

SMART STEPS TOWARD COLLEGE AND CAREERS

Preparation for school begins before your child is born. Every interaction with your child is an opportunity to prepare him for his education. It starts with things as simple as talking, playing and reading, but before you know it, your child is ready for kindergarten!



BIRTH – 6 MONTHS: EMERGING

TALK

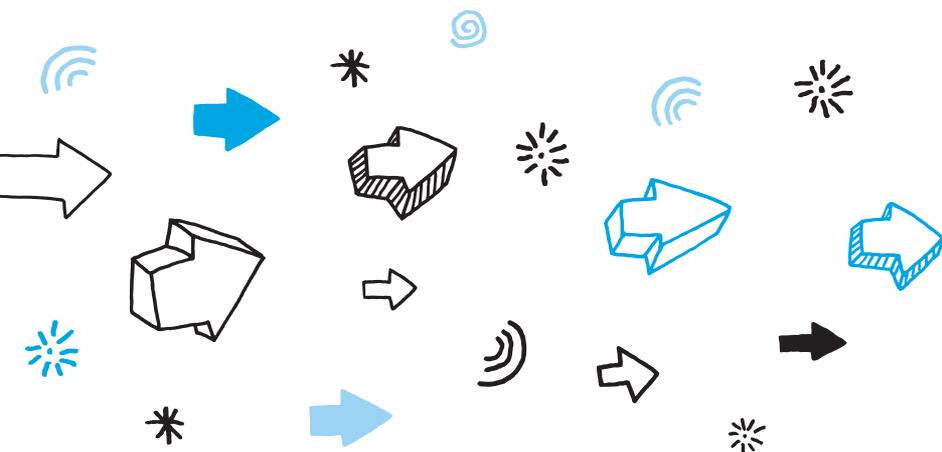
Everything about this world is a new experience for your baby. When you speak, your baby is fascinated. When she watches your mouth move, she is creating a framework of the language she will use for a lifetime. Make lots of time for face-to-face talking with your child.

CUDDLE

When you answer her cries, you let your baby know you understand her earliest communication. Let her know you are creating a safe, trustworthy, learning environment for her by taking lots of time to cuddle.

READ

Have books on hand. It's never too early to read to your baby. You are planting the seeds of language and literacy for a lifetime.



6 – 14 MONTHS: ON THE MOVE

INVESTIGATE

Your baby is moving around which enables him to explore his world. Give him lots of room for free movement and place interesting, safe objects to discover in daily adventures. Prop some books open for him to investigate. He loves that he is now able to turn pages.

EXPERIMENT

Your baby is beginning to learn about cause and effect. Experimenting with rattles and other fun, safe toys that shake, drop and bang are fun for your child.

RESPOND

Your baby wants to communicate with you! Even when he just babbles (bababababa) take a minute to respond and have a mini conversation. Sometimes you can repeat the very sounds your child makes. This will reinforce sound awareness — a skill he will later use when learning to read.

Reading to your child every night before bedtime is one of the best things you can do as a parent to help her succeed in life and school.

14 – 24 MONTHS: UNDERSTANDING

NARRATE

Your baby is beginning to understand everything you say. To help him understand even more, “narrate” what’s going on around him. As you talk about what is going on exactly as it happens, you help him match the words to the action or object they represent.

STRETCH TALK

His sentences will be very short — as short as one word. Help him develop language by stretching his ideas into a whole sentence.

When he points and says, “Blankie,” say, “Oh, you want to hold your blanket!” This is called stretch talk.

BE UNDERSTANDING

Your child’s understanding of language will far out-stretch his speaking abilities. This can be frustrating for him! Be patient. Some great “bridges” into spoken language are animal sounds, vehicle sounds and songs. Simple books with just a word or two on each page are valuable at this age. Toddlers often communicate with gestures. Let your child know you understand what he is trying to tell you.

EXPERIENCE

Take your child around town — to the grocery store, the park, the post office. He will develop background knowledge that he will use later when he begins to read. A trip to the bank is a deposit in his literacy memory bank!

24 MONTHS – 3 YEARS: EXPRESSING

RESTATE SENTENCES

Your child is beginning to communicate fluently with you. Always take the time to answer her questions. As her grammar begins to develop, restate her sentences — but don’t correct her. If she says, “Her take it,” you reply, “Oh, she took the toy.”

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO READ

Provide an abundance of rich literacy opportunities such as pointing out environmental print (signs at stores and restaurants, labels of favorite foods, stop signs); books with repeating text that will be easy for your child to predict and memorize; and dialogic reading, which simply means discussing what is happening in a book. For instance, ask your child, “What do you think will happen next?” and, “How do you think that child feels?” Use books and other opportunities to discuss conceptual language such as same and different, bigger and smaller.

SING

Sorting and matching will develop the visual skills your child needs to recognize shapes, alphabet letters and numerals. Sing the alphabet song and count out loud together every day.

DRAW

Your child will begin to express himself on paper. Encourage him daily to draw or write using a variety of materials. Occasionally, let him lie on his tummy and draw. This will help him develop a mature pencil grasp.

Tell stories together.

Make up silly stories and have your child fill in parts of the adventure. Pretend!



READ, READ, READ!

When you're reading to your child, point to the pictures! Talk about the pictures and what is happening in the book. "What do you think happens next? What is this in the picture?"

Point to words in the book while you're reading them.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✦ [Black on White](#) by Tana Hoban
- ✦ [Baby Faces](#) by Margaret Miller
- ✦ [Goodnight Moon](#) by Margaret Wise Brown
- ✦ [Mama Do You Love Me](#) by Barbara Joosse
- ✦ [Brown Bear Brown Bear](#) by Eric Carle
- ✦ [One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish](#) by Dr. Seuss
- ✦ [Chicka Chicka Boom Boom](#) by Bill Martin Jr.
- ✦ [Blue Hat, Green Hat](#) by Sandra Boynton
- ✦ [Clap Your Hands](#) by Lorinda Bryan Cauley
- ✦ [The Snowy Day](#) by Ezra Jack Keats
- ✦ [Goodnight Gorilla](#) by Peggy Rathmann
- ✦ [Each Peach Pear Plum](#) by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
- ✦ [Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon](#) by Patty Lovell
- ✦ [Caps For Sale](#) by Esphyr Slobodkina
- ✦ [Curious George](#) by H.A. Rey
- ✦ [To Market To Market](#) by Anne Miranda

3 – 5 YEARS

SMART STEPS

When reading to your child, ask, “What do you think happens next?” And when finished with a book, ask your child, “What happened first in this book? What happened in the middle? And how did it end?”

Your child should know his first and last name, and practice spelling it too! Your child should learn and practice his parents’ names as well.

Read all types of books — fiction, nonfiction, poetry, picture books, etc.

Rhyme time! Read nursery rhymes and play rhyming games. (While you’re in the car say, “Rug, bug, hug,” and other rhyming words!)

Teach your child to handle books with care. (This is the title page, this was written by Dr. Seuss, he also drew the pictures.) Close the book and say, “The end!”

Let your child read to you as best he can. Tell him, “You are a great reader!” Encourage your little reader and writer!

- ◆ Name objects in pictures
- ◆ Count everyday items with your child and sort them by shape, size and color
- ◆ Read letters and signs in your community, such as restaurant or store names and use alphabet letter magnets on your fridge
- ◆ Create patterns (spoon, fork, spoon, fork or red crayon, yellow crayon, blue crayon, red crayon, yellow crayon, blue crayon)
- ◆ Identify sequence (Which came first?)

Singing songs and telling stories are both great ways to interact with your child. Sing the alphabet song and get creative. Make learning fun!



KINDERGARTEN READINESS SKILLS

Here are just a few of the many important skills your child should have when entering kindergarten.

READING, WRITING, LANGUAGE & MATH

- ✦ Writes his or her own name and other meaningful words (I love you)
- ✦ Begins to show interest in print rather than just pictures in books
- ✦ Knows letters and letter sounds
- ✦ Can recognize beginning sounds ("d" is for dog)
- ✦ Answers who, what, when, where and how questions
- ✦ Retells stories
- ✦ Begins to decode simple words (c-a-t... cat)
- ✦ Shows interest in spelling and writing words
- ✦ Recites alphabet song and rhymes simple words
- ✦ Counts to 20 and recognizes numerals to 10
- ✦ Understand that a numeral represents a quantity
- ✦ Understands directional/positional concepts (up, down, near, by)
- ✦ Uses descriptive words (hot, cold, most, least, day, night)
- ✦ Recognizes and names common shapes, colors and body parts
- ✦ Follows multi-step directions

FINE MOTOR

- ✦ Can use school supplies (scissors, crayons, pencils and glue)
- ✦ Draws simple shapes
- ✦ Can dress and undress (button, zip, etc.)

GROSS MOTOR

- ✦ Has fun playing outside!
- ✦ Jumps, hops, gallops!

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL

- ✦ Express feelings through gestures, actions and language
- ✦ Participates in relationships of mutual trust and respect
- ✦ Follows directions and acts in a safe and responsible way
- ✦ Shares and plays cooperatively with others
- ✦ Participates in conversations with adults and kids using complete sentences



Kids should pretend play and act out roles with others — play dress up and put on performances.

Congratulations! Your child is ready to enroll and attend kindergarten at Center School District.

YOUR CHILD IS NOW ON HIS WAY TO:

- ✦ [Advanced Reading](#)
- ✦ [Advanced Math](#)
- ✦ [Algebra](#)
- ✦ [A Great A.C.T. Score](#)
- ✦ [COLLEGE!](#)