



TALKING



Facts about Talking

- The more words a child hears at home, the more words he/she will understand and speak at school.
- The more words a child can speak, the more likely they will recognize words in print.
- Take turns while speaking with your child. This helps them understand how conversation works.
- Talking with your child will help them hear sounds that make up words.



Social-Emotional Development

Talking connects children to the world around them. It is important for children to develop language skills that help them express how they are feeling. It is also important for children to understand that people around them have feelings. When you use language to explain this to children, it helps them to have healthy relationships with others. When you take turns talking with your child, this helps build conversation skills such as listening and speaking.



Language and Communication

Talking is the way most people communicate with each other. It is important for your child to understand that not all people speak the same way. Talk to your child about how people of different cultures speak different languages. Talk to your child about sign language and why people use it to communicate. Speak and read to your child in your first language, but expose them to other languages through books, songs, and other types of media.



Books That Encourage Talking

- ***Bee & Bird*** –Craig Frazier
- ***Is Your Mama a Llama?*** –Deborah Guarino; Steven Kellogg
- ***The Doorbell Rang*** –Pat Hutchins
- ***Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See?*** –Bill Martin, Jr., Eric Carle
- ***The Napping House*** –Audrey Wood; Don Wood






Activities That Encourage Talking

- When you read with your child, ask questions about what will happen next. This helps your child develop language and vocabulary skills, which are important skills for school.
- At the end of the day, take time to talk to your child about all of the things that happened that day. Ask your child to tell you their favorite part of the day, and share your favorite part with them. This helps children with conversation skills.
- When you run errands, such as shopping at the grocery store or going to the post office, talk to your child about what the workers are doing and why you are there. This helps children connect language to the world around them.
- Play games like “I Spy,” (one person “spies” an item of a certain color and the other person has to guess what it is). Games such as this require descriptive vocabulary, visual, and listening skills.
- Ask your child to make choices when it is appropriate, such as deciding what they would like to drink with their meal. This allows a child to use their words and make independent decisions.



MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				Ask your child to talk about his/her favorite part of the day.		Read about a place your child has been before. Talk about the similarities and differences in the text.
	Talk often to your child. The more words a child hears, the more successful they will be with reading later.		Encourage your child to draw a picture. Ask him/her to tell you about the picture. Write down the description.		Play a rhyming game. Say a word and ask your child to say a word that rhymes, or sounds like the word.	
Ask your child to tell you a story.		Visit the library! Encourage your child to ask a librarian about a book he/she would like to read.		Point out familiar signs around town. Ask your child to tell you what they say.		At lunchtime, ask your child to tell you the steps for making a sandwich.
	Before you read a story together, talk about what you think it will be about.		Try a few tongue twisters together. Playing with sounds helps a child develop language skills.		Talk about new words as you read a new story together.	
Allow your child to talk to a friend or family member on the phone.		Visit the library! Talk about the different types of books in the library and how they are organized.		Talk about the weather. Ask your child to describe what it looks and feels like outside.		Give your child a three-step direction to follow as he/she gets ready for bed.

Early Literacy Practice: Talking

The activities this month will give you the opportunity to model language and conversation skills for your child. Studies show the more language that a child hears at home, the better chance they have of becoming a successful reader. Language and literacy are connected.

Readiness Domain Focus: Social and Emotional Development, Language and Communication Development

SINGING



Facts about Singing

- Singing is important because it slows language down. This helps children hear individual sounds in words.
- Singing and music stimulates all different parts of the brain, which helps with reading and learning.
- Music encourages movement with young children that helps develop coordination and muscle strength.



Social-Emotional Development

Music and movement activities such as singing and dancing foster self-confidence and self-awareness. Singing in a group helps a child connect with peers. Music-based activities help children to explore new ideas and new words. Singing with others encourages children to share the “spotlight.” This helps children better understand the idea of sharing and turn-taking.



Language and Communication

Children can hear the sounds that make up individual words through singing. Children also have the opportunity to learn new words through singing new songs. Songs often rhyme, which helps introduce this literacy concept. The rhythm of the music helps prepare children to hear the rhythm of reading. Children can learn new concepts through songs that introduce math, science, history, different cultures, different languages, sequencing . . . the list goes on and on.



Books That Encourage Singing

- ***Dancing Feet*** –Lindsey Craig; Marc Brown
- ***Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*** –James Dean; Eric Litwin
- ***De Colores: Bright with Colors*** –David Diaz
- ***Chicka, Chicka Boom Boom*** –Bill Martin, Jr.; John Archambault; Lois Ehlert
- ***Raffi Songs to Read series*** –Raffi



Music That Encourages Singing


- ***Whaddaya Think of That*** –Laurie Berkner
- ***Smile at Your Neighbor*** –Eric Litwin
- ***The Singable Songs Collection*** –Raffi
- ***Music Time with SteveSongs*** –SteveSongs

Activities That Encourage Singing

- Check out CDs or downloadable music from the library. Allow your child to listen to the music in the car or at home.
- Learn songs with your child. What you think is important, your child will see as important. If you model a love of music and reading, your child is more likely to do the same.
- Make up silly songs together. This helps your child play with the sounds in language.
- Clap out the syllables in words with your child. This will help your child understand how words are broken up into parts.
- Play music during quiet times at home. The rhythm of music stimulates the brain.



MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Sing familiar songs that play with sounds, such as "I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas."		Visit the library! Check out some music to play at home or in the car with your child.		Encourage your child to make up their own songs.		Sing the day's schedule to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.
	Sing the alphabet song together, and then encourage your child to sing it alone.		Clap out the syllables as you sing a song together.		Purchase an inexpensive echo microphone. Encourage your child to put on a concert for you.	
Encourage your child to make up his/her own words to a familiar tune.		Visit the library! Check out a book that is a song you can sing together.		Make a drum together using an oatmeal container.		Clap a rhythm and encourage your child to repeat what he/she hears.
	Sing a song with letters, such as BINGO.		Sing a song that tells a story, such as Mary had a Little Lamb.		Sing songs together in the car.	
Sing a song that encourages your child to echo or repeat you.		Ask your child to pick out a song to sing together each morning.				

Early Literacy Practice: Singing

The activities this month will help you foster language skills through slowing down the sounds in language. Singing and music also helps children to understand rhythm, which helps with developing skills necessary for reading.

Readiness Domain Focus: Approaches to Learning; Language and Communication; Social and Emotional Development

READING



Facts about Reading



- Reading together is important! You are your child's first and best teacher. If you show your child that reading is important, they will think it is important, too.
- Reading skills begin at birth . . . language and literacy go hand in hand.
- When children look at picture books before they can read the words on the page, they are working on important skills that will lead to reading.
- Reading the same book over and over helps children connect spoken words to the text on the page.

Books That Encourage Reading



- ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** –Eric Carle
- ***Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons*** –James Dean; Eric Litwin
- ***Bark, George*** –Jules Feiffer
- ***If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*** –Laura Numeroff; Felicia Bond
- ***The Lion and the Mouse*** –Jerry Pinkney

Approaches to Learning



A child's attitude about learning—especially reading—impacts how successful he/she will be. When children are taught that reading is fun, they are much more likely to want to learn, and more likely to continue reading as they become older. How children perceive reading has a big impact on all areas of learning. It is important to make learning fun, and for your child to see you enjoying reading and learning, as well.

Activities That Encourage Reading




- Read together 20 minutes per day. Research shows that this simple practice has a big impact on a child's success as a reader later.
- Create a cozy space for your child to read. Place books on a shelf that is easy for them to reach. Have a "reading time" every day when you read a book and your child reads a book alone. Modeling this type of reading will help develop your child's reading skills later.
- Read signs when you are out with your child. Children will recognize familiar print—this is a child's first step toward reading.
- Read wordless books together. Ask your child to read the story to you through the actions in the pictures. This offers your child the opportunity to be the narrator and helps to develop language, communication, and literacy skills.
- Choose books to read to your child that you find enjoyable. If you enjoy a book, chances are your child will, too. When reading is fun, it has a much more positive impact on a child!

Language and Communication



Reading together fosters language skills, and introduces new ideas and concepts to your child. Encouraging your child to participate in reading through asking questions helps children to develop their own story-telling and narrative skills. Interactive reading also helps a child learn the sequence of events and helps them to see the connection between the words and the pictures on the page. When adults read to children, this provides practice with listening skills and making sense of the information they hear.

MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Create a cozy area with books for your child to sit and read with you.		Visit the library! Check out a few rhyming books to read together.		Let your child see you reading. Talk about why you enjoy reading.		When you read to your child, ask questions about what might happen in the story.
	Re-read books together. Young children learn best through repetition.		Show your child how to hold a book and turn the pages.		Read your favorite book from childhood. Share memories from your childhood.	
Read a nonfiction book about an animal. Talk about the animal's habitat.		Visit the library! Check out a book about the library.		Read a wordless book. Encourage your child to tell you what is happening in the pictures.		Make a book with paper. Encourage your child to draw pictures to tell the story.
	Go on a letter scavenger hunt. Encourage your child to find every letter of the alphabet.		Talk with your child about the author and illustrator of the book you read together.		Choose a book you enjoy reading—when you have fun, your child learns to love reading, too.	
Point to words as you read them. This helps your child connect your language to the words on the page.		Visit the library! Check out books about things that your child is interested in.				

Early Literacy Practice: Reading

The activities this month will help you prepare your child for becoming a successful reader. In order for children to develop reading skills, it is important for them to be read to. Taking 20 minutes per day to read together helps children understand that text on a page has meaning; develop a love for reading; recognize letters; develop listening and language skills; and helps them learn new words.

Readiness Domain Focus: Approaches to Learning; Language and Communication; Cognitive/General Knowledge

WRITING



Facts about Writing



- When a young child scribbles, it is his/her first step toward writing.
- Drawing and coloring are important activities for a child to practice in order to learn proper gripping and control of writing tools.
- Children need to practice with a variety of writing tools, including standard-size pencils, pens, crayons, markers, paintbrushes, chalk. By using different tools, children learn that each tool feels different, but accomplishes the same thing. Drawing helps children understand the meaning behind pictures.

Physical Well-Being/Motor Development



Learning how to hold a pencil, crayon, marker, or pen is a fine motor skill that children learn over time. Other fine motor skills include cutting with scissors, buttoning, zipping, snapping, and tying shoes. It is important to provide opportunities for your child to strengthen hand muscles needed for these skills before they enter school.

Language and Communication



Writing and drawing are important methods of communication. When your child first begins expressing ideas through drawing, it is important to ask them to tell you about what they have drawn. This gives the child the opportunity to verbally connect the ideas that they expressed on paper. To connect drawing and verbal language to written language, write down what your child tells you about their picture. This allows your child to see the connection between each type of communication, and also models writing skills for them to follow

Books That Encourage Writing





- ***Draw Me a Star*** –Eric Carle
- ***Rocket Writes a Story*** –Tad Hills
- ***Harold and the Purple Crayon*** –Crockett Johnson
- ***Library Mouse (series)*** –Daniel Kirk
- ***More Bears!*** –Kenn Nesbitt; Troy Cummings

Activities That Encourage Writing



- Scribbling, coloring, and drawing are all forms of pre-writing. Encourage your child to create with different writing tools as they progress through each stage—they all lead to writing.
- Encourage your child to write the letters in his/her name. This is the most meaningful printed word for a child, and often the one they are most interested in learning to write.
- Write the alphabet on lined paper with a yellow highlighter. Encourage your child to trace letters with a pencil.
- Provide regular size pencils for children to learn with. Using fatter pen-cils for children to learn with actually makes it more difficult for children to learn to write with regular size tools when it is required in school. In order for your child to develop the correct pencil grip, it is important for them to have practice with the tools they will be using in school.
- Allow your child to help with the grocery list by drawing pictures of a few items and/or checking items off the list as you purchase them.
- Write letters, cards, and notes to family members and encourage your child to sign their name to cards that you give to loved ones.

MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				Make many different types of writing tools available for your child to use for drawing and writing.		Write letters on writing paper with a highlighter. Encourage your child to trace over the letters with a pencil.
	Ask your child to help you make a grocery list by drawing pictures of some of the items.		Play restaurant. Encourage your child to take your order and write it down, or draw it.		Write a letter together with your child and mail it to a family member.	
Allow your child to play in shaving cream on a table. Encourage them to write their name in the cream.		Visit the library! Look up books together using the catalog. Write down the call numbers together.		Ask your child to draw/write a recipe card for making a sandwich.		Help your child work on making shapes with a pencil by doing connect the dot puzzles together.
	Use play dough together in order for your child to strengthen hand muscles for writing.		Have a small wipe-off board and markers available for your child to practice with.		Ask your child to draw different shapes with different writing tools.	
Supply washable paint and brushes. Ask your child to paint a picture of you.		Visit the library! Look for books about writing and drawing.		Help your child practice writing letters with their finger in the air.		

Early Literacy Practice: Writing

The activities this month will help your child develop hand strength and hand-eye coordination—skills needed for writing. The activities will also promote your child’s awareness of the connection between written words and language.

Readiness Domain Focus: Cognitive/General Knowledge; Language and Communication; Health and Physical Well-Being

PLAYING



Facts about Playing

Playing is a child's work. It is through play and exploration that a child learns most about the world around them. It is important for children to have the opportunity to play with peers and adults, as well as to play independently. Play should offer a child the opportunity to engage their senses through imaginative play: to interact with people, places, and things in their everyday world; and should incorporate print as much as possible.



Social-Emotional Development

Playing with peers is important for a child's social development—one of the most important areas of readiness identified by kindergarten teachers. Play enables a child to try out new ideas and apply knowledge through using their imagination. Play also promotes getting to know others in a way that feels safe and familiar. Play helps build self esteem and confidence.



Cognition/General Knowledge

Play helps children learn about the world around them. Play can be connected to the people and places that are a part of a child's daily living. Play that involves imagination, also called dramatic play, allows a child to learn through being actively engaged in familiar situations, such as playing house, setting up a pretend restaurant, or playing grocery store. It is important to introduce print into a child's play as much as possible, as well as to provide realistic materials—such as receipts, menus, pretend money, etc. This helps children connect play to the real world.



Books That Encourage Playing

- ***Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*** –Eileen Christlelow
- ***Let's Do Nothing!*** –Tony Fucile
- ***A Mouse Told His Mother*** –Bethany Roberts; Maryjane Begin-Callanan
- ***My Friend Rabbit*** –Eric Rohmann
- ***Is Everyone Ready for Fun?*** –Jan Thomas





Activities That Encourage Playing

- Provide realistic materials for children to play with, such as empty cardboard food containers for playing grocery store, or an old cell phone for playing office. Using realistic items will help children learn to interact with their world.
- Set up a pretend grocery store. Take turns playing the part of the customer and the cashier. Use stickers or pieces of paper taped to the items as price tags. Encourage your child to write the prices on the stickers. When paying for the items you purchase, use pretend money and help your child count it out. Write out pretend receipts and encourage your child to sign their name to receipts for pretend credit cards.
- Set up a post office station. Provide envelopes and paper for your child to write letters and mail them in a pretend mailbox. Use junk mail for post office play.
- Play school. Encourage your child to play the role of the teacher. This will help erase fears about starting school, while also providing an opportunity for learning.



MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						Allow your child to experiment with water, measuring cups, and bowls.
	Create a sensory tub with sand, beans, water, or rice. Encourage your child to scoop and pour.		Visit the library! Play educational games with your child on a computer.		Build a town together using blocks. Add trucks and cars and build a road.	
Act out your child's favorite book together.		Make puppets together with paper bags. Encourage your child to put on a puppet show for you.		Play a simple board game. This helps children learn to follow directions and take turns.		Set up a play date with another child. This helps your child develop social and turn-taking skills.
	Play "school" with your child. Take turns being the teacher.		Visit the library! Look for CDs with interactive songs and games.		Play grocery store. Encourage your child to write price tags and count money as you "buy" groceries.	
Pretend to cook with your child using pots, pans, and utensils. Talk about each step as you "cook."		Play hide and seek. Encourage your child to count while you hide.				

Early Literacy Practice: Playing

The activities this month will focus on play to help your child prepare for school. Play is a child's work. Play provides the opportunity for children to work on language, math skills, social skills, scientific thinking, writing, pre-reading skills, and connecting to the world around them. Play helps children understand that learning is fun.

Readiness Domain Focus: Approaches to Learning; Cognitive/General Knowledge; Language and Communication; Social-Emotional Development



SELF-HELP AND MOTOR SKILLS

Self-Help Skills

Self-help skills include behaviors such as caring for one's own bathroom needs, hanging up one's own coat, and controlling one's emotions. This skill area is one of the most important indicators of school readiness according to kindergarten teachers. It is important to help children work on social skill development and adaptive skills in order to help make the transition as smooth as possible.



Motor Skills

Physical skills including large and small muscle movements are important indicators of readiness. Large muscle movements, such as running, walking, jumping, and lifting are known as gross motor movements, which contribute to a child's ability to care for his/her own needs. Fine motor skills are small muscle movements, such as pinching, grasping, squeezing, pressing, and twisting. Fine motor skills are needed for writing, cutting, buttoning, zipping, and tying—all important skills needed for kindergarten activities.



Approaches to Learning

The way a child learns is dependent on his/her self-concept and health. Listening skills are also a part of how a child learns, and this is connected to the ability for a child to have self-control in group situations. Children learn from other children, as well. It is easier for children to focus on what the teacher is saying when they are well rested, healthy, and feel good about themselves. In order for children to acclimate to kindergarten, it is important for them to be part of a social situation with peers before kindergarten. Play dates, library programs, and other group activities help prepare children for the transition.



Books That Encourage Physical Well-Being

- ***I Like Myself!*** –Karen Beaumont; David Catrow
- ***The Vegetables We Eat*** –Gail Gibbons
- ***Ready, Set, Skip!*** –Jane O'Connor; Ann James
- ***The Busy Body Book*** –Julie Sykes; Tim Warnes



Books That Encourage Self-Help Skills

- ***Hands Are Not For Hitting*** –Dr. Martine Agassi; Marieka Heinlen
- ***Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*** –Margaret Chodos-Irvine
- ***It's Hard to be Five: Learning How to Work My Control Panel*** –Jamie Lee Curtis
- ***Llama Llama Time to Share*** –Anna Dewdney
- ***The Kissing Hand*** –Audrey Penn; Ruth E. Harper; Nancy M. Leak

Activities That Encourage Motor/ Self-Help Skills

- Get your child involved in a play group or other social situations where they have plenty of time to work on social skills before kindergarten. Take them to the library to attend story hour programs with children their age.
- Take your child to the park. Encourage them to run, climb, skip, and slide. All of these activities are important to a child's physical development.
- With supervision, allow your child to use scissors to cut out pictures in a magazine. It is important for a child to have practice with scissors before kindergarten.
- Encourage your child to put on their own clothes, shoes, and jacket. Encourage your child to hang up their own jacket and put things away when they are finished. Give them a simple chore to do independently each day, such as set the table, or feed the pet.



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Visit the library! Encourage your child to carry some of the books they would like to check out.		Encourage your child to cut pictures from a magazine with supervision. Remind them: thumb in the top of the scissors.		Encourage your child to work on zipping their own zipper.
	Have a "skipping" race outside to help your child practice skipping.		Unlace a pair of shoes and encourage your child to lace them back up correctly.		Encourage your child to walk up and down steps by alternating feet.	
Hang a shirt with buttons on a hanger within reach for your child. Encourage your child to button it.		Visit the library! Check out books about kindergarten.		Supply large beads and pipe cleaners. Encourage your child to string the beads with supervision.		Play with play dough to help strengthen your child's hand muscles.
	Encourage your child to hang up his/her own laundry on hangers.		Play "Simon Says" focusing on physical movements.		Go to the park and run with your child.	
Practice shoe tying with your child. Model how to tie shoes by reaching around your child.		Visit the library! Check out CDs with music and movement activities.				

Early Literacy Practice: Self-Help and Motor Skills

The activities this month will help foster your child's self-help skills. Activities that work on fine motor skills such as writing, cutting, stringing, and lacing, and large motor skills such as running and skipping, are also included.

Readiness Domain Focus: Approaches to Learning; Social-Emotional Development; Health and Physical Well-Being