



GET
READY FOR
KINDERGARTEN!
Activity Calendar
for Families



GET READY FOR KINDERGARTEN!

ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR FAMILIES

The first day of kindergarten is an exciting time for families, especially when they know what to expect and how to prepare for the changes. The move from preschool to kindergarten is an important transition for young children and their families. What will help make it a wonderful year for your entire family?

Families and schools play important roles in this significant change. When you work together as partners, it can make a big difference for your child. When families engage in transition activities, the research shows that children are more likely to become successful in school, both socially and academically.

This calendar is designed to help guide that transition. It gives you concrete activities to help prepare your family and your child as well as create partnerships with school staff, so that your child can arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and grow.

Many people play key roles in a child's move from preschool to kindergarten. This calendar can help you with your role.



ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR FAMILIES

Everything in this calendar is geared towards helping you and your child be more prepared for the changes that are coming. The activities are about making strong connections between your family and your child's new school. They highlight ideas for how to work together to help children get ready for kindergarten. Each month you can choose from activities that are organized into two groups:

Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School:

- These activities are broken down into the four domains of learning - Emotional & Social, Physical, Communication, and Cognition - as outlined in the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS).
<https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Early%20Childhood/Docs/14EarlyLearningStandards.pdf>

Family Activities:

- The activities help children and families become familiar with the new kindergarten, including the school, the classroom, and the teacher.
- They also help the new teacher get to know your child and family.



HOW DO YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS CALENDAR?

Make it simple: Choose activities you know are going to work for your family. Find those that everyone can enjoy. It can be spontaneous or planned in advance. You can also use these ideas to spark your own ideas. The important thing is to learn what your child and family need for a successful transition to kindergarten. Then choose those activities that will work best for the whole family.

Be realistic: It can be useful to set reasonable goals. For example, you can make it a goal to do one activity every month toward getting your child ready for kindergarten. You can also do a November activity in February if that is better for your child or family. Do you need support? A friend or family member might be willing to help.

Expand when possible: As you and your family become more comfortable doing these activities, you can add new ones. Be creative and include your own family traditions.

WHY START NOW?

Kindergarten may still feel far away, but you may be surprised at how quickly that first day arrives. Preparing now will give you more time to work with teachers and help build the skills your child will need in kindergarten. School is more than letters and numbers. Children also need to learn skills such as waiting for a turn, making friends, problem solving, sticking with challenging tasks, and dealing with disappointment. Which skills do you want your child to get better at before the first day of kindergarten?

HOW TO GET STARTED

First, write in the number for each day of the month. Ask your child to help and make the calendar their own. Choose the activities that are best for you and your family each month.



MORE ABOUT WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

We know from research how important a quality transition is for children. When families talk with teachers and engage in school activities, children do better in kindergarten. The change is less stressful for them and they are more successful socially. That first week of school can be especially important for kindergarteners as it can set the foundation for learning and social interactions. A number of children miss the first day, sometimes several days, when they are not prepared for the changes. Everyone plays a related role—child, family, friends, school, and community—in helping a child be prepared for the first day of school and to do well there.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE FAMILY ACTIVITIES TO YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS IN SCHOOL?

School readiness is a phrase often used when talking about what is needed to support a child in making a smooth transition to kindergarten. When it comes to *school readiness*, the research also confirms the importance of family activities. Whether it is math, science, reading or writing, you and your family make a difference! How much you know about these topics does not seem to make a difference. It is your family's activities and attitudes that do. Everyday conversations, routines, storytelling (all in your home language), and more will add up to your child's readiness for school.

This calendar will support you in your role. Get started today!



Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Talk about different feelings, name them and discuss them. Let your child know that they are normal and okay.

Physical

Go to a park and allow your child the opportunity to climb, jump, run, and play.

Communication

Read a book with your child. Talk about words that your child may not know or use regularly.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Provide objects for children to count. Count the number of chairs at the table, count the number of people in the room, count the number of toys in the bathtub. Count anything and everything!

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Start to explore your family's choices for kindergarten.

Do you know what activities and programs are available for young children in your community?

Ask friends, family, and preschool teachers for ideas.

AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER



Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Let your child practice doing things on their own such as washing hands, putting on their winter clothes to go outside, or dishing themselves up at the table

Physical

Encourage your child to write their name. When you write it talk about the letters and how you use straight lines and curves to write each letter. Watch how they will imitate you.

Communication

Read, talk, sing, and play with your child daily.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Talk about opposites such as up/down, hot/cold, over/under, soft/rough, and first/last.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Attend library story hour and meet new friends.

Watch for activities such as dance classes and baseball leagues that your child can participate in.

Sign-up for activities in the community, and get to know the children and families in your area.

SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER



Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Set up playdates so that children have an opportunity to play with other children.

Physical

Spend time climbing on equipment in parks or on large rocks and other uneven surfaces to help your child learn balance and large muscle control.

Communication

Talk about the words and the letters you see around you. Point out specific letters and tell children the name of the letter and the sound that it makes.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Count out loud to 10 whenever you are driving in your car.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Call neighborhood schools for information about enrolling your child next school year.

Ask if there are any special events planned for incoming kindergarten children and their families. If so, write them on your calendar.

Talk with Preschool teachers about what skills you can help your child with at home.

OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER



Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Start daily routines. Have meals together at the same time each day. Bedtime routines may consist of a bath, brushing teeth, and reading a book. Take this time to talk about any changes in routine for the next day to give your child time to adapt.

Physical

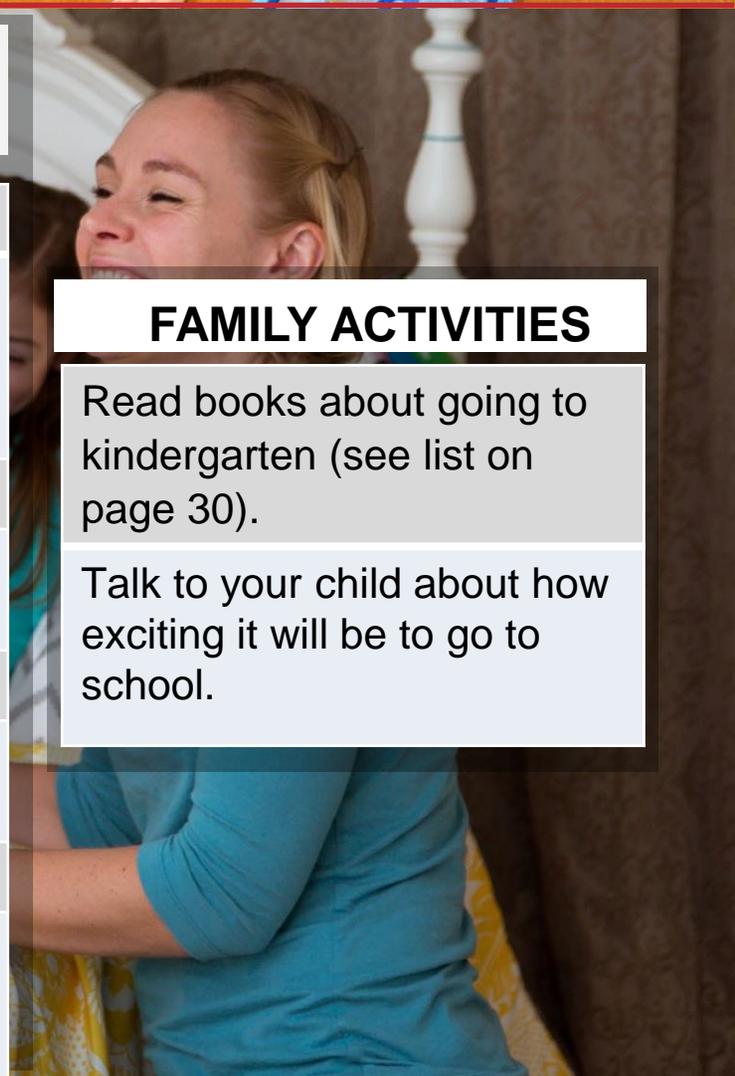
Provide different objects for child to use and explore such as child safe scissors, crayons, markers, and pencils.

Communication

Help your child understand that pictures and symbols stand for real things in the world. Talk about pictures you see.

Thinking & Problem Solving

During everyday activities talk about adding things or taking things away. I gave you three carrots; how many would you have if I gave you two more? How many would you have if I took one away?



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Read books about going to kindergarten (see list on page 30).

Talk to your child about how exciting it will be to go to school.

NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Provide opportunities for your child to share, cooperate, be helpful around the house, and to take turns.

Physical

Offer activities that allow for use of leg and arm movements such as kicking, pulling, or throwing. Dance, sing, listen to music, swing, or pull wagons outside in the fresh air.

Communication

Talk with your child in complete sentences and make sure to use pronouns such as he, she, her, we, and us correctly.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Explore the world together through the senses. Talk about how things look, smell, feel, taste, and sound.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Gather items for Kindergarten enrollment such as your child's birth certificate and immunization records.

Schedule a doctor appointment for a physical and to ensure immunizations are up to date.



DECEMBER

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JANUARY

Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Encourage your child to try new things.

Physical

Throw and bounce a ball with your child.

Communication

Sing silly songs, make up goofy words, and rhyming words.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Offer activities that require your child stick with them for 10 to 15 minutes. Encourage them to keep trying.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Check-in with the child's school and make sure you have all the information you need ready to turn in for the enrollment process. Ask for forms to fill out.

Complete kindergarten registration forms and return them to the school.

JANUARY

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Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Do an art activity that celebrates the culture of your family. Talk about your family history and roots.

Physical

Draw with crayons on a piece of paper. Encourage your child to draw a picture of themselves.

Communication

Take books with you everywhere you go and encourage children to “read” them often.

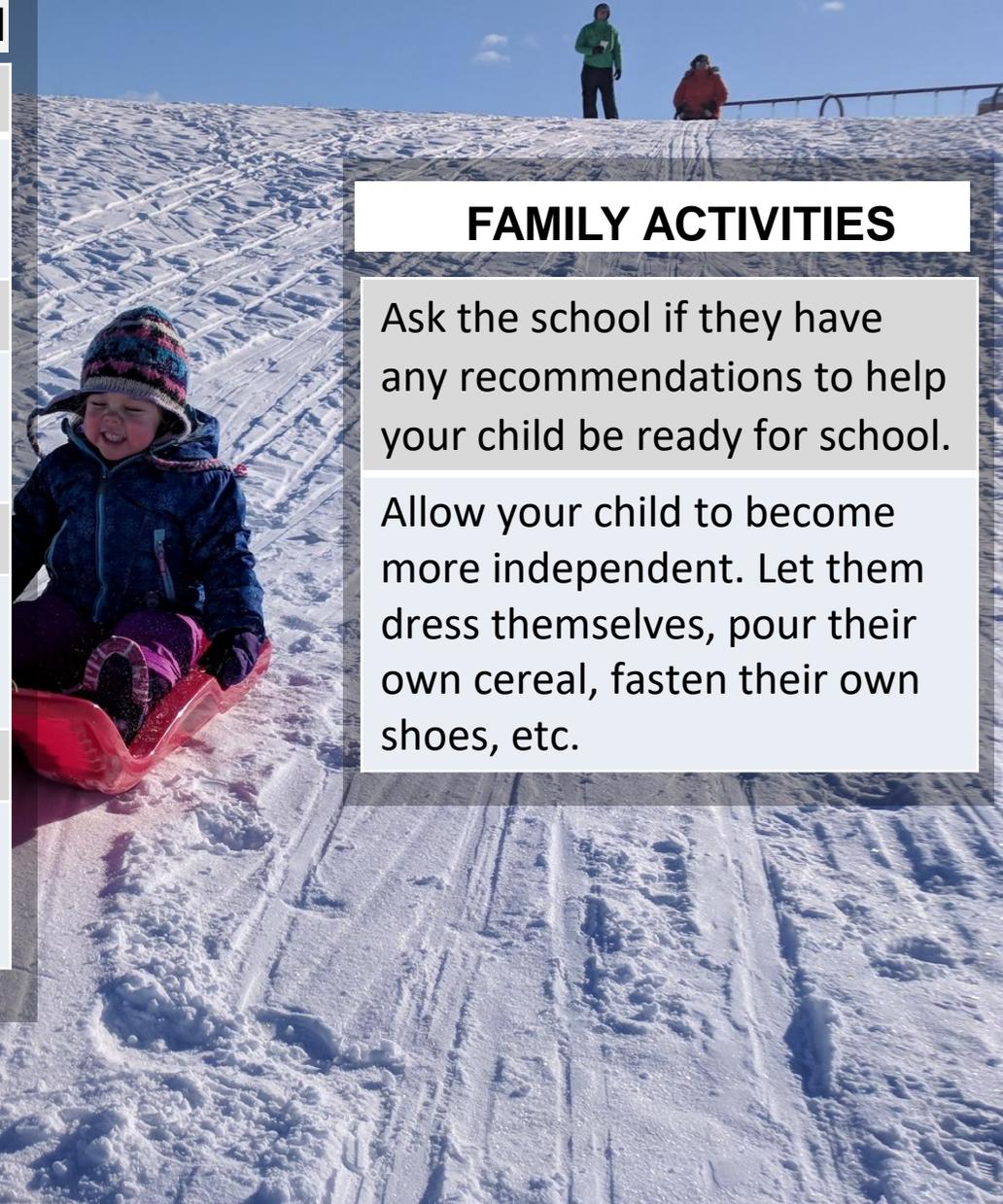
Thinking & Problem Solving

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Ask the school if they have any recommendations to help your child be ready for school.

Allow your child to become more independent. Let them dress themselves, pour their own cereal, fasten their own shoes, etc.



FEBRUARY

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MARCH

Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

To prepare them for leaving you when they go to school, give your child occasional opportunities to spend time with other safe adults.

Physical

Pedal and steer a tricycle or bike.

Communication

Help your child retell some of a story that you have read multiple times together.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Offer choices and help your child make a plan for what to do first, next, and last, when she selects.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

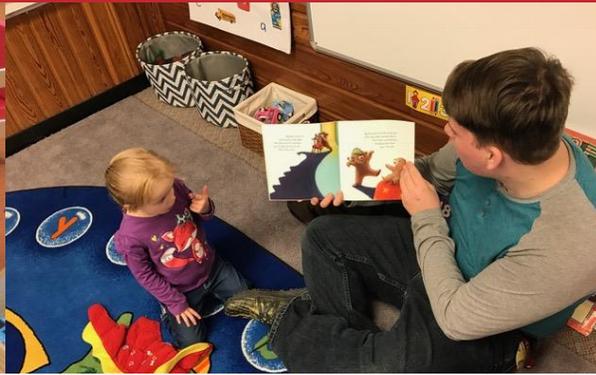
Arrange a visit to your child's school and classroom.

Try to see it through their eyes. When you bend down to their height, how do things look? Talk about what makes them excited or nervous.

MARCH

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APRIL



Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Talk about school in enthusiastic, positive ways.

Physical

Allow your child to cut with scissors in a purposeful way such as cutting a paper in half.

Communication

Encourage your child to “write” during play. It is okay if it is just scribbles. They are understanding that writing has purpose

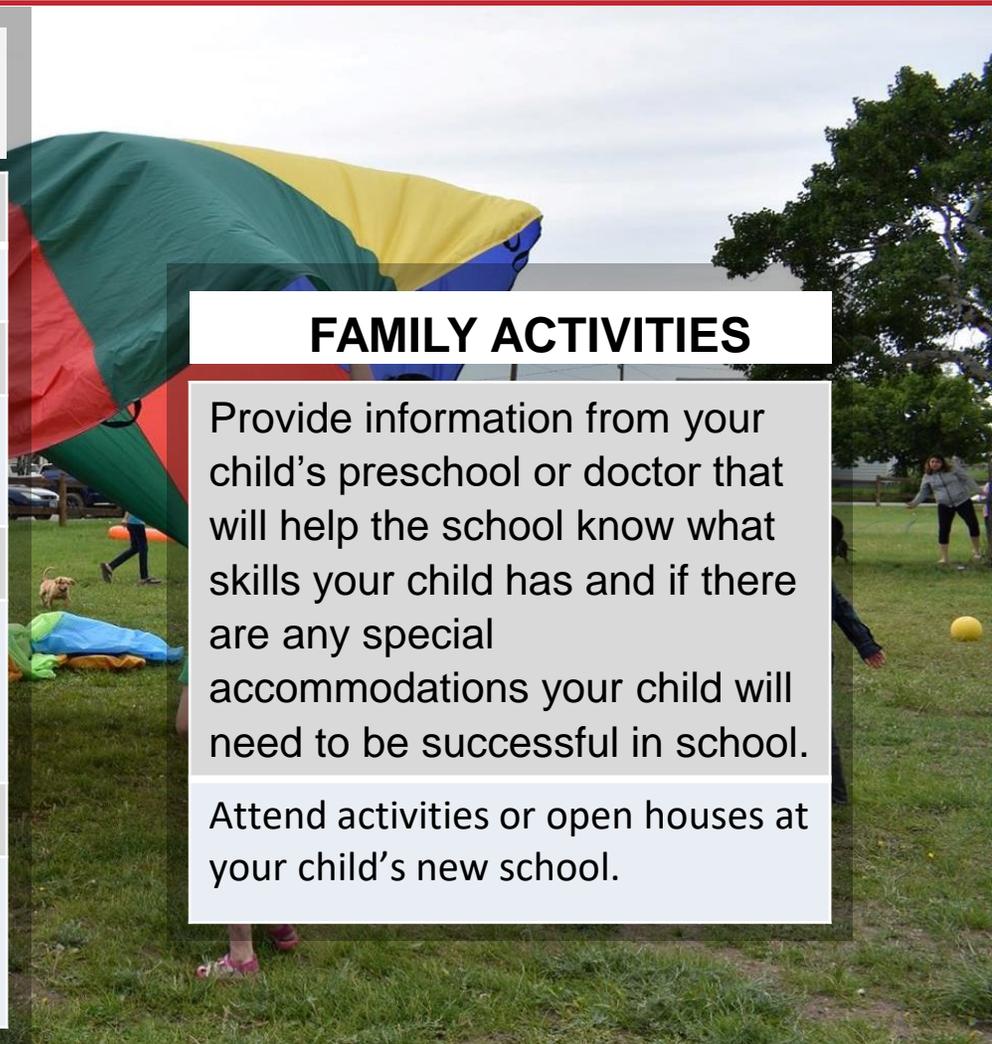
Thinking & Problem Solving

Help your child identify how many is in a group of five or less.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Provide information from your child’s preschool or doctor that will help the school know what skills your child has and if there are any special accommodations your child will need to be successful in school.

Attend activities or open houses at your child’s new school.



APRIL

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Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Visit your child's bus stop and talk about the children getting on and off the bus to go to school. Drive the route to school so they know what to expect when they are on the bus

Physical

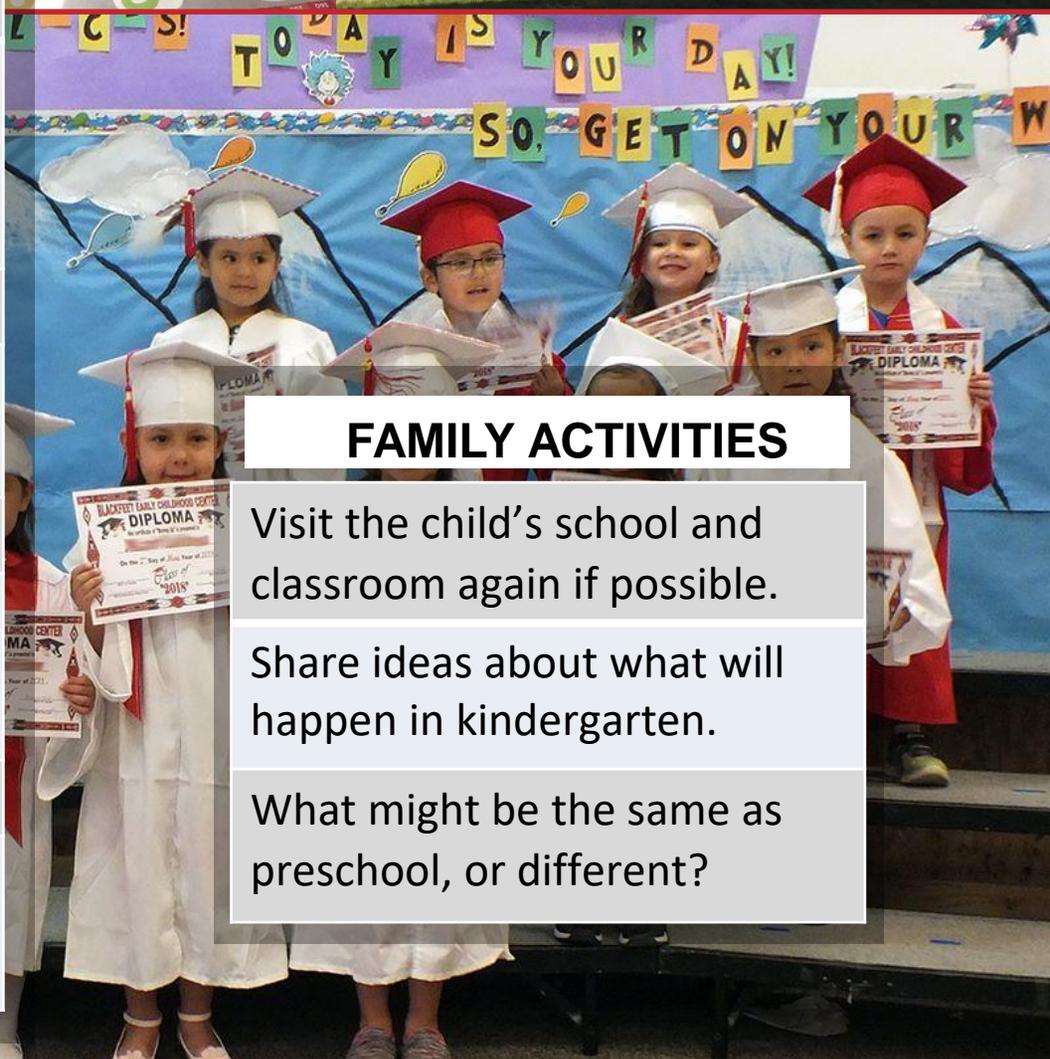
Roll out, pinch, and shape play dough into different objects including shapes and letters.

Communication

Talk with your child in complete sentences and make sure to use pronouns such as he, she, her, we, and us correctly

Thinking & Problem Solving

Explore the world together through the senses. Talk about how things look, smell, feel, taste, and sound.



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Visit the child's school and classroom again if possible.

Share ideas about what will happen in kindergarten.

What might be the same as preschool, or different?

MAY

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Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Sing the song “Head, Shoulders Knees, and Toes” and talk about the different parts of the body.

Physical

Do log rolls down a hill and climb a ladder in a playground.

Communication

Read a book with your child. Play with the beginning sound of some of the words in the story. Cat starts with the /k/ sound.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Create opportunities for play and exploration that can be done over a longer period of time such as watching a seed grow or a complex Lego project that your child can add to each day.

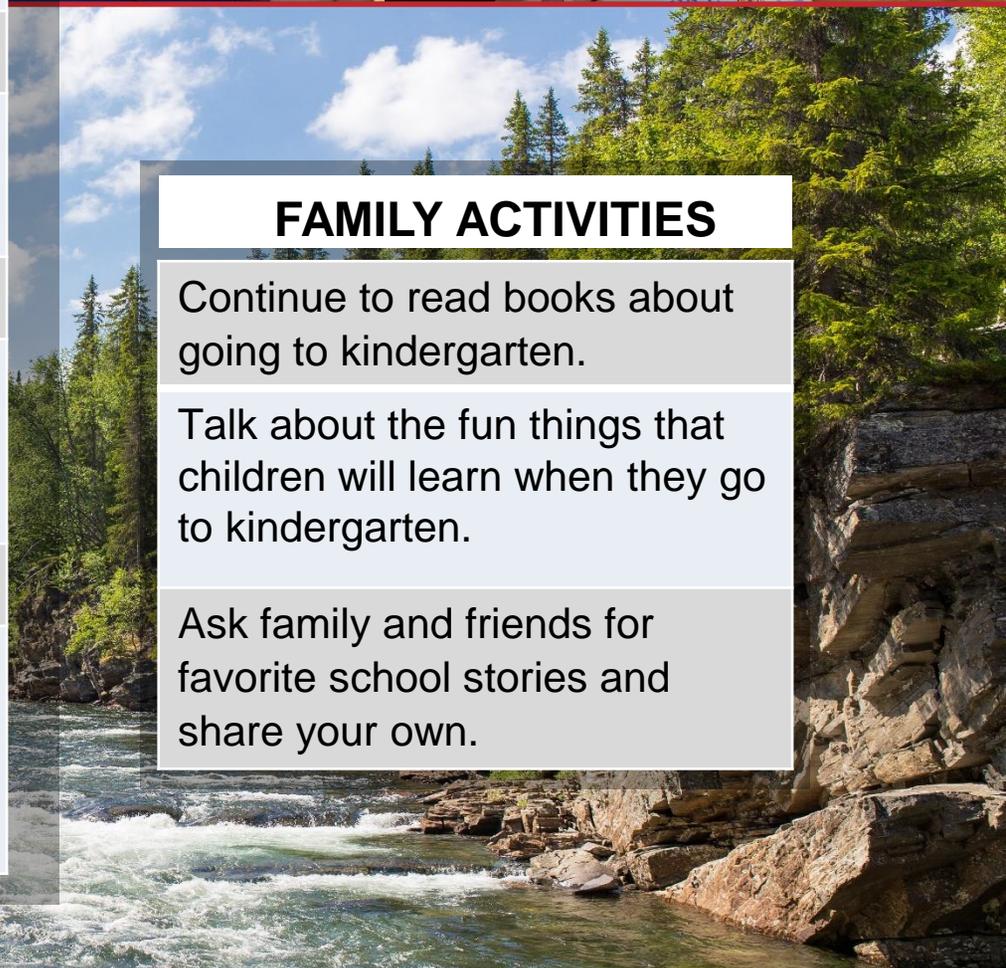


FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Continue to read books about going to kindergarten.

Talk about the fun things that children will learn when they go to kindergarten.

Ask family and friends for favorite school stories and share your own.



JUNE

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Activities for Parents to Help Children Develop Skills to Support Success in School

Emotional and Social

Provide opportunities for your child to share, cooperate, be helpful around the house, and to take turns.

Physical

Allow your child to get dressed with minimal help (zippers, snaps and buttons may still be a little hard).

Communication

Have alphabet letters on the fridge and in the bath tub. Talk about the shapes of the letters, the letters' names, and make words with them.

Thinking & Problem Solving

Provide experiences that will allow for deeper thinking and sorting. Buttons can be sorted by size, shape, color, or number of holes. Talk about ways to sort, and encourage the child to make decisions.

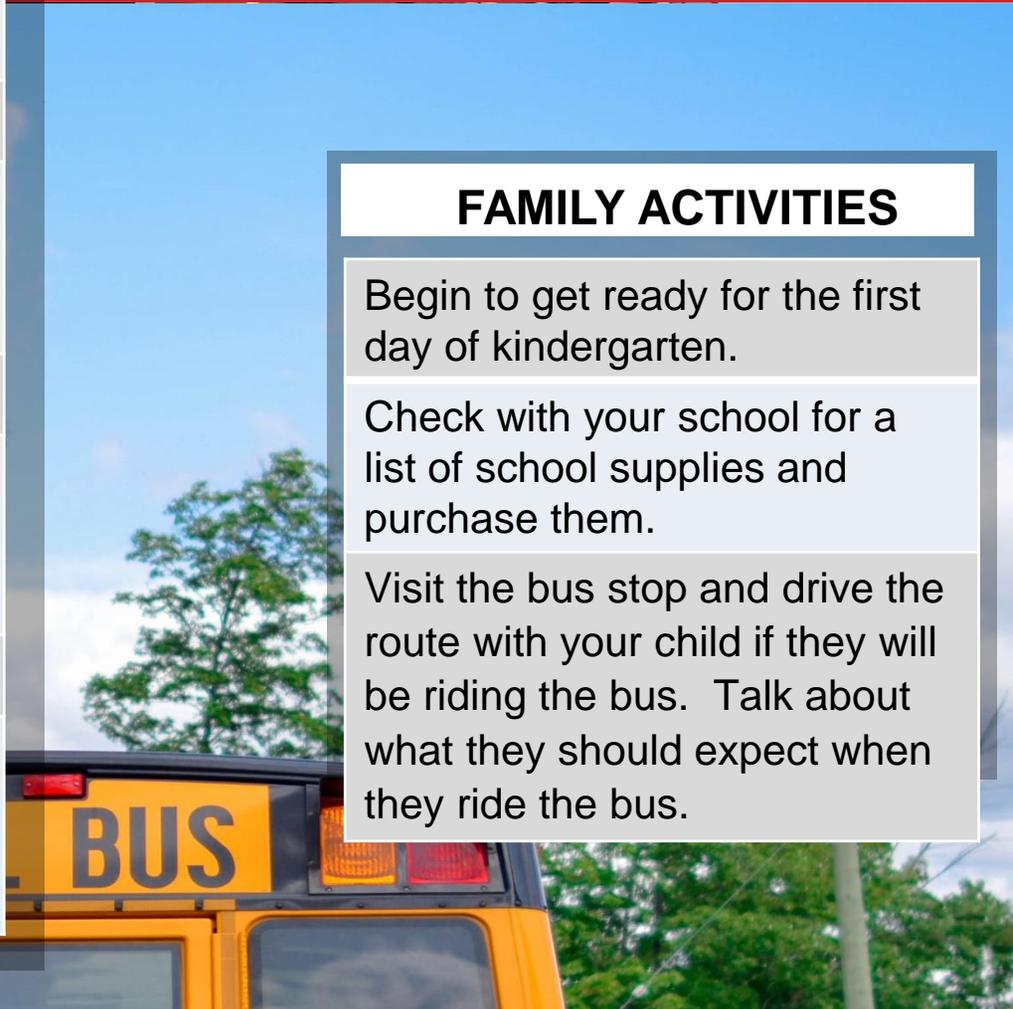


FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Begin to get ready for the first day of kindergarten.

Check with your school for a list of school supplies and purchase them.

Visit the bus stop and drive the route with your child if they will be riding the bus. Talk about what they should expect when they ride the bus.



JULY

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SELECTED CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT KINDERGARTEN

- *A Place Called Kindergarten* by Jessica Harper
- *Countdown to Kindergarten* by Alison McGhee
- *First Day Jitters* by Julie Danneberg
- *I am Too Absolutely Small for School* by Lauren Child
- *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson
- *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come/Preparate, kindergarten! Alla voy!* by Nancy Carlson
- *Owen* by Kevin Henkes
- *Do You Want to Be My Friend?* By Eric Carle
- *Will I Have a Friend?* By Miriam Cohen
- *Tom Goes to Kindergarten* by Margaret Wild
- *Tiptoe Into Kindergarten* by Jacqueline Rogers

- *Friends at School* by Rochelle Bunnett
- *When You Go to Kindergarten* by James Howe
- *Vera's First Day of School* by Vera Rosenberry
- *The Night Before Kindergarten* by Natasha Wing
- *The Twelve Days of Kindergarten* by Deborah Lee Rose
- *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate and Ashley Wolff
- *Off to Kindergarten* by Tony Johnston
- *Que Nervios! El Primer Dia de Escuela* by Julie Danneberg
- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- *Un Beso en Mi Mano* by Audrey Penn
- *Welcome to Kindergarten* by Anne Rockwell
- *School Bus* by Donald Crews



ARE YOU READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

We hope this Kindergarten Activity Calendar will help your family and your child prepare for kindergarten. You play a key role in your child's smooth transition. By doing these three things, you can make a big difference:

- **Build positive relationships with the preschool and kindergarten teachers.**
 - Spend time as a family having fun with stories and books.
 - Help the new teachers get to know your child and your family.

Kindergarten is an exciting change for your whole family. You and the school can work together to support this transition and help *your child have a wonderful kindergarten experience!*

