

THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Champions of Public Education Across Canada



Welcome to
Kindergarten™

Family Activity Calendar

2009 - 2010

www.thelearningpartnership.ca

This year more than 75,000 families from across Canada will participate in The Learning Partnership's Welcome to Kindergarten™ program – an early years initiative supporting pre-school children and their families.

The year before and when a child starts school is an exciting and sometimes stressful time for children and their parents. This Welcome to Kindergarten™ calendar was developed to help families get ready for the child's transition into formal schooling.

For each calendar month, family activities are suggested that are fun and will help the child develop understandings that are the foundation of reading.

We, at The Learning Partnership, hope that our Welcome to Kindergarten™ calendar of activities will be used by parents and caregivers to help children develop curiosity, imagination and confidence as they begin to prepare for their adventures in learning.

DID YOU KNOW?

- You are not alone. There are people and places in your community where you can get help finding books and toys for enjoyable language learning.
 - Public library
 - School library
 - Pre-school programs, early years centres, family and other community/resource centres.
 - Neighbours and other parents
 - Websites – e.g. www.parentscanada.com
- When children play "Let's Pretend" they practise the skills of carrying on a conversation, getting others to do what they want, cooperating and listening to what others are saying. They also imitate different ways people talk. For example, the vocabulary and tone of the doctor, the store cashier and the teacher are all slightly different. It is amazing how accurately children can capture the mood and intention of the various speakers. Just listen in when your child is playing parent and you will hear what you sound like to your child.
- Always encourage and praise your child's attempts.
- Get your pre-school child a library card. Go regularly to the public library and explore the children's section together.

ACTIVITIES

Activities with Magnetic Letters and Numbers

Talking about letters and numbers and doing activities will help your child develop number and letter awareness. Help your child to:

- Sort the letters and numbers into different groups – e.g. by colours, letters and numbers your child can or can't name.
- Count them. "How many are in each pile?" "How many altogether?"
- Find letters from your child's name. Put these letters on the refrigerator.
- Match the magnetic letters to the letters and numbers in books, magazines, newspapers.

Playdough

Activities with playdough will help children develop the finger control and coordination they need for writing. To make playdough you need: 2 1/2 cups flour (625 ml), 1/2 cup salt (125 ml), 2 teaspoons (2 ml) cream of tartar or alum, 2 cups boiling water (500 ml), 2-3 tablespoons oil (30-45 ml), 2 packages unsweetened kool-aid. This recipe will make 8 small balls of playdough.

1. Combine the ingredients together.
2. Stir well.
3. Knead the dough and it is ready to use.
4. Store it in a covered plastic container or zip-lock bag.

Encourage your child to:

- Take a ball of playdough and explore the feel of it by squishing, rolling, flattening.
- Make different shapes and patterns with the playdough using cookie cutters, rolling pin, forks, popsicle sticks.
- Roll and make small balls and worm shapes with the playdough.
- Use the playdough to make shapes, letters and numbers.

Activities with Crayons, Paper, Glue, Scissors

Art activities will help your child develop the finger control and coordination they need for writing.

- Encourage your child to draw pictures with thick crayons or markers.
- Let your child cut out pictures from old magazines and newspapers.
- Glue favourite pictures to paper.
- Praise your child's art and post it for everyone to see.

READING

A GIFT TO LAST A LIFETIME

Learning to read is one of the most important gifts we can give our children. It opens up a world of information, imagination and success. It is never too early to begin building a foundation for reading by talking to children, playing with them, telling stories and reading with them.

If English is your second language, don't be afraid to speak in your first language. The important thing is for your child to learn language. Once children are in pre-school or kindergarten, they will pick up another language rapidly when they need to use it.

As you and your child progress through the calendar, keep in mind that you can use each month's suggestions as often as you like. Feel free to repeat your favourites and bounce from month to month for fun! Once an activity has been completed, try recording it together on the calendar under the appropriate day to give your child a sense of accomplishment and to discuss what he or she has learned with others.

There are four building blocks that make up the foundation for reading and writing.



READING BEGINS WITH TALKING AND LISTENING

Children who become good readers are children who are good talkers. That is, they have a big vocabulary and are able to talk in sentences.



STORIES AND BOOKS: THE BACKBONE OF EARLY READING

When children listen to stories either from books or through storytelling, they come to understand such things as the beginning, middle and end; they broaden their understanding of the different ways people act and speak; they learn to predict an outcome; they learn to follow a sequence of events and pick out important details. These are some of the main skills needed for reading.



PLAY AND LANGUAGE

Children's play is one of the most important ways children learn language. Most parents see the value in playing language games but do not realize that make-believe play is one of the most important activities for the development of language. This is not only true of listening and speaking, but of reading and writing as well.



READING AND WRITING ARE ALL AROUND

Reading and writing are everywhere in any child's world. Seeing adults read and write in everyday life helps children understand the importance of these skills in getting along in the world. Being unable to read and write is one of the biggest barriers to successful living.

January



Family Activities

Week 1

Play games matching letters of the alphabet. Read alphabet books. Make your own alphabet books using your child's suggestions of objects for each letter – e.g. M is for motorboat.

Week 2

Talk with your child about the day's activities or about plans for the following day – e.g. "What should we do at the park tomorrow?"

Week 3

Play word and sound games – e.g. "How many words do you know that start with the same sound as your name?"

Week 4

Ask your child to tell you a story about a picture that she/he has made.



Reading begins with talking & listening

The alphabet is the key to forming words and sentences and helps your child make sense of reading.

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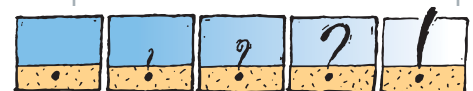
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Family Activities

Week 1

As you read a storybook with your child, ask your child to predict:

- "What do you think will happen next?"
- "How do you think Baby Bear felt when he saw the porridge was all gone?"
- "What is your favourite part of the story?"
- "Why?"

Week 2

Talk about other ways that the story could end. Make up new endings.

Week 3

As you reread a favourite book together, make your child aware of the letters of the alphabet.

Point out words that begin with the same letter.

Find words that begin with the same letter as the child's name.

Find rhyming words.

Week 4

Have your child find the magnetic letters that will make favourite words from a book. Put the letters of the word on the refrigerator.

February



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| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |

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Stories and Books:
The backbone of early reading

There is a strong link between what pre-school children know about books, words, sounds and letters and their readiness for school.

March



Family Activities

Week 1

Show your child that you approve of pretend play and encourage imaginative play by joining in.

Week 2

Have a box of props including old clothes, hats, scarves, capes, shoes and other items that encourage your child to dress up and pretend to be a character from a favourite book or TV program.

Week 3

Use puppets to encourage conversation. After reading a story, have puppets available for you and your child to retell the story together.

Week 4

Sing favourite songs and suggest changing the lyrics –
e.g. *Ten In The Bed* –
“Maybe we can use another word instead of roll-over?”

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| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |



Play and Language

What are some things I can do to encourage language and literacy development in play?

Make time to listen to your child's questions and answer them honestly. This will develop language skills and nurture curiosity.

April



Family Activities

Week 1

Read out loud as you look at road signs, store flyers, posters in windows, the TV guide, post-it notes, recipes.

Week 2

Include your child as you make shopping lists, write notes on a birthday card, print a reminder on a post-it, write an email to a friend.

Week 3

Point out messages on the television screen, logos for programs and products, announcements – e.g. warnings on the weather network.

Week 4

Play board games that use reading and writing – e.g. Lotto, Bingo, Memory.





Reading and writing are all around

How can I make reading and writing important to my child?
Show your child the many ways we get information. Show your child the reading materials that you use in your day-to-day activities – e.g. cookbook, television guide, newspaper, maps.

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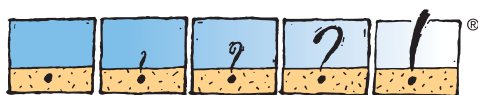
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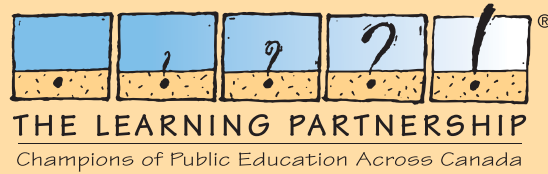
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