counting, measuring spoons, money set, number lines, pattern blocks, stamps of various mathematical manipulatives (e.g., pattern blocks, tangrams, clocks, base 10), two-coloured counters, and 3D solids.

**Recommended for every division** – trundle wheel, thermometers, tangrams, stackable blocks, pentominoes, plastic transparent tools, measuring tapes, coloured relational

rods, coloured tiles, clocks for student use, connecting plastic shapes to build 2D shapes and 3D nets and an abacus.

The organization of the classroom is an essential ingredient in the building of a classroom community of mathematics learners. To support an effective early mathematics program, a classroom should have:

- ✓ a visible mathematics area in the room where core manipulatives are kept;
- ✓ manipulatives accessible to children throughout the day as needed, with routines established for their distribution and collection;
- ✓ manipulatives storage bins or containers that are labeled for easy identification and clean-up;
- ✓ mathematical reference materials that are displayed around the room (e.g., calendar, number lines, hundreds chart);
- ✓ computers that are accessible to all children;
- ✓ areas for instructional groupings (whole group, small group, individuals).

The provision of sufficient blocks of time as well as the threading of mathematics throughout the day plays vital roles in student learning. **In Junior and Senior Kindergarten, there should be focused time (approximately 20 minutes) every day for mathematics;** this may take the form of a guided or shared experience, or of students participating in a center focused on mathematics. In addition to this time, students should be engaged in consolidating their mathematical learning in centers within the classroom (e.g., sand table center, literacy center, water table, and measuring center).

### **An Effective Teaching Framework**

**In an effective mathematics program, balance is the essential factor.** There needs to be a balance of the following:

- skill development and problem solving;
- conceptual understanding and technical proficiency;
- teaching strategies;
- investigation and guided learning;
- individual activities and group activities;
- activities to address different learning styles;
- strands;
- actions of mathematics or categories of the achievement chart
- assessment strategies

Three components are suggested in the building of a balanced program. The components are **guided mathematics**, **shared mathematics**, and **independent mathematics**. A description and a lesson sample of each of the components of learning in a balanced mathematics program follows.

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### *Shared Mathematics*

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#### **Reasons for shared mathematics:**

- Shared mathematics provides students with opportunities to acquire and use content knowledge and skills through problem solving, investigation, reasoning and proof, communication, connection, and reflection.
- Shared mathematics takes key concepts/big ideas from the curriculum that need to be addressed and considers how to incorporate them in a developmentally appropriate manner through problem solving or discussion.
- Students learn from one other. The teacher is not the only source of knowledge, and students need a variety of opportunities to construct their own mathematical understanding with others.

#### **What shared mathematics looks like:**

- Shared mathematics may occur between teacher and student, teacher and a group of students, student with other students.
- Reflection, discussion, and sharing occur at the end of the session to bring closure and clarification to the key mathematical ideas.
- Groupings could be pairs, small groups, or whole class.

#### **Students could be:**

- working in partners exploring a problem together;
- working at centers in small groups;
- teaching other students;
- using manipulatives;
- playing games;
- participating in a mathematics walk;
- working on a puzzle;
- working on computers;
- singing songs to reinforce mathematical ideas;

- exploring concepts, finding answers/solutions to problems, and generating or asking questions;
- working together to learn a new concept/idea or skill;
- talking, sharing – the classroom is productively noisy.

**The teacher could be:**

- facilitating, observing, and asking key questions as students work;
- promoting individual, small group, or whole group discussion;
- gathering assessment data to;
  - make decisions about where to go next with program planning;
  - make modifications for individuals or group of students;
  - provide extensions for individuals or groups of students.

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*Guided Mathematics*

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**Reasons for guided mathematics:**

- Guided mathematics helps to clarify new knowledge or skill.
- Guided mathematics takes key concepts/big ideas in the curriculum and incorporates or presents them in a developmentally appropriate manner.

**What guided mathematics looks like:**

- Focus lessons are used.
- Instruction is sequential and planned by the teacher.
- Class instruction is well thought out yet flexible to capitalize on alternative ideas and strategies provided by students.
- The teacher works with the whole group or a small group, and at times with individual students.
- Reflection, discussion, and sharing are vital components to help bring closure and clarification of key mathematical ideas but need not occur at the end of class and may happen throughout.
- The teacher and students work with manipulatives, at a chart, standing in a group, at the overhead/blackboard, or sitting on the floor.

**Students could be:**

- responding to the teacher's questions and offering next steps;
- guiding and modeling mathematical thinking or ideas for other students while the teacher provides support and guidance.

**The teacher could be:**

- activating the concept and connecting it with prior knowledge;
- modeling mathematics language, problem solving, and thinking;
- leading the discussion;
- setting up a learning experience so that students gain new knowledge or skills;
- pointing out and highlighting students' different strategies while addressing the key concept/big idea or focus of the lesson;
- acting as a guide or facilitator to ensure that strategies are appropriate, effective, and correct;
- including good questions that are thought provoking and capture the essence of the mathematics.

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*Independent Mathematics*

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**Reasons for independent mathematics:**

- Children demonstrate their understanding, practice a skill, or consolidate learning in a developmentally appropriate manner through independent work.
- Students have time to grapple with a problem on their own.
- Students need time to consolidate ideas for and by themselves.

**What independent mathematics looks like:**

- Independent mathematics may occur at various times and just at the end of the activity or lesson.
- Reflection, discussion, or sharing could occur to bring closure and clarification of the key mathematical concepts.
- Independent mathematics may include practicing a mathematical skill, journal writing, explaining an idea to the teacher, playing a independent game, working alone on the computer, or using manipulatives to gain a better grasp of a key concept.

### **Students could be:**

- communicating and demonstrating their learning;
- at their desks, working on the carpet, at the board, using manipulatives, using clipboards, or working at computer;
- deciding which tools to use and where to find them.

### **The teacher could be:**

- gathering assessment data to be used for diagnostic, formative, or summative purposes;
- observing and recording anecdotal comments;
- walking around the room and interacting with students;
- interviewing or conferencing with individual student

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

Assessment is the gathering of information or observable evidence of what a student can do. Evaluation involves the judging and interpreting of the assessment data and, if required the assigning of a grade. **The purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.** A balanced unit would incorporate the categories of the achievement chart in both instruction and assessment. The categories provide a framework that gives students opportunities to demonstrate the understanding of concepts, the applying of procedures, problem solving, and communication.

A good mathematics program should also use assessment for different purposes to determine prior knowledge; to identify developmental levels of mathematical understanding; to support day-to-day learning; and to set new goals. These purposes are addressed through diagnostic (assessing prior knowledge), formative (ongoing assessment), and summative (determining what has been learned) assessment strategies. **Assessment should encourage students to show what they know and can do rather than focus on what they do not know or cannot do. An assessment that focuses on what students can do takes into account the developmental stage of the child.**

Teachers need to use assessment strategies that provide as complete a description of the child's mathematical achievements and attitudes as possible. Strategies that teachers can use are observations, interviews, conferences/conversations, portfolios and collections of work, tasks and daily work, journals and logs, self-assessment, open-ended questions, performance tasks, projects and investigations, and some tests, quizzes and short-answer questions.

*Sample SK Mathematics Lessons*

Strand:	<b>Measurement</b>	Component: Independent Mathematics
Big Idea:	Relationships	
<b><i>How Can We Find Out If It Fits?</i></b>		
<u>Task:</u>	Estimating and comparing length.	
<u>Materials:</u>	Stuffed toy, paper strips of various lengths and lots of colours, stickers, wallpaper scraps or fabric.	
<u>Getting Started:</u>	Remind the children about the shoes that were too big, too small and just right – Tell them they will be making some items for their stuffed friend. Demonstrate what they can make – chokers, belts, wrist or ankle bracelets and how they must get the right sized strips.	
<u>Activity:</u>	Children make some items for their stuffed friend. Watch and listen for “too long”, “too big”, “too short”, and “just right”. The children will be estimating. The children spend about 15 minutes make the clothing for their stuffed friend (They can also use patterning in decorating the strips).	
<u>Reflect and Communicate:</u>	Children bring their toy to circle and show off what they have done. Display the animals in the room. Discussion could include “ Both _____ and _____ made belts. Which belt do you think is longer? Why?”	
<u>Literature Connection:</u>	Big Sarah’s Little Boots by Paulette Bourgeois	

Strand:	<b>Number Sense &amp; Numeration/ Data Management &amp; Probability</b>	Component: Guided Mathematics
Big Idea:	Quantity	

***Which Snack Would We Like to Make?***

<u>Task:</u>	Making a graph to compare sets and analyze data.
<u>Materials:</u>	2 column-graphing mat, pizza ingredient cutouts, fruit salad cutouts.
<u>Getting Started:</u>	Talk to children about times that they have had to decide between two snacks they like. Discuss the ingredients of each snack (pizza and fruit salad) and which snack they think they would prefer.
<u>Activity:</u>	Present the question <b>“We will be making one of these snacks, but must decide which to make. How will we decide?”</b> Discuss the children’s suggestions. Children may think of sorting the class into two groups. Children can estimate which group is larger. Ask them if it was easy or difficult to tell how many children voted for each alternative. Explain to the children that lining up in two rows may help show the number of children in each group. Encourage the children to make a people graph by forming two lines that show their choices. Ask if there is another way to show our choices since it might be hard to count the people graph when one is part of the graph. Display a two-column graphing mat and the cutouts for the two snacks. Let each child take a cutout for one the choices and print her or his name on it to make a name card. Then each can place her or his name card in the appropriate column on the graphing mat. Ask the following questions: <b>Which snack do more children want? How do we know? Which snack do fewer children want? How do we know? How is this graph like the people graph we made? How is it different? What does it tell us?</b>
<u>Reflect and Communicate:</u>	Which snack do more of us want? How were we able to tell? Which way of finding out did you find most useful? Why?
<u>Literature Connection:</u>	Ten, Nine, Eight by Molly Bang

Strand: **Patterning**

Component: Shared Mathematics

Big Idea: Representation

***What Part of the Pattern is Covered?***

Task: Guessing hidden elements in the pattern.

Materials: Counters, paper or cloth squares to cover up pattern elements.

Getting Started: Remind the children of the experiences they have had so far with patterns. Displays counters (such as animals) and ask one of the students to make a pattern with the counters. Have the class read the pattern together. Ask how they could make the pattern longer. Invite students to add to the pattern. Do this a few times with other patterns.

Activity: Create and describe a pattern with the children. Have children close their eyes and cover up elements of the pattern. Ask the children to look and predict what is under the cover. Do this a few times then have children partner up to continue on their own. Listen to find out what strategies children suggest for checking their predictions without lifting the cover. Have children record one of the patterns they made to a strip of paper.

Reflect and Communicate: Invite the children to form a large group. Have children talk about the game they played, the patterns they made, and the ways they found out what was hidden under the covers.

Literature Connection: Mary Wore Her Red Dress by Merle Peek

Strand: **Spatial Sense and Geometry**

Component: Guided Mathematics

Big Idea: Relationships

***What Different Shapes Can We Find?***

Task: Identify and discuss shapes.

Materials: Chart paper, Peepo cutout, Poster 11 (Quest 2000)

Getting Started: Begin by having the children focus on Poster 11 and help them recall how they used shape to help Peepo find his friend. Relate the discussion to the children's environment by discussing how the children might use shape to help Peepo find their classroom.

Activity: Pick a starting point in the school and a destination to which the children can readily travel. Begin by having the children look in the direction of the final destination from their starting point. Ask questions such as: **How can we get to our final destination from here? What shapes do you see along the way?** Have children move as a group and sit by a landmark for a discussion: **What shapes did you see? How can we record where we have been and the shapes we saw?** Draw the shapes the children suggest and a word that identifies the object on chart paper. Continue by having children identify where to go next, move there, and sit and discuss the shapes seen along the way. Continue to map out the route, recording shapes along the way. Watch to see what shapes the children notice along the way. Listen to find out what shapes the children suggest to represent the objects.

Reflect and Communicate: Display the recording the class made. Make revisions to the recording by having the children describe the route one would need to take to get back to the starting point. Ask questions such as: **How can we get back to the starting point? Where should we go first? What are these two rectangles that we will see? Is there anything we should add or change to make these directions more helpful?** When they are happy with the revisions, review and discuss the route they created and some of the observations they made while completing the activity. What shapes did you see along the way? What shapes did you see most often? Which did we see the least? In what objects did you see (squares)?

Literature Connection: Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins

# Literacy in Kindergarten



In the Early Reading Strategy, *The Report of the Expert Panel on Early Reading in Ontario, 2003*, there are sections devoted to Why Early Reading Matters and Effective Reading Instruction. These include the following components:

- Why early reading matters
- Stages of reading development
- Laying a strong foundation
- Goals of reading instruction
- Knowledge and skills for reading
- Instruction, assessment and evaluation
- Teaching practices

The following notes about Early Reading are taken right from this document.

## Why Early Reading Matters

Becoming a reader is a continuous process that begins with the development of oral language skills and leads, over time, to independent reading. Oral language – the ability to speak and listen – is a vital foundation for reading success.

While developing oral language is a natural process, learning to read is not. Children must be taught to understand, interpret, and manipulate the printed symbols of written language. This is an essential task of the first few years of school.

Reading success is the foundation for achievement throughout the school years. There is a critical window of opportunity from the ages of four to seven for learning to read. Children who successfully learn to read in the early primary years of school are well prepared to read for learning and for pleasure in the years to come.

## Stages of Reading Development

The first two reading stages are named and described in different ways by different reading specialists, but they are essentially the same.

- *In the earliest, **pre-reading** stage, children mimic the reading process without actually reading. They begin to understand what reading is about and how it works. They learn that what can be spoken can be written down and read by someone else.*
- *In the **beginning reading** stage, children learn to pay attention to the details of print and to the way that printed letters and words represent the sounds and words of oral*

*language. They need to understand how the sounds of the language map onto the letters.*

## **Making It Happen**

Most children require explicit, planned instruction – as well as plenty of exposure to suitable books - to crack the complex code of written language and become as fluent in reading as it speaking.

Effective instruction activates children’s visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses, and makes reading a living and lively experience.

## **Laying a Strong Foundation**

In the early years – whether at home, in childcare, in a preschool program, or in Junior and Senior Kindergarten – children gain a definite advantage when they are given opportunities to engage in purposeful oral language and early print activities. These activities include:

- *Observing others reading*
- *Enjoying and discussing a variety of books that are read aloud by others*
- *Experiencing and pretending to read predictable and familiar books, alphabet books, poems, rhymes, and more*
- *Acting out stories, retelling familiar stories, and singing songs*
- *Sharing experiences with adults and talking about those experiences*
- *Observing print in the environment and connecting print with spoken words and their meaning*
- *Understanding book conventions and concepts about print (e.g., that a book has a front and back)*
- *Recognizing that words are made up of sounds, and manipulating those sounds through rhyming games, sound substitution games, alliterations, and more*
- *Building new vocabulary through books, experiences, and interactions*

## **Effective Reading Instruction**

The foundations of good reading are the same for all children, regardless of their gender, background, or special learning needs. All children use the same processes in learning to read.

The three strands of the language curriculum – oral and visual communication, reading, and writing – are interwoven. They need to be integrated in all subject areas and encouraged at every opportunity.

## **Knowledge and Skills for Reading**

The knowledge and skills that children need for proficiency in reading include:

*Oral Language* – Through experience with oral language, children build the vocabulary, semantic knowledge (awareness of meaning), syntactic knowledge (awareness of structure) that forms a foundation for reading and writing. For the benefit of all children, teachers should constantly model language structures that are more elaborate and varied than the ones children use outside of school, and should engage the children in using these structures and variations for themselves.

*Prior Knowledge and Experience* – In order that children may understand what they are reading, it is important that they come to the text with a variety of experiences that will allow them to appreciate the concepts embedded in the text. These experiences enable them to anticipate the content, and such anticipation leads to easier decoding of the text and deeper understanding of its meaning.

*Concepts About Print* - These concepts include: directionality (knowing that English or French text is read from left to right and top to bottom); differences between letters and words (words are made of letters, and there are space between words); awareness of capitalization and punctuation; diacritic signs (e.g., accents in French); and common characteristics of books (such as the front/back, title, and author).

*Phonemic Awareness* – Children need to learn that the words we say are made up of sounds. This understanding is called phonemic awareness. In order for children to develop phonemic awareness, teachers need to engage them in playing with and manipulating the sounds of language. This can be accomplished through songs, rhymes, and activities that require children to blend individual sounds together to form words in their heads, and by breaking words they hear into their constituent sounds. Blending and segmentation of speech sounds in oral language provide an essential foundation for reading and writing. Phonemic awareness prepares children for decoding and encoding the sounds of the language in print.

*Letter-Sound Relationships* – Building on the foundation of phonemic awareness and concepts about print, children are ready to understand that there is a way to connect the sounds they hear with the print on the page in order to make meaning. Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. Research has shown that systematic and explicit phonics instruction is the most effective way to develop children's ability to identify words in print.

*Vocabulary for Reading* – Vocabulary development involves coming to understand unfamiliar words and being able to use them appropriately. Good teaching includes selecting material for reading aloud that will expand children's oral vocabulary, and providing opportunities for children to see and use the new reading vocabulary in different contexts.

## **Instruction**

Read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, guided comprehension, independent reading, phonics, and word study provide instruction that gives children the opportunity to experience and enjoy authentic texts and to practice the skills and strategies necessary for fluency and comprehension.

## **Phonics and Word Study**

Phonics is a systematic instructional approach that links the foundation of phonemic awareness with children's growing knowledge of letter-sound relationships to enable children to decode words and read. Teachers need to introduce the letter-sound correspondences in a planned, sequential manner so that children have time to learn, practice, and master them. Letter formation is a part of phonics instruction that reinforces children's memory for letter-sound correspondences. To understand the usefulness of letter-sound correspondences and letter formation, children need to apply their knowledge by seeing, saying, and printing words in interesting and authentic contexts.

Word study gives children the opportunity to practice high-frequency words so they can read them automatically (word identification), and to learn word-solving strategies so that they will be able to read partially familiar or unfamiliar words (word knowledge).

## **Read-aloud**

In read-aloud(s) the teacher reads to the whole class or to a small group, using material that is at the listening comprehension level of the children. The content may focus on a topic related to a curriculum expectation in another subject areas, such as mathematics, science, or social studies.

Reading aloud to children helps them to develop a love of good literature, motivation to pursue reading on their own, and familiarity with a variety of genres, including non-fiction. It provides them with new vocabulary, exposes them to a variety of literature, and contributes to their oral and written language development. Reading aloud should occur every day in the early stage of reading instruction to stimulate the children's interest in books and reading.

## **Shared Reading**

In shared reading the teacher guides the whole class or a small group in reading enlarged text so that all the children can see – for example, a big book, an overhead, a chart, a poster, or a book. The text can be read several times, first *for* the children and then *with* the children joining in. Shared reading involves active participation and considerable interaction on the part of students and teachers. It is both enjoyable and motivating for children. The teacher takes into account the difficulty of the text and the skill, knowledge, and experiences of the children in structuring this activity.

Shared reading provides the teacher with the opportunity to model effective reading; promote listening comprehension; teach vocabulary; reinforce concepts about books and print and letter-sound relationships; and build background knowledge on a range of subjects.

Shared reading provides a bridge to guided reading. It should occur daily in the early stages of reading instruction and less frequently in later stages.

## **Guided Reading**

Guided reading is a small-group, teacher-directed activity. It involves using carefully selected books at the children's instructional level. The teacher supports a small group of children as they talk, read, and think their way through a text.

Guided reading provides opportunities to integrate children's growing knowledge of the conventions of print, of letter sound relationships, and of other foundational skills in context. Through modeling and instruction, guided reading enables teachers to extend children's vocabulary development and their knowledge and use of appropriate behaviours, identify areas of need, and allow children to develop more independence and confidence as they practice and consolidate reading behaviours and skills.

### **Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting**

There is a direct and continuous link between teaching and assessment. Assessment includes gathering, recording, and analyzing information about a child's knowledge and skills and, where appropriate, providing descriptive feedback to help the child improve.

- *Diagnostic assessment occurs before reading instruction begins so that the child's prior learning and current reading level can be identified and instructional priorities for the child can be determined.*
- *Formative assessment occurs on an ongoing basis to track the child's progress towards achievement targets. It is formative in the sense that it provides information about learning that is still forming or in progress.*
- *Summative assessment occurs at the end of a learning module or specific time period. Its purpose is to provide information needed to make judgments (evaluations) about student understandings.*

Young children show their understanding by doing, showing, and telling. Assessment strategies need to capture this doing, showing, and telling by watching, listening, and probing. Hence, observation is an integral part of all other assessment strategies.

The Kindergarten curriculum identifies ten expectations for reading, but does not distinguish categories or levels of achievement. For children in Kindergarten, the evaluation is largely a description of what the teacher has observed in the classroom.

Reporting relates to the communication of accurate, comprehensive, and timely information about student achievement to parents, students, and/or other educators. For Kindergarten children reporting should be ongoing and should include a variety of formal and informal methods, ranging from formal written reports and discussions with parents and the child to informal notes to parents and conversations with them.

### **Teaching Practices That Support Early Reading Achievement**

The Framework for Effective Early Reading Instruction (page 12) lists several practices that support reading achievement in young children. They create the conditions for teachers to provide focused, explicit instruction that addresses the specific needs of individual children and groups of children. These include:

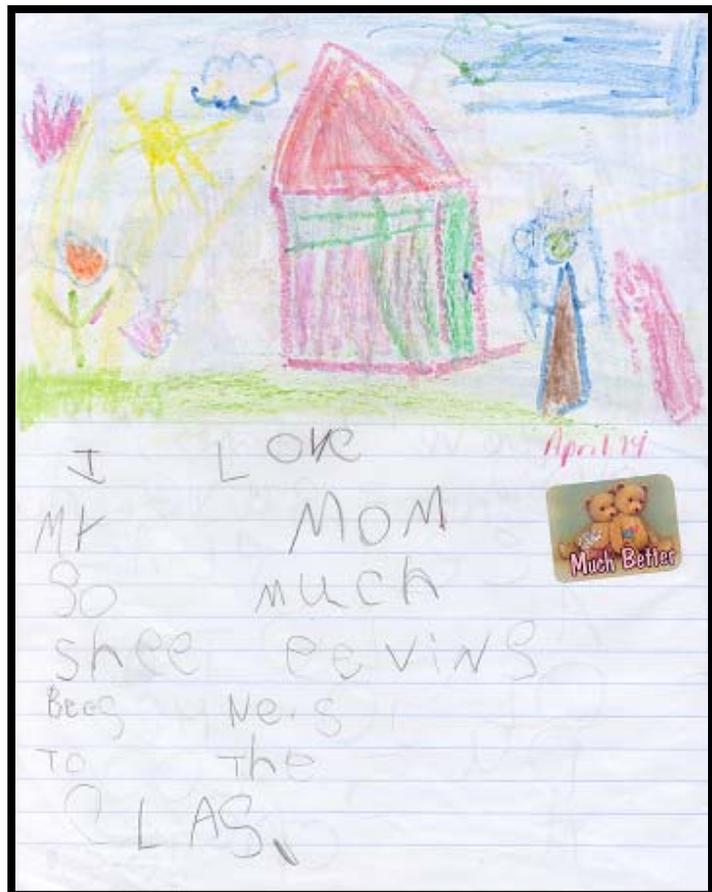
- A balance of direct instruction, guided instruction, independent learning, and practice
- Large group, small group, and individual instruction, discussion, and collaboration
- A variety of assessment and evaluation techniques to inform program planning and instruction

- The integration of phonics and word study in reading, writing, and oral instruction
- An uninterrupted literacy block each day
- Parental and community involvement
- High-quality literature and leveled texts
- A variety of genres, narratives, informational texts, and electronic media
- Authentic and motivating literacy experiences and learning activities
- Guidance, coaching, and feedback for children
- Effective classroom organization and management

### Goals of Writing in Kindergarten

Source: Betsy Stenklyft, BER Conference

1. I want my students to believe that they can write.
2. I want my students to be independent, self-starting writers.
3. I want my students to love writing.
4. I want my students to have the basic tools they need to write:
  - ✓ letter/sound correspondence
  - ✓ high frequency words
  - ✓ topic generation
  - ✓ mechanics: spacing and punctuation, beginning editing



### The Five Developmental Stages of Writing

1. Scribble/Kinder-cursive, pictures
2. Letter strings – random letters
3. Word writing using phonetic spelling
4. Word writing using phonetic and conventional spelling
5. Word writing using mostly conventional spelling

When developing a writing program the teacher should implement the following writing components during the day.

### Modeled Writing (Writing to Children)

In modeled writing the teacher models the writing process talking aloud as she/he writes. This can be done during the daily new or morning message. The teacher talks her way through the exercise explaining why there is a capital at the beginning, spaces in between words, period at the end etc.

### Shared Writing (Writing with Children)

The teacher guides the children through the writing process. The children help contribute ideas on what to write but the teacher is still in control of the pen. Examples of this are letter writing, brainstorming activities, and thank you notes.



### Interactive Writing (Writing with Children)

The teacher and children decide on a topic together and share the pen. Children can help write letters they know, sight words, or be the space between words. Children can even put in punctuation such as periods, exclamation marks etc. This should be started off with slowly due to short attention spans and a limited knowledge of how print works.

### Independent Writing (Writing by Children)

This is the time when children write entirely on their own. They may scribble, draw, or write random letters at first as their awareness of print develops. Eventually they will use their letter sounds, sight

words, and word wall words to contribute to their writing. Good experiences for independent writing are journals, labeling pictures, personal letters, or story writing. Children need to be given the chance to write every day.

*Sample SK Reading Lessons*

Component:	<b>Shared Reading Lesson</b>		
Text:	Three Little Kittens by Paul Galdone, Shared Reading with Big Books, Carson-Dellosa		
Materials:	Big Book version of the text, individual small copies of the text, sticky notes		
<b>Day 1</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Cover talk – title, author, and illustrator.	Read aloud – the teacher reads aloud to the students with full expression.	Discussion – “What would you do if you lost your mittens?”	
<b>Day 2</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Retelling – children retell the story during a picture walk.	Choral reading to guess the covered word – use sticky notes to cover some key high-frequency words.	Reread the book with all of the sticky notes removed.	
<b>Day 3</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Retelling – use the cover of the book as a catalyst for retelling the story.	Echo reading – read a line and let the children be your echo, repeating the line after you.	Rereading of the complete book to gain fluency and expression.	
<b>Day 4</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Discussion – talk about your favourite part of the book.	Readers Theatre – the teacher is narrator with half the students as kittens and the other students are the mother cat. Switch parts and read the book again.	The book is reread in its entirety with the appropriate emphasis. The teacher makes note of those students who are now reading along and those who are confused or who are having difficulty with the repetitive pattern.	
<b>Day 5</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Review the story and actions of the kittens that lost their mittens.	Create a class big book on large sheets of paper.	When the class book is completed, students celebrate their learning by reading their own contributions and then sharing the book in its entirety with interested adults and other classes in the school.	

Component:	<b>Guided Reading Lesson</b>
Text:	Baby Wild Animals, Momentum, Literacy in Motion, A Guided Reading and Writing Program, (Scholastic, 2003)
<b><i>Before</i></b>	
Introduction of the text - Cover talk – read title and author’s name and discuss cover. Brainstorm and list animals that live in the wild and ask children which names they know for the baby animals. Predict which baby animals they might read about in this book. Look through the pictures together to discover which wild animals are included.	
<b><i>During</i></b>	
Independent reading – use all the information on the page to check and confirm meaning. When children come to a difficulty work, they can ask themselves - What makes sense?	
<b><i>After</i></b>	
<p>Discussion - about what they have read and any difficulties they may have encountered. The students are encouraged to share strategies that helped them in their reading. Talk about children’s favourite animals in the book. Ask them to find the page that tells about their favourite animal and read the page to a partner.</p> <p>After-reading activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher may choose to introduce the students to a brief onset-and-rime activity involving the word frog with the letters, d, h, and j, so that the students can make and then record the words dog, hog, and jog.</li> <li>• The teacher may supply a variety of magazines and ask children to find animal pictures. Work together to make an animal mural.</li> </ul>	

### Sample Balanced Literacy Timetable – Full Day Kindergarten

<i>Time</i>	<i>Day 1</i>	<i>Day 2</i>	<i>Day 3</i>	<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Day 5</i>	<i>Day 6</i>
8:45 – 9:00	Entry and Sign In					
9:00 – 9:10	<b>O Canada and Announcements</b>					
9:10 – 9:35	Circle Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In this time block teachers choose from the following activities: daily agenda, shared writing (e.g. daily news, V.I.P.'s, shared reading (e.g. poems, chant or song), student sharing (e.g. Visiting Bear, sharing groups/triads), phonological awareness song/game, interactive writing</li> </ul>					
9:35 – 10:30	Activity Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children self-select from a variety of choice activities (e.g., sand, water, painting, blocks, puppets, house, listening, writing, shelf toys, math, play doh, science table, book corner, etc.)</li> <li>Teachers may choose to draw together a small group of students to focus on a particular learning experience (e.g., math lesson, science focus, interactive writing, guided reading for students who are ready, etc.)</li> </ul>					
10:30– 10:45	Snack/Recess					
10:45 – 11:30	Reading and Writing Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Aloud or Shared Reading</li> <li>Hold follow up discussion to make relevant connects to students' lives</li> <li>Reading Response Activity: This could include large group activities (e.g., art, independent writing, math or science extension) or small group activities (e.g., literacy centres)</li> <li>Response activities allow students an opportunity to demonstrate an understanding of what has been read (retell, relate, reflect, review)</li> <li>Library, Learning Buddies or Computer time could also take place in this block</li> </ul>					
11:30 – 11:45	Student sharing of response activities, clean up and preparation for lunch					
11:45 – 12:45	Lunch and Recess					
12:45 – 1:15	Circle Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This second oral language focus should include any of the following types of activities: calendar, shared writing, shared reading (often a poem, song or chant dealing with science or mathematics), graphing activity, or interactive writing activity dealing with science or math</li> </ul>					
1:15 – 2:15	Activity Time or Large Group Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers may choose to have a second activity time (often exclusively supporting math or science expectations) or a large group extension activity that supports integrated learning</li> <li>Library, Learning Buddies, or computer time could occur in this block</li> </ul>					
2:15 – 2:30	Snack/Recess					
2:30 – 2:45	Students receive mailing, home links, prepare backpacks, take home reading books or take home kits					
2:45 – 3:30	Gym/Outdoor Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This time block could include scheduled physical education in the gym or quality daily physical activity in the classroom or outside on the playground</li> </ul>					

Source: Thames Valley District School Board Sample, 2002

### Sample Balanced Literacy Timetable – Half Day Kindergarten

<i>Time</i>	<i>Day 1</i>	<i>Day 2</i>	<i>Day 3</i>	<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Day 5</i>
8:40 – 9:00	Entry and Sign In				
9:00 – 9:10	<b>O Canada and Announcements</b>				
9:10 – 9:35	Group Time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared reading / writing</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Introduction of centres for the week</li> <li>• Poem / story</li> <li>• Morning Message</li> </ul>				
9:35 – 10:30	Centre Time (changes weekly): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Teacher also takes small groups for literacy activities</li> </ul>				
10:30– 10:45	Snack/Recess				
10:45 – 11:30	<b><i>Mon</i></b>	<b><i>Tues</i></b>	<b><i>Wed</i></b>	<b><i>Thurs</i></b>	<b><i>Fri</i></b>
	Read Aloud	Gym	Library	Computers	Reading Buddies
11:00 – 11:15	Independent Reading – books chosen from leveled bins				
11:15	Dismissal				

Component:	<b>Read Aloud Reading Lesson</b>		
Title:	The Gingerbread Man, retold by Brenda Parkes and Judith Smith		
Materials:	Copy of the book, flannel board cutouts of the characters		
<b>Day 1</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Do a cover talk. Look for clues about the story. Have them predict what they think the book will be about, and record their predictions on a chart.	Read the book aloud, with appropriate fluency and expression. The story pattern “Run, run, as fast as you can. You can’t catch me, I’m the Gingerbread Man,” is chanted by the teacher and the children are encouraged to join in with the familiar verse.	Discuss the students’ predictions and compare how the story was. Discuss whether their predictions were similar or different.	
<b>Day 2</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Retell the story using flannel board cutouts of the characters.	Reread the text and encourage the children to join in with familiar parts.	Ask the students: What does the story make you think of? What part of the story did you like best? Who was your favourite character? Have you read other books about the Gingerbread Man?	
<b>Day 3</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Make sentence strips of the verse “Run, run, as fast as you can. You can’t catch me, I’m the Gingerbread Man”. Have the students sort the strips and put them in order in the pocket chart or cut the sentence strips into words and have the students sort the words.	Reread the book aloud, showing the pictures once again. Encourage the students to choral read.	Create a new cover for the book. Have the students share their drawings during circle time.	

Component:	<b>Independent Reading Lesson</b>
Materials:	Just-right books, which students can read easily because the challenges in the books match the students' level of skills development; familiar books introduced by the teacher in read-aloud, shared reading, and/or guided reading.
<b><i>Before</i></b>	
Book talk: Introduce a sample text to students. Discuss title, author and cover of book.	
<b><i>During</i></b>	
Read the book or a few pages, aloud with expression.	
<b><i>After</i></b>	
Have the students search book bins or book bags for leveled books. Interact with students by listening to students read short selections of text and engage in brief conversations about the story content with individual students. Have students give a book talk, retell a story through writing or drawing, or share what they learned about a topic.	

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*Sample SK Writing Lessons*

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<b>Component:</b>	<b>Guided Writing Lesson (Mini-lesson to focus on spelling strategies)</b>
<b>Materials:</b>	Blank chart paper on easel, markers, “Three Kittens Lost Their Mittens” by Paul Caldone.
<b><i>Before</i></b>	
Focus on the title and author of the book, “The Three Little Kittens”. Read the book with fluency and expression. Ask students what pets they have. Have the students share their experiences with pets.	
<b><i>During</i></b>	
Tell the children you have a cat. Model stretching out words and hearing the beginning, middle, and ending sounds. Talk about capitalization and punctuation. As you write, “think-aloud” about what you are doing. Focus on spelling strategies. “I want to say, ‘I have a little brown cat.’ I know how to spell ‘I’, I. ‘I’ begins with a capital. I want to write the word ‘have’. I can see the word ‘have’ on the word wall under the letter ‘h’, have, h-a-v-e. Can you spell the word ‘a’? Yes, that is right, ‘a’. I can look over to the wall and see the colour chart to find the word ‘brown’, b-r-o-w-n. I want to write ‘cat’. I can stretch out the word and spell it, c-a-t, because I know the sounds of the letters. If I know how to spell ‘bat’, I can spell ‘cat’.”	
<b><i>After</i></b>	
Read the sentence. Encourage the students to read the sentence with you. Remind the children that in their writing today, they should use the words in the room to help them spell words that are found on the walls and stretch out other words they cannot spell or find on the walls.	

Component:	<b>Shared Writing Lesson</b>		
Text:	Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Bill Martin, Jr.		
Materials:	Chart paper, markers, sentence strips		
<b>Day 1</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Introduce the book by title, author and cover. Read the book with fluency and expression.	Encourage the students to join in with the predictable pattern of the book, “_____, _____, _____, What do you see? I see a _____ looking at me.”	Have children make a predictable chart using the pattern. Student dictates the sentence and the teacher writes sentence on the chart paper.	
<b>Day 2</b>			
Read the sentences written on Day 1 on the chart paper. Finish the chart with students.			
<b>Day 3</b>			
Model “touch reading” with the first sentence on the predictable chart. The children “touch read” their sentences on the predictable chart. Each child reads his/her sentence and touches the words as it is read (tracking print).			
<b>Day 4</b>			
Choose two or three sentences from the chart. Write each sentence on a sentence strip. Cut the words apart and give each word in the sentences to students. Children with the words come to the front of the class to “build the sentence”.			
<b>Day 5</b>			
Make a class book and read the pages in the book. Have each child read his/her page.			

Component:	<b>Interactive Writing Lesson</b>
Materials:	Blank chart paper on easel, markers, highlighter markers
<b><i>Before</i></b>	
<p>To write the Morning Message, ask questions as you write. Model what you think. Where do I begin my message? What letter do I write at the beginning of the word? What do I put at the end of the sentence? What should I write next?</p>	
<b><i>During</i></b>	
<p>Talk as you write. "I am going to write my morning message. I want to write 'Good Morning, girls and boys.' Good, capital G-o-o-d, Morning, capital M-o-r-n-i-n-g, girls, g-i-r-l-s, and, a-n-d, boys, b-o-y-s. This is a comma and the comma means to pause. Where are we going tomorrow? Yes, we will go to the library. What letter does 'we' start with? Yes, 'w', w-e, will, w-i-l-l, go, g-o, to, do you know how to spell 'to'? Yes, t-o, the, can you spell the word 'the'? Yes, t-h-e spells the word the, library, l-i-b-r-a-r-y. What do we put at the end of the sentence? Yes, a period, we end the sentence with a period.</p>	
<b><i>After</i></b>	
<p>Point to the words and ask the class to read the morning message with you. Have students count the words in the sentence. Have them highlight some of the high-frequency words. The morning messages can be stapled into a class book and put in the library center. As the children progress in their writing skills and they can spell some words, the teacher can share the marker and have the child print the word on the chart.</p>	

Component:	<b>Independent Writing Lessons</b>
Materials:	large pieces of drawing paper, notebooks or teacher-prepared books, a variety of paper e.g., unlined, lined and paper of different sizes, textures and shapes to be pasted into scrapbooks; a variety of surfaces for writing e.g., blackboards, whiteboards, magnetic boards, magic slates; a variety of tools for writing e.g., magic markers, pencils, chalk, crayons, paintbrushes; resources e.g., alphabet cards, alphabet books, picture dictionaries.
<b><i>Before</i></b>	
Ask the children to draw and write what they want to tell.	
<b><i>During</i></b>	
Walk around the room and give positive reinforcement to students' attempts at 'writing'. Encourage students to 'read the room'. Every kindergarten classroom needs to be a print-rich environment. Label the clock, the calendar, the easel, the blackboard, etc. Help students stretch out words and point to places in the room where they can find help to spell words e.g., charts, lists, word walls, bulletin boards. Hall and Williams, in "Writing Mini-Lessons for Kindergarten", declare a strong message to teachers, "DO NOT spell words for children!"	
<b><i>After</i></b>	
Have students share their stories with their peers.	

Content:	<b>Phonemic Awareness, Phonics and Word Study Lesson</b>		
Text:	Little Bo Peep by Iris Zammit		
Materials:	Big-book version of book, chart stand and paper, sticky notes, magnetic letters and board, markers, pocket chart, blank cards		
<b>Day 1</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Show the cover of the book, read the title and ask the children to predict what the book will be about.	Read the book with fluency and expression.	Discuss familiar nursery rhymes and their favourites.	
<b>Day 2</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Reread the text and invite children to join in.	Have the children predict high-frequency words. Use sticky notes to cover two or three words. Write the child's predictions on the sticky notes. Reveal words under sticky notes.	Reread the entire text and have children join in with choral reading.	
<b>Day 3</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
Reread the text, encouraging children to join in.	List focus words on chart and use magnetic letters to spell words. Scramble letters and rebuild words.	Put the letters into a resealable bag and place in it the word study area for independent practice.	
<b>Day 4</b>			
<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	
The children read the book aloud together with no support from the teacher.	Choose a sentence from the text that includes the high-frequency words and print the words on cards. The children put the words in correct order in the pocket chart. Put the high-frequency words on the word wall.	Children can reassemble sentences as an independent activity.	

# *Special Education in Kindergarten*



Special Education in kindergarten can be a challenging endeavor for a number of reasons. Among these are the differences in funding and accessing services for Junior Kindergarten (JK) as compared to Senior Kindergarten (SK) and the challenge of accurately assessing kindergarten children. With these concerns in mind however; it is important to note that early assessment and intervention is critical for students who may experience difficulties early in their education. Research indicates that the earlier effective methods are put in place for struggling students, the better their chances for improved learning. Thus, the identification of exceptional students and the introduction of remedial programming are important considerations for kindergarten teachers.

Assessment for many beginning students starts with the results from the Fair Start programs. These provide an initial screening for concerns in the areas of vision, hearing, speech and to some degree child development. Based upon these results referrals to Public Health can be encouraged to determine the extent of potential concerns. These referrals would be the responsibility of the parents. It is important to note at this point that JK students are not able to access the same school based programs as SK students. This is the reason for the parent initiated referral and the involvement of Public Health. Once students attend school full-time, they are eligible to receive services through Integrated Services for Northern Children (ISNC) or Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) and thus referrals for SK students can go through these agencies. These referrals would be made with the assistance of the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) at each school.

Once students are attending school, it is vital for teachers to provide a rich, stimulating program and to maintain regular communication with parents. Teachers and parents can share their observations about the child's development and work together to identify any concerns that may arise. If warranted, these concerns could lead to an in-school assessment by the SERT and a further referral to ISNC for identification of any exceptionality. Should these assessments reveal any issues, the accompanying reports would also provide programming suggestions to help teachers remediate areas of concern. In addition to teacher observation, our Board also utilizes programs like the Direct Reading Assessment (DRA) and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Success (DIBELS). These can be used by teachers to assess students at various times of the year and provide them with information on students who may require early intervention in the area of literacy. Once again, the school SERT would be an important resource when administering these assessments.

Should it become evident that a child requires intervention or a referral, it is important that parents are involved in the process and the availability of services is discussed with them. At this point, the classroom teacher should work closely with the SERT and the parents to initiate the appropriate course of action.

# *Behaviour, Support and Discipline*



## **The Role of the Teacher**

The teacher creates the climate in the classroom that makes good discipline possible, both by modeling acceptable attitudes and behaviours, and by clearly explaining expectations and enforcing consequences. This task is made much easier when student motivation is high, and becomes increasingly difficult as student motivation deteriorates. For this reason, it is essential that the teacher use every available resource to keep motivation high, and keep students interested in participating in class activities.

The best time to begin boosting student motivation is the first class of the first day of the term. At the beginning of the term, student motivation is most directly affected by:

- Careful teacher planning and organization,
- Conducting classes in a manner that sets clear expectations for co-operation and self-discipline, and
- Establishing an atmosphere that is based upon respect through the reinforcement of positive behaviours.

Some students will test the teacher at the beginning of the term to see how little work the teacher will actually accept, and how much “goofing around” the teacher will tolerate. It is important to set the parameters from the very beginning. As the term progresses, if the teacher continues to maintain high expectations and the students see that their work and behaviour are being monitored effectively, and the consequence for poor work or misbehaviour are clear and consistent, most students will continue to try to meet the teacher’s expectations, and discipline problems will be kept to a minimum.

Effective discipline involves skills that every teacher can learn, but it is important to understand that good management is a process that teaches responsibility and not a final product. There are a number of helpful strategies that can be used daily to ensure that the process continues to evolve in a satisfactory way, and that the classroom is maintained as an orderly environment for learning.

## **What Makes Discipline Effective?**

**MODEL**      Teacher must model appropriate behaviour. It is worth remembering that writer James Baldwin once observed –“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.”

**RESPECT**      Children should be able to respect their teachers’ authority and also the rights of others. Discipline should be as positive as possible, with the avoidance of humiliation as a focus.

**CONSISTENCY** Discipline that is not consistent is confusing to students, no matter how old they are. If teachers are consistent in the way they discipline their students, students will find it difficult to not respect them.

**FAIRNESS** Students need to see discipline as fair. The consequences of their actions should be related to their negative behaviour. When the consequence has been served, the incident is over.

In order to promote learning, it is essential to establish an atmosphere that promotes respect and a feeling of safety. Studies have shown that classrooms based upon mutual respect have the most effective learning environments.

### **What Do You Praise?**

*“I like the way that you were able to share the blocks with Amber.”*

It is essential that you build on the strengths of your students and that you establish a positive atmosphere. Instead of focusing on error correction, comment on every step forward. Continually praising children for positive behaviour contributes more toward establishing an effective atmosphere than any other “talk” in the classroom. A usually boisterous child who comes into class without too much noise and disturbance gets, “I really liked the way you came into the room today”. Praise any improvement, however slight. Always take into consideration the fact that children progress at different rates, and be sure to make note of any improvement, however slight. This is where direct observation and record keeping comes into practice.

### **What Do You Overlook?**

*Mary was a particularly slow working student. Whenever she was given a task, she dawdled. This included getting prepared for home time, beginning seatwork, moving to the carpet for news time, etc.*

In any classroom there will be negative behaviours that you should overlook. Rather than “nagging” at the behaviour, turn any small achievement into a praise point. Students who are continually dawdling should be praised for even the slightest increase in speed. The dawdling of these students should not be commented upon, as this may be an attention seeking behaviour. With the focus on the positive behaviour, the child may begin to work towards receiving praise and may work in an increasingly diligent manner.

### **What About the Disruptive Student?**

*Sally comes into class each day ready for action. She waits until the other children have created an elaborate structure of blocks and bricks, and then she sidles into the group. She proceeds to knock everything over. The group is upset; Sally moves on to another group to repeat the task.*

Sally’s behaviour was obviously destructive and disruptive. The teacher took action and had a mediation session between Sally and the other students. This occurred after each session of

destruction. The teacher convinced Sally that it was much more productive and enjoyable to join the group and build cooperatively than to knock things down. The teacher remained very calm during this time, did not shout or protest loudly, but led the discussion, peer teaching and peer pressure to produce the change in Sally's attitude. This consistent modeling of positive behaviour led to a successful resolution.

### **Supporting Behaviour with Routines**

All classrooms today have students who exhibit inappropriate behaviour from time to time, some more frequently than others. Have you ever wondered why some teachers seem to be able to handle behaviour situations better than others? A consistent approach with no exceptions and logical consequences is the key to success in classroom management. How do you handle the following situations? Are your students aware of your expectations in these situations? What are the consequences to not adhering to the established routines?

1. What method do you employ to get your student's attention?
2. What are your students expected to do when they come in first thing in the morning? From recess? Lunch?
3. What routines are in place when students finish work early?
4. How do your students ask for assistance?
5. What are the consequences for unfinished work?
6. What are the consequences for students who refuse to work?
7. What are your dismissal routines?
8. What are your tidy up routines?
9. How are your students aware of all of your routines?
10. How do you reward positive behaviour?

### **Classroom Management – Best Practices and Accommodations**

- Develop consistent behaviour expectations
- Communicate with parents so that strategies are consistent at home and school
- Set limits and boundaries
- Apply established consequences immediately, fairly and consistently
- Acknowledge and reinforce acceptable behaviour
- Provide a highly structured classroom environment (meaningful play opportunities and center routines clearly established)
- Establish a quiet area for time out. This area should be in a quiet area of the classroom where you can continue to supervise the child visually. Time out is used when other techniques have proven to be ineffective, or when the child needs to calm down prior to you speaking to him/her. Students should remain in time out for a short period of time (ten minutes), after which you then speak to the child
- Provide, teach and model opportunities for students to use self-control

- ❑ Establish cues as reminders for inappropriate behaviour
- ❑ Redirect to avoid situations that may increase anxiety levels
- ❑ Greet students individually and in an invitational manner as they enter the room – remember that eye contact and the personal approach creates a welcoming atmosphere
- ❑ Require everyone's attention before speaking (i.e.: A signal is established at the beginning of the school year)
- ❑ Involve the students (when possible) in the development of class rules and consequences
- ❑ Organize activities to maximize student participation and success
- ❑ Use positive feedback whenever possible with students
- ❑ Speak to students quietly, in a calm and controlled voice.

# Assessment in Kindergarten



Young children show their understanding by doing, showing, and telling. Assessment strategies need to capture this doing, showing and telling by watching, listening, and probing. Hence, observation is an integral part of all other assessment strategies. Teachers need to use assessment strategies that provide as complete a description of the child's achievements and attitudes as possible.

Observation is probably the most important method for gaining assessment information about young students as they work and play (interact) in the classroom. Observation is the basis on which a teacher makes decisions about each child's progress and programming requirements. It must be an ongoing process that is conducted regularly for identifying each child's interest, strengths and learning needs. The teacher must be skilled in making valid observations and in keeping accurate records. Teachers need to observe each child in various situations over a period. Factors such as environment (child's use of space, time and materials), self (cognitive, emotional and physical aspects of development), and others (relationships with adults and peers) help teachers to direct their observation in considering the child from many points of view.

Effective observations provide ongoing information about each child's growth and development. A record of this information helps the teacher to form a more complete picture of the child in order to program effectively. Purposeful observations occur when attention is given to the following guideline:

- ✓ *Considering the Development of the Whole Child*
  - Physical
  - Intellectual
  - Social
  - Emotional
  
- ✓ *Observing on a Regular, Systematic and Frequent Basis*
  - Use of observation devices
  - Plans to observe daily, weekly and long-term basis
  - Opportunities to observe
  - Time provided to for observing collected samples of the child's work
  
- ✓ *Being Objective and Non-judgmental*
  - Opportunities to observe in many different situations
  - Notations made using child's own language
  - Attention focused on observed behaviour
  - Distinctions between what is observed and what the teacher infers from the behaviour

- ✓ *Using both Spectator and Participant Modes*
  - In the *spectator mode* the teacher watches, listens and records *without* interacting with the child
  - In the *participant mode* the teacher watches, listens and records *during* interaction with the child
  
- ✓ *Using the Data from Observations*
  - Programming to meet the child's needs
  - Conferencing with children
  - Reporting to parents



## **The Nature of Observation**

It is important to realize that observation is an integral part of the whole teaching-learning process. Ongoing observation is the basis for the teacher's instructional decisions.

*“Early and ongoing observation is not a separate program. It is an integral part of the teaching process, which continues throughout a child's school life. The teacher's observation of the child can begin in the home environment or in an inviting, reassuring area of the school. Observation should be made of the child's interaction with people and things in the environment and the child's attitudes and learnings. In this way, the teacher will discover the special talents, strengths, interests, and needs of the child that may affect his/her progress towards becoming an autonomous learner.”*

Shared Discovery, pg. 13

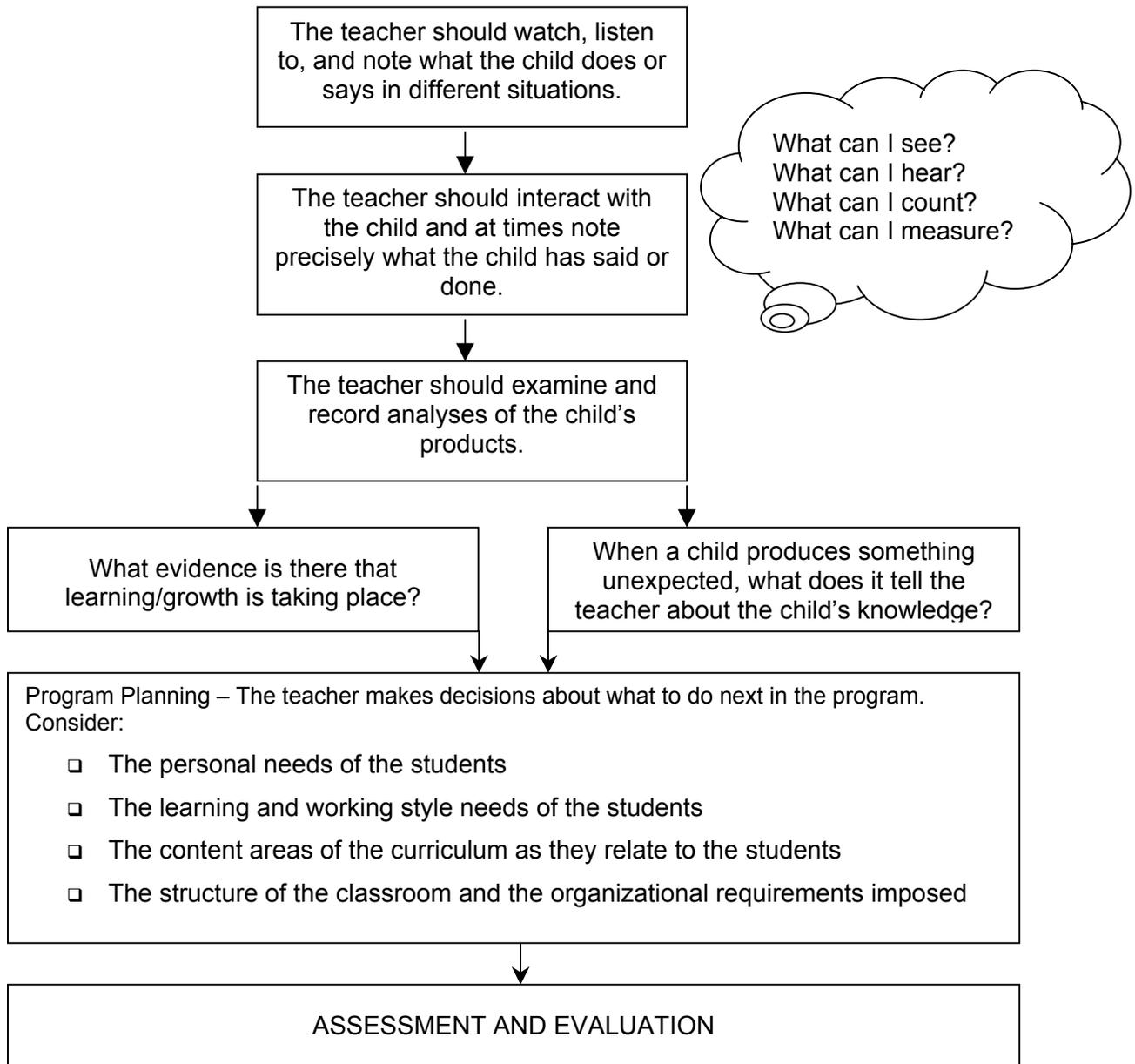
## **Observation is a Two-Part Process**

1. Noting what one saw (description)
2. Determining the meaning of what was seen (interpretation)

## **Guidelines for Observing Students**

Remember that the goal is to use the observation of behaviours as a means of verifying that a student has achieved an instructional goal.

1. Do not make judgments. We need to focus on what we have seen in order to document clearly what the student is doing.
2. Documentation is based on a clear description of the observed behaviour.
3. Be subtle. Do not cause a distraction for the students.
4. Determine who is to be observed and over what time.
5. Use a new page for each group.
6. Use a tally mark with a checklist to track observed behaviours.
7. Be sure to provide a means to track non-verbal behaviours.
8. Keep the focus on one behaviour at a time.
9. Be sure to keep track of information that is not included in your checklist – this means anecdotal notes at regular intervals
10. Maintain your records so that long-term gains can be monitored.
11. Use these records to form evaluations for the student.



Although behaviour is something we can see, this act of seeing is only the beginning. This is because behaviours can emerge from a person's past experiences, as a result of some inner process or reaction to some event. For these reasons, the meaning of the behaviour is often hidden.

Part of the challenge for the teacher within the classroom is to structure activities that will result in observable behaviours that can be measured and thus provide the teacher with evidence of learning or the need for learning. The whole process of observation is a collection of information. The teacher must have sufficient information to support the assessment and evaluation process as well as the ongoing instructional decisions made for the class.

### **Quantitative Observation Methods**

Use a quantitative observation technique when there is a need to measure classroom events and behaviours.

### **Qualitative Observation Methods**

There are many qualitative or descriptive forms of observation used by teachers. These are anecdotal comments that are based upon skills that the student may be working on, the answers to questions posed by the teacher or general interaction between students.

### **Assessment Strategies for Kindergarten**

#### ➤ Observations

- Observation tools should be efficient devices for collecting and organizing information about the child.
- They should be easy to use and easy to maintain
- Tools that can be useful are: *At-a-Glance Book*, *In-depth Anecdotal Observation*, *Checklists*, and *Observation Guidesheet*
- *At-a-Glance Book* is designed to facilitate the recording of the observations the teacher makes for each child during the week. These observations are made for specific purposes in particular situations. By observing a few children for a brief period of time each day, the teacher is able to record an observation for each child by the end of the week. One scheduled observation per child per week is a reasonable goal.
- *In-depth Anecdotal Observation* directs the teacher's observation of a child in very specific areas for a longer period of time. A suggested strategy to accomplish in-depth observation is the two-a-day plan. In the two-a-day plan the teacher selects two children to observe in-depth each day.
- *Checklists* are lists of specific observable behaviours that can be prepared by the teacher or purchased. They permit the teacher to quickly and efficiently check off the observed behaviour. They are more productive when they are directly related to programming. They should be designed to reflect children's responses to specific materials and activities, and their stage of development.
- *Observation Guidesheet* helps the teacher to observe a child's behaviour in a particular aspect of the program. The questions should help the teacher focus on the kinds of behaviours that will provide pertinent information about the child's development.

➤ Interviews

- Interviews are an effective tool for gathering information about young children's thinking, understanding, and skills.
- They can be formal or informal, and are focused on a specific task or learning experience.
- They include a planned series of questions.
- They should give the teacher information about attitudes, skills, concepts, and/or procedures.

➤ Conferences/Conversations

- A conference is useful for gathering information about a student's general progress and for suggesting some direction.
- It might occur in a one-to-one teaching situation or informally as the teacher walks around the room while the students are engaged in an activity.
- A student-led conference, in which students share their portfolios or other evidence of learning with parents or teachers, is an effective way of helping children to articulate their own learning and establish new goals.

➤ Portfolios and Collections of work

- A portfolio is a collection of samples of a child's work.
- These can include paper-and-pencil tasks, models, photographs, drawings, or other evidence of learning.
- This work is selected by the student and includes a reflective component that allows the child to connect with his or her own learning.
- They help to monitor growth over time.
- They allow all learners to show what they know and can do.

➤ Running Records

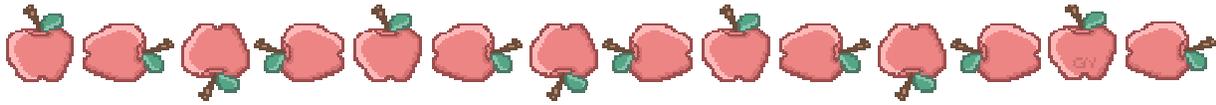
- A method of observing, scoring, and analyzing a child's reading aloud.
- It allows a teacher to record and then analyze reading behaviours.

➤ Journals and Logs

- Journals allow students to share what they know about a concept.
- They can include written work, diagrams, drawings, charts, or other methods of representing.
- They also offer students to describe how they feel about what they are doing or about themselves as learners.
- Journals for young children could be done with a tape recorder or with an older person recording what the child has to say.
- It is important to consider the importance of oral sharing and the modeling of oral communication, which provides scaffolding for young children who are not always able to communicate all their ideas in written form.

- Letter-Sound Knowledge, Alphabet Knowledge and Word Lists
  - These give the teacher a basis to work with each child and to expand on what the child knows and what the child needs to learn.
  
- Self-assessment
  - Students need the opportunities for self-reflection.
  - They need opportunities to think and talk about their learning.

# *Why Do We Have Full-Day Senior Kindergarten?*



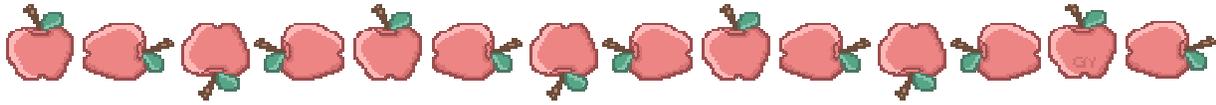
Full-day kindergarten is being instituted and studied in school boards across Canada. There is an abundance of research available regarding full-day programs, with the most dominant argument being that children who attend full-day programs consistently “progress further academically than children who attend half-day programs” (Full-Day Kindergarten Task Force, Delaware Trail Elementary). Other arguments that have become evident are:

1. All Kindergarten-aged students need a safe and enriching environment for more than 2.5 hours per day;
2. Students who are delayed cognitively, physically, socially, or emotionally benefit from having more time to obtain support and to practice skills in the areas of delay;
3. Full-day kindergarten can help those students who did not attend or participate in pre-school programs;
4. Teachers can individualize instruction better if they are given half as many students for twice as much time;
5. Our society needs its children to acquire important competencies earlier in their school careers: (Martinez and Snider, Kansas State Department of Education)

It is also significant to note that at-risk children make the greatest gains in a full-day kindergarten program. Their day has a better balance with larger blocks of instructional time. Parents also note that they strongly value the increased opportunity to communicate with their child’s teacher and the reduced number of transitions that full-day kindergarten programs offer.

The length of the kindergarten day is not as important as making sure that all kindergarteners are provided with developmentally and individually appropriate learning environments, regardless of whether these programs are full day or half days. Other important issues include the nature of the kindergarten curriculum and the quality of the teaching.

# *Transition from Kindergarten to Grade One*



"Children's transition to school is no longer looked at as one point in time, entering Kindergarten. Each grade level has distinct characteristics and unique demands for children and their families. A great transition from Kindergarten into first grade can start a child on the path of success through out all of the other transitions in his or her educational career."

[http://homepages.stmartin.edu/fac\\_staff/Belinda/ece\\_research/KN.pdf](http://homepages.stmartin.edu/fac_staff/Belinda/ece_research/KN.pdf)

## Ideas for Kindergarten Teachers:

- Near the end of third term allow your students to go outside for recess. This will allow them to get used to the hustle and bustle of other students playing on the playground. If you have a common lunchroom, this could also apply to this area and time of day, as well.
- Consult with the Grade One teacher about curriculum and particular students.
- Invite the Grade 1 teacher into the classroom to visit and meet with your students (on their own territory).
- Visit the Grade 1 classroom.
- Create an SK / 1 Buddy system.
- Arrange to have small groups of Kindergarten students join the Grade 1 students for centre time and story time.
- Have your students prepare their own questions and interview a Grade 1 "expert" to get advice about entering the first grade.
- Schedule a K/1 field trip.
- Incorporate the Looking Back / Looking Ahead into literacy and writing exercises. For example, read the story "Ten Step Guide to Living with your Monster" by Laura Numeroff. Have students respond by making their own book or story titled "Ten Steps to Enjoying Grade One."
- Allow students to reflect on their year by responding to this phrase "At Kindergarten I ..." and then "In Grade One I'll ...". They may share these with their reading buddies or their new Grade One buddies.

## Ideas for Grade One Teachers:

- Consult with the Kindergarten teacher to get a better understanding of current curriculum and student needs.
- Meet with Kindergarten students and participate in transition activities.
- Incorporate Kindergarten activities such as play time and show and tell into weekly activities.

- Correspond with parents about Grade One expectations. Give insight into classroom routines and some of the activities that students will be participating in.

#### Ideas for Parents:

- Over the summer parents can continue to practice and develop good reading and math skills through play and everyday activity.
- Read to your child for 10 to 15 minutes daily.
- Take your child to the library once a week. Allow them to have their own library card.
- Continued practice of letters and letter sounds is essential. For example, on a trip to the grocery store have your child find words that begin with a specific letter or letter sound.
- Continue to practice number skills by playing card and dice games such as "Sevens Up", etc.
- Continue to sort household objects by colour, shape and size.
- Practice adding numbers that are less than 10. For example, on a bike ride with your child, explore how many wheels are on your bike, how many on mine, how many do we have all together?
- Solve problems using numbers less than 10. For example, if we have 6 cookies and you get three how many are left for me?
- Play games that develop small motor skills such as "Pick up Sticks". These activities will help to improve fine motor skills that will enhance pencil holding and writing skills.

#### Sources:

Ontario Kindergarten Conference, Spring 2004. "Resource Handbook", pgs. 66-68.

#### Websites:

Press Release on Kindergarten Transition Study  
National Centre for Early Development and Learning  
<http://nccic.org/research/ncedl.html>

#### Kindergarten to First Grade

<http://www.pasadenaisd.org/ParentUniversity/parent28.htm>

# Great Kindergarten Resources



## On the Worldwide Web:

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/listkindersu.html>

An Internet Hotline on Kindergarten created by Sue Roseman. Hop on board to for an hour of exploration and sharing of exemplary web sites, thematic units and classroom organization ideas to kick-start your school year.

Walk away with a wealth of resources and web site links for all subject areas.

Time will be allotted to the exploration of sample kindergarten schedules, worksheet ideas, center ideas, balanced literacy and 4 blocks resources, home/school connections.

<http://www.kinderkorner.com/>

Kinder Korner is a US-based resource website for teachers and others interested in early childhood education, Pre-K through 2nd Grade.

Kinder Korner is also a Listserv (an Internet mailing list) and a great place to share ideas, ask questions, and talk about what works in your classroom with more than 5000 teacher subscribers.

<http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/ec/est/kprog/kindergarten.htm>

This Canadian web site has been developed for use by Kindergarten teachers by the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board. The lesson plans listed under "Kindergarten", are specifically early childhood lessons. The plans in the "Elementary Lesson Plans" are appropriate for a range of ages, including but not limited to Kindergarten. In many cases the lessons indicate the level for use.

In "Strategies and Resources" you will find a variety of information that would be useful for teachers of any grade, as well as items of particular interest to Kindergarten teachers specifically. Educational graphics, things to order, children's literature, and teacher tips, are a few of the topics presented here.

<http://www.kinderhive.net/teachers.html>

The Teacher's Notebook by Kinderhive.net is a U.S. based web site that provides resources such as themes and units, free downloadable activities, bulletin boards and displays, pictures of the author's classroom, a kindergarten handbook and daily schedule, internet projects, and a list of additional links.

<http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/cccf/00000984.htm>

A Kindergarten Perspective on Play is a discussion paper written by kindergarten teacher, Catherine Maulsby, and posted by Child and Family Canada.

<http://www.comsewogue.k12.ny.us/~rstewart/k2001/Kids/kids.htm>

The Kid's Place is a US-based web site created and maintained by kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Stewart. This site provides resources includes, but is not limited to themes, fun stuff to make, popcorn words, on-line fun and games, and web sites for students.

<http://www.cutecolors.com>

Looking for some cute free clipart for that newsletter you want to send home? Look no further than Cute Colors. There are approximately 30 categories to choose from.

<http://games.funschool.com/games.php?section=g2>

This site is an interactive game guide that encompasses activities for geography, history, math, reading / words / vocabulary, science and thinking skills.

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com>

This site has a variety of lesson plan suggestions for all grade levels, including Kindergarten, in the areas of math, science, art, music, language arts to name a few.

<http://kinderart.com/bulletin/>

Looking for bulletin board ideas? Check out kinderart.com. This site has several suggestions based on items submitted from classroom teachers of all grade levels.

<http://harmony.millersv.edu/curriculum/music/music.htm>

This site has music activity suggestions, complete with song lyrics for Kindergarten to Grade 6.

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/ElementaryConcepts.html>

This song site is geared to preschool, early childhood and kindergarten students including, but not limited to, numbers and counting skills, opposites, shapes, parts of the body, the calendar, weather and seasons, colours, clothing.

While some of the items contained on this site require paid ordering, there are several downloadable sound clips with associated lyrics.

<http://nancymusic.com/PRINThomemade.htm>

Site this may be of help combining music and art. Nancy's site contains "recipes" for making homemade musical instruments as well as a Song of the Month to use with the instruments, and an archive of past Song of the Month songs.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/categories/preschool.shtml>

This site contains Preschool and Kindergarten activities that may complement your daily classroom events.

**In Print:**

<u><i>500 Five Minute Games</i></u>	Gryphon House, Inc.
<u><i>A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3</i></u>	Ontario Early Reading Strategy
<u><i>A Poem A Day</i></u>	H. Moore
<u><i>Alphabet Them-a-Saurus</i></u>	J. Warren
<u><i>Alphatales Aa-Za</i></u>	Maria Fleming
<u><i>Beginning Writers How To Make Books with Children</i></u>	Evan-Moor
<u><i>Day-by-Day 100<sup>th</sup> Day Activities</i></u>	Scholastic Professional Books
<u><i>Early Childhood Health and Safety Curriculum</i></u>	1996 Instructional Fair
<u><i>Early Literacy Instruction in Kindergarten</i></u>	Lori Jamison Rog
<u><i>Explorations of Early Childhood</i></u>	Addison-Wesley (Nelson Thomson)
<u><i>Frank Schaffer's Primary Club</i></u>	
<u><i>Jolly Phonics Program</i></u>	
<u><i>Just for Kindergarten, Gruber, B. &amp; S.</i></u>	Practice and Learn Right Publications, Inc.
<u><i>Kindergarten Activities</i></u>	Frank Schaffer Publications
<u><i>Kindergarten Conference Manual 2003</i></u>	BER Bureau of Education and Research
<u><i>Kindergarten Connections</i></u>	Kelly Wingate Publications, Inc.

<u>Literacy Introduction in Half/Whole Day Kindergarten</u>	L. Morrow, D. Strickland, D. Woo
<u>Momentum Literacy in Motion! A Guided Reading and Writing Program</u>	Scholastic Canada Ltd.
<u>Phonemic Awareness</u>	Fearon Teacher Aids
<u>Phonemic Awareness Songs and Rhymes</u>	K. Jordano/T. Callella
<u>Quest 2000</u>	Addison-Wesley (Nelson Thomson)
<u>Reading Success Mini Books. Initial Consonants</u>	Mary B. Spann, Scholastic
<u>Resources for Every Day in Every Way</u>	C. Holley/F. Burditt
<u>Royal Bank Activ 8</u>	
<u>Scholastic Kindergarten Program Guide</u>	Scholastic Canada Ltd.
<u>Shared Reading with Big Books</u>	Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company, Inc.
<u>Sounds Abound Storybook Activities</u>	Sandy Lachance
<u>Successful Kindergarten Transition</u>	R. Pianta/M. Sayre
<u>Teaching Children to Read and Write. A Literacy Guide for Teachers</u>	Toronto District School Board
<u>The GIANT Encyclopedia of Theme Activities for Children 2 to 5</u>	
<u>The Instant Curriculum</u>	P. Schiller/J. Rosanno
<u>The Kindergarten Program</u>	The Ministry of Education
<u>Thematic Poems Songs and Fingerplays</u>	Meish Goldish
<u>Tree Homes</u>	GEMS
<u>Writing Mini-Lessons for Kindergarten: The Building Blocks Model</u>	Dorothy P. Hall and Elaine Williams Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company, Inc.
<u>Young Minds at Play</u>	1997 Instructional Fair

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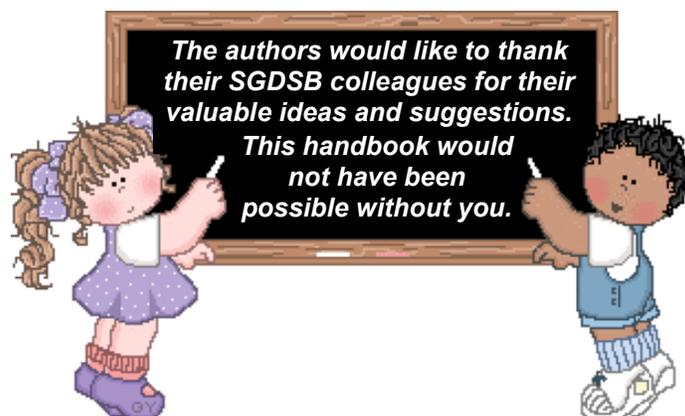
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June 2004



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