

Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten

an activity guide for families

Physical Development

Emotional & Social Development

Language Development

Cognitive Development

Approaches to Learning



This booklet is provided by the Chatham County Partnership for Children with support from Smart Start

For more information on preschool resources and services please refer to the list on the back of this booklet.

Acknowledgements

The following sources were used to create this parent-friendly brochure:

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

Foundations Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers
<http://www.ncprek.nc.gov/Foundations/index.asp>

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool
By: Diane Trister Dodge, Laura J. Coker, & Cate Heroman

Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice
By Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp

Resources for Families

Chatham County Partnership for Children
<http://chathamkids.org/>

Chatham County Schools
<http://www.chatham.k12.nc.us/>

Born Learning Resources
<http://bornlearning.org>



Chatham County Partnership for Children
200 Sanford Highway, Suite 4, Pittsboro, NC 27312

Physical Development

Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor refers to the movement of the large muscles in the upper and lower body that control the ability to walk, run and dance.

Children begin to:

- Skip, hop, jump and run
- Pedal and steer a tricycle
- Throw, bounce & catch a ball
- Show balance

Adults can help:

- Create obstacle courses
- Encourage outdoor activities everyday
- Introduce simple ball games

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor refers to movement of the small muscles of the hand and arm that control the ability to scribble, write, draw, tie shoes and many other activities requiring finger, hand and hand-eye coordination

Children begin to:

- Use scissors, glue, markers, crayons and paint brushes
- Mold clay and play dough
- Manipulate sewing cards, clothes pins, and smaller beads to string

Adults can help:

- Supply materials for children to cut and draw
- Limit using coloring books or work-sheets with lines
- Encourage using sewing cards & small beads for hand-eye coordination

Self - Care Skills

Self –care refers to the development and use of eating, dressing and hygiene skills.

Children begin to:

- Use a fork effectively to feed themselves
- Dress and undress themselves independently

Adults can help:

- Offer assistance as needed, but give children room to manage for themselves
- Be patient

Helpful Strategies

Encourage outdoor activities everyday



Encourage your child to play outside—running, jumping climbing, hopping, and skipping.

Don 't worry about the weather! Take rainy day hikes, splash in mud puddles, make mud pies.

Preschoolers learn by doing and investigating!

Prepare for writing skills

Encourage your child to use the muscles in his/her hand.

- Clip art work
- Hang clothes
- Use clay or play dough
- Use markers, crayons and pencils daily

Teach your child about self-care skills

- Setting the table is a great way to incorporate math skills, self-care skills, and physical development skills. Help your child at first then slowly let your child manage.
- Planning what to wear the night before can help with morning schedules.
- Can your child zip, buckle and tie? Practice together.



Emotional & Social Development

These areas of development are influenced by maturation, temperament, cultural expectations and experiences.

Sense of Self

Emotional and social development refers to children's feelings about themselves

Children begin to:

- Show self-confidence
- Play with one or two others
- Express feelings and manage them appropriately
- Develop skills for dealing with change

Adults can help:

- Provide your child with a loving relationship
- Discuss feelings and how to handle them
- Help children see the natural consequences of their actions

Sense of Self with Others

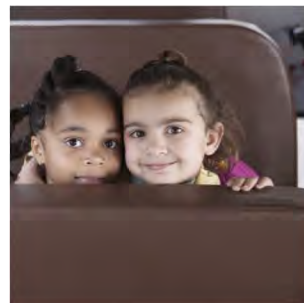
This refers to how children make friends, appreciate differences, solve conflicts and function within groups

Children begin to:

- Show independence
- Respect and care for environments and materials
- Follow simple rules
- Follow routines
- Develop awareness of differences in others

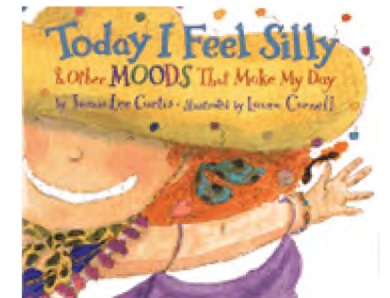
Adults can help:

- Encourage friendships
- Promote respect and appreciation for the cultures and abilities of others
- Establish, explain and model simple rules



Helpful Strategies

Read stories that talk about feelings.
Create a feeling wheel together



Remind your child about sharing and "using their words"
to get what they want

- Can I have a turn with that train?
- You took my piece. I don't like that!
- Can I play with you?
- I need some help setting the table.
- Do you want to play with paint or crayons?

Discuss friendships and how to deal with differences

What is a good friend?

Who do you like to play with?

Why?

If you guys are fighting how can you work it out?

In the beginning, your child will need assistance solving problems.
Ask questions and let your child manage when he/she is ready.

Language Development

Listening and Speaking Skills

Listening and speaking skills refer to knowledge of spoken words and also non-verbal language, such as gestures and picture symbols.

Children begin to:

- Answer questions
- Ask questions
- Understand and follow oral directions



Adults can help:

- Encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings
- Talk about daily events
- Encourage children to speak the language used in the home. This will not interfere with learning English.

Reading and Writing Skills

Reading and writing skills refer to developing knowledge of oral language, concepts of print, letters and sounds.

Children begin to:

- Show interest in books
- Engage in reading behaviors, turning pages, imitating adults by pointing to words
- Alphabet Knowledge: Know letters of the alphabet are different from pictures and shapes
- Understand that letters function to represent sounds in spoken words
- Phonics: Play with the sounds of language
- Writing: Independently engage in writing behaviors, writing symbols for names

Adults can help:

- READ with your child everyday
- Bring home a variety of reading materials
- Alphabet Knowledge: Point out letters on menus, tickets & notes
- Find letters in everyday items like cereal boxes
- Point out letters in your child's name
- Phonics: Read books that have rhymes
- Sing songs together
- Writing: encourage your child to scribble, draw and print
- Talk about what you are doing as you write lists or notes

Helpful Strategies

Talk to your child everyday and ask questions

What did you think of that song?

What was your favorite part of the movie?

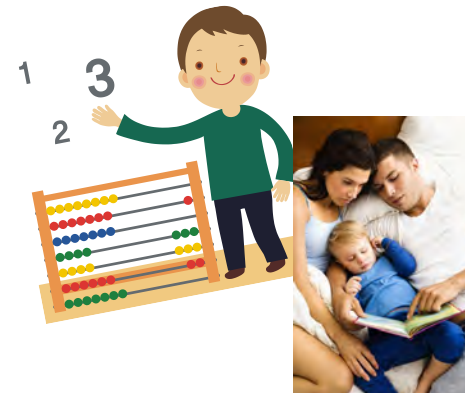
Do you like playing soccer or basketball?

As your child draws or scribbles, ask them about their work. Let them dictate to you what it means - "this picture is my flower garden." This is not the time to correct their work. Let your child enjoy expressing herself.



Scribbles are the first step to writing.

Look for letters and numbers in everyday places



Cognitive Development (Thinking Skills)

Scientific Thinking Skills

This aspect includes independent thinking, recognizing problems and trying to solve them in a variety of ways.

Children begin to:

- Observe objects and events with curiosity
- Show persistence with new tasks
- Explore cause and effect

Adults can help:

- Talk with your child about how to fix things
- Help your child finish a task even when it is hard

Mathematical Thinking and Expression

This refers to the knowledge of mathematical concepts.

Children begin to:

- Classify objects by color, shape and texture
- Compare/measure
- Recognize patterns and repeat them
- Use numbers and counting

Adults can help:

- Use the names of shapes and colors
- Look for patterns in nature & discuss
- Measure and count while baking cookies
- Let your child set the table: one plate for each person

Social Connections and Creative Expression

This refers to the ways children form ideas about the way things are.

Children begin to:

- Take on pretend roles and situations
- Make-believe with objects
- Make estimates based on experiences

Adults can help:

- Encourage your child to experiment
- Join in pretend play with your child, letting him or her take the lead

Helpful Strategies

Involve your child

“ I broke my toy train, please fix it Dad. ”

“ Let ’ s see, how do you think we could put this back together? What would we need? ”

“ We need the hammer, Dad. ”

“ Ok, let ’ s do it together. Watch me first. ”

Use sorting with everyday items

- Cleaning the play room— “You get all the blocks and I will get the cars and put them away. ” or “You get all the red blocks and I will get the green ones. Ready, set, go! ”
- Sort keys, bottle tops, coins, buttons
- Choose 1 or 2 attributes to start with like color and size. As your child progresses, add more.



Find patterns in nature or create your own



- As you are in the backyard, look at leaves, rocks, sticks and point out patterns.
- Thread spools and create a color pattern—blue, red, blue, red.
- Let your child create his own pattern and you follow.

Experiment

What might happen if.....

The bike is left in the rain?

Crayons are left in the sun too long?

We forget to water the plants?

We add red and blue paint together?

Approaches to Learning

Approaches to learning includes children's attitudes toward, and interest in, learning.

Curiosity, Information-Seeking & Eagerness

This refers to children's interest in the world, asking questions to find answers, and experimenting with materials.



Children begin to:

- Demonstrate an eagerness to learn
- Show a sense of wonder and pleasure
- Work toward completion of a task
- Seek and accept help or information

Adults can help:

- Allow your child to play and learn skills at a comfortable pace
- Involve your child in planning of family activities
- Encourage your child to discuss everyday events

Persistence, Attentiveness and Responsibility

This refers to the ability to hold attention, pursue difficult tasks, and take responsibility for one's own learning

Children begin to:

- Work toward completion of a task
- Seek and accept help or information

Adults can help:

- Provide time for unscheduled activities that allow your child to explore the world
- Pay attention as your child talks about her experiences and ask follow-up questions

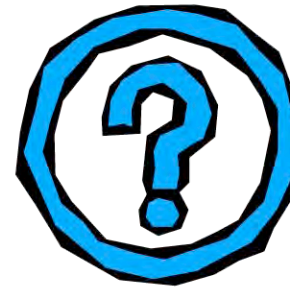


Helpful Strategies

Create a question chart together

List questions of the week:

- Why is the sky blue?
- What do frogs eat?
- How do I fix my bike?
- Where does a fox live?



Searching for Answers

- Go to library
- Check the computer with Dad
- Ask an expert

Plan trips and activities together

While planning with your child, write lists, discuss options and ask for other ideas. This builds on multiple developmental areas: language, writing, math, social & problem solving

- Use calendars
- Create lists of items to pack
- Research what you might see and do during your trip
- How much money will you need?
- Look at a map together



Time can be a difficult concept children at this age—three weeks from now may seem like tomorrow to your child. Be patient & use a calendar to count down the days.

Give your child daily responsibilities

SUZIE'S DAILY CHORES

- Feed the dog
- Wash out my lunch box
- Put back pack in my room