Success in Kindergarten **Parent Strategies**

Fairfax County PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ENGAGE • INSPIRE • THRIVE

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) believes that a high quality kindergarten program provides an education which meets each child's needs, interests, and level of development. Kindergarten offers opportunities for children to observe, explore, experiment, and investigate the world around them.

FCPS recognizes that parents are their children's first teachers. This publication provides parents with ways to support their children to help ensure a successful transition to kindergarten. Parents are encouraged to engage children in these activities in their home language. For additional information, please visit https://www.fcps.edu/academics/elementary-school-academics-k-6/kindergarten

Oral Language

Oral language is the basis for all communication, both spoken and written. *With your child:*

- Talk about what you are doing and what they are doing.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes.

Reading

Children develop reading behaviors before they enter school. Print (e.g., books, street signs, email) is encountered early in life. *When reading with your child:*

- Go to the library or bookstore for story time.
- Check out books from the library.
- Use wordless books and pictures to make up a story.
- Let your child choose his or her own book.
- Point to the words and talk about what they mean.
- Let your child know he or she is a reader.

Writing

Children begin to explore writing in many ways. They make scribbles and print-like marks, draw pictures, write strings of letters, write letters in their name, write words they see, and write letters to match sounds. *With your child:*

- Encourage drawing and writing notes to family and friends.
- Make lists.
- Make up stories about the pictures they have drawn.

Mathematics

An understanding of mathematics happens as children use objects in the home. *With your child:*

- Sort objects such as socks, crayons, and cereal.
- Look for patterns (e.g,.stripes on a shirt, petals on a flower).
- Touch and count objects or toys.
- Talk about different coins when you go to the store.

Science

Science for young children is exploring and discovering the world around them. *With your child:*

- Talk about things you see outside.
- Collect and sort leaves, sticks, and flowers and talk about their shape, size, and smell.

Social Studies

Children are beginning to move from thinking about themselves to thinking about the world around them. *With your child:*

- Share family history. Help your child to tell family stories.
- Get to know your community. Talk about the role of community members as you visit the fire station, post office, local police station, community center, swimming pool, and stores.

Technology

Technology, when available, provides another tool for learning. *With your child:*

- Make age-appropriate software and apps available.
- Talk about what he or she sees on the screen.

Emotional Development

Parents can help children become responsible, independent, and confident by setting clear limits and explaining appropriate behaviors. *With your child:*

- Discuss and be consistent with rules and consequences.
- Help your child understand that making mistakes is part of learning; encourage them to keep trying even when it is hard.
- Encourage your child to find multiple solutions (e.g., "Can you think of a different way to do it?").
- Participate in programs in your community to help your child practice being away from you for a short time. Say good-by and give reassurance that you will return.
- Work on developing independence by having them dress, use the bathroom, and wash hands.

Social Development

Social development begins as children interact with the world. Children learn socially when they engage in play and observe others. *With your child:*

- Join in play and activities that encourage sharing and taking turns.
- Encourage your child to get along with others and help them problem solve when difficulties arise. (e.g., "I can see it makes you upset when he takes your toy. How do you think we can solve this problem?")

Physical Development

Daily opportunities to develop physical growth and coordination are important. *With your child:*

- Play by practicing throwing, catching, kicking, rolling, bouncing, or chasing a ball.
- String beads, buttons, or straws on pipe cleaners.
- Visit local playgrounds.

Executive Function and Self-Regulation

These skills are the thinking processes that help us to plan, focus, and remember successfully. Harvard University Center on the Developing Child has published an activity guide for building executive function skills:

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/activities-guide-enhancing-and-practicing-executive-function-skills-with-children-from-infancy-to-adolescence/

FUN LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Sorting

Materials: An assortment of buttons, keys, rocks

Pour out a handful of objects, and have your child sort by color, shape, or size.

Writing Tool Kit

Materials: Salt or sand, cookie sheet, pipe cleaners, play dough, markers, paper, crayons, pencils, envelopes, note cards

Provide a variety of materials for your child to use when practicing forming letters or words.

Math Egg Carton Game

Materials: egg carton, magic marker, small objects (e.g., shells, buttons, beans)

Number the holes inside the egg carton 1 through 12. Have your child place the matching number of shells in each hole (e.g., 5 shells in hole number 5).

Playground

Create an obstacle course using playground equipment and challenge your child to move through the course in different ways (e.g., walking, crawling, hopping).

Puzzles

Provide your child with different kinds of puzzles to help develop problem solving, memory, and planning skills.

Cooking

When preparing snacks and/or small meals, invite your child to help. Participating in cooking helps develop self-control, memory, attention, oral language, reading, and math behaviors.

TAKE YOUR CHILD PLACES

Libraries

Fairfax County Public Library – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

Parks

Fairfax County Park Authority – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

Nature Centers

Fairfax County Nature Centers – https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/nature-history/parks

Farms

Frying Pan Farm Park – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fryingpanpark/

Cox Farm – www.coxfarms.com

Museums

Smithsonian Institution – www.si.edu

PLAY Is the highest form of research.
Albert Einstein