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## Readiness: Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?

Cynthia L. Nott

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READINESS:  
IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

by  
Cynthia L. Nott

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July 1999

A handbook has been designed to aid parents or care givers in guiding their preschooler towards a successful formal education. The handbook will allow parents or care givers to be more involved in their child's first five years of learning. It will also enable the preschooler to have a better chance for success in his or her education. The handbook consists of suggested activities developed by the author with the parent or caregiver in mind. These activities are designed for the parent or caregiver to incorporate within their everyday routine. These activities are organized in order of age levels and learning areas. The learning areas are social, emotional, academic and physical readiness. These activities are designed to further increase the parent or caregiver's involvement in the readiness of their preschooler. Current literature and research involving the topic of Kindergarten Readiness were explored.

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CHAPTER ONE  
BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

There are an enormous number of preschool age children entering the public school system with fewer basic skills each year. According to a 1995 study by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, one third of all children entering kindergarten are not prepared to learn. ("Motivation", 1995). "Many children go to school unprepared because their parents, or others who care for them, are not aware of what children need to know to be ready for school, and that parents themselves, are the best people to teach these things to children" (Parent Education Resources, 1997, p.1).

There is a large and consistent body of research that demonstrates the relationship between parents' behaviors and children's success in school. Substantial evidence shows that children whose parents are involved in their schooling have significantly increased their academic achievement and cognitive development than the children whose parents are not involved (Epstein, 1995; Teale, 1978; Morrow, 1983).

Research has shown that development of a wide range of skills in preschool aged child is strongly influenced by the parent's literacy,

especially that of the mother's (Teale 1978).

### Significance of the Project

The topic of Readiness has been chosen because the author has seen many children within her school system that are failing due to a lack of readiness. The children's lack of readiness is due in part to the lack of parental attention toward academics. Research studies indicate, "there is a strong connection between the active participation of parents in their child's learning experiences and success in school" (Georgia Pre-kindergarten Program Handbook, 1997, p. 4).

Parent participation in children's learning experiences in school has been declining in recent years. According to Pinata (1996), increased poverty has been a major reason. Poor or low income children have had no predictable routines in their lives, nor have they had a close relationship with any adult.

In 1995 Washington State adopted the new Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EARLs) in order to raise the academic requirement for all children. As a result, it will be more important than ever for preschool age children to be academically ready when they enter kindergarten.

With educational expectations being raised, the children of Washington must be better prepared by their parents in the home

before their formal education begins in the kindergarten year.

### Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to develop a handbook for parents with preschool age children. The handbook will include the expectations of not only the typical public school district, but also the expectations of the recently adopted EALRs for the state of Washington in the area of kindergarten readiness.

A handbook has been designed to aid parents or care givers in guiding their preschooler towards a successful formal education. The handbook will allow parents or care givers to be more involved in their child's first five years of learning. It will also enable the preschooler to have a better chance for success in his or her education.

### Limitations of the Project

The activities in the parent handbook project were designed to be used in the child's home and family environment. They are not intended for a school or other educational institutional settings. The activities have been written with the parent or care giver in mind. The focus of the project is on four areas: physical, emotional, social, and academics. Other readiness areas are not covered in the handbook.

## Definition of Terms

The following terms used within the context of the project are stated below.

Readiness: A level of maturity and or skills that predict a child's success in the school setting.

Preschool: An institution that advertises a curriculum of academic and/or social and physical growth for three to five years of age.

Essential Academic Learning Requirements: (EALRs) Higher academic standards desired to create higher order thinking and problem solving skills. (Washington Commission on Student Learning, 1995).

## Overview of the Remainder of the Project

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature. It contains information on the importance of parental involvement in the preschooler's education and readiness strategies. Chapter Three describes the procedures undertaken to develop materials and system management for the project. This section also contains the criteria for materials selected for the project. Chapter Four consists of the project itself. Chapter Five contains a summary of the project and the author's summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

There are an enormous number of preschool age children entering the public school system with fewer basic skills each year. According to a 1995 study by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, one third of all children entering kindergarten are not prepared to learn, (cited in "Motivation," 1995). "Many children go to school unprepared because their parents, or others who care for them, are not aware of what children need to know to be ready for school, and that parents themselves, are the best people to teach these things to children" (Parent Education Resources, 1997, p.1).

#### Defining Readiness

According to the U.S. Department of Educational Research and Improvement, readiness is defined as "being prepared to participate successfully in formal schooling" ( U.S. Department of Educational Research and Improvement 1993, p. 3). The Department further states that there is no one test that is available to educators or parents to determine readiness. According to the Goals 2000 formula, experts feel

that readiness involves the whole child, not just his or her verbal skills or general knowledge. (National Educational Goals Panel, 1991). The Goals 2000 formula states that by the year 2000, every child will start school ready to learn and at least 90 percent of all students will graduate from high school. Each American student will leave the fourth, eighth and twelfth grades demonstrating competence in core subjects.

Therefore, the concept of readiness is a term used to describe preparation for what comes next in a child's education. Readiness for the formal school setting involves both the child and the instructional situation. Bard, (1995) believes "Readiness for kindergarten is a deceptively simple concept", he maintains there are actually a number of areas in which to evaluate readiness. They include cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and physical factors, which all need to be taken into account. Nurss, (1997) maintains readiness is based on a pattern of qualities, a cluster of conditions and characteristics that embraces many of these categories social, emotional, physical, and academic.

White, (1997) is in agreement with the categories of readiness identified by Bard, (1995) and Nurss, (1997). White (1997) believes the four categories of, social, emotional, physical, and academic readiness are evident from Phase I, (birth to six weeks old), to Phase VII, (24 to 36 months old). White concludes:

a baby should be reared in such a manner that he comes to feel he is cared for, that he acquires all the specific skills within his

capacity, and that his inborn tendency to learn more about and to enjoy the world around him is deepened and broadened. (White, 1997, p. 14)

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### Rational for Readiness

According to the Parents Education Resources Handbook (1998), school can be an exciting place where children meet new and different people. Students also get to experience many new and different activities and opportunities. There is a lot to see, a lot to do, and a lot to learn. If children are ready for kindergarten, it can be a wonderful experience that makes them feel good about themselves, good about school, and eager to learn. However, if children are not ready, beginning school can be confusing and embarrassing, even frightening. All children can start to feel bad about themselves, to dislike school, and not do as well as they could. This can happen if a child hasn't been to a school before, is new to the neighborhood or the country, English is the second language, or any combination of the above. Once a child feels this level of confusion it can be very hard to change his or her opinion of the school experience.

Many experts feel that many children also go to school unprepared for learning because their parents, or others who care for them, are not aware of what children need to know to be ready for school because they have had a little or no education themselves. (Zill,

Collins, West, & Germino-Hausken 1995b; United States Department of Education 1993). These experts believe the first teachers of children are their parents. Parents set by example and conversation towards the child the foundation of his or her education. Morrow (1983) contends that if a mother's educational level is high there is a greater chance, her child's educational abilities will be high. Morrow further states children who experience interaction with their parent or care giver in their early childhood years benefit in the long run towards their entry to formal education.

### Non readiness

Zill, Collins, West, and Germino-Hausken (1995a) discussed several factors that affect a child's readiness for school. The identified factors were basic survival skills that were dealt with on a day-to-day basis. Zill et al. (1995b) stated; before they enter kindergarten, most American children can identify colors, recognize letters of the alphabet, count to 20, hold a pencil properly and write their own first names. However, preschoolers whose mothers have less education or whose first language isn't English lag behind other kids in both literacy and motor skills.

Zill et al. (1995b) also raised concerns about whole groups of children who are not ready for school. Non-English speaking children as a group, for example, had fewer literacy skills when they entered

kindergarten. Many non-English speaking mothers simply come from countries with fewer educational opportunities, so, of course, fewer of them will have finished high school.

Zill et al. (1995b) list five risk factors for non-readiness. These risk factors play a large part in a child's life. If one or more of these factors exist in a child's life, the ability for a successful education has already been altered and set up for a long hard battle with the formal educational years. The risk factors are:

1. Having a mother who did not finish high school.
2. Having a mother whose primary language is not English.
3. Being born to an unmarried mother
4. Living in a single-parent household .
5. Living in poverty.

Pianta (1996) states that a major factor for non readiness among children is poverty. He maintains that many poor children have had no predictable routines in their lives, and they've had no close relationships with adults. Children living in poverty are more likely to have fewer social skills and less ability to tolerate frustration than children from middle and upper income families.

White (1997) states that the family is the first educational system the child encounters. He feels that most American families get their child through the first six to eight months of their lives with a high rate of success. However, during the next age period from eight to 36 months,

the educational aspect takes a backseat. Parents don't seem to be as involved as they really should be. White (1997) believes parental involvement is crucial during these months because at this age children are forming a pattern for routines, social skills and an attitudes toward learning. White further states that to begin to look at a child's educational development when he is two years of age is already much too late.

### Readiness

According to Pianta (1996), when a child is beginning his/her formal educational years, parental involvement can boost a child's success, no matter what school he or she attends. Pianta suggests preschoolers be equipped with some basic pre-reading skills. Children should be able to sit and look through a book and tell a story. Pianta also believes that preschoolers should be able to talk to an adult when they are frustrated, be able to listen and follow directions from an adult and know how to get along with other children.

The Georgia Pre-kindergarten Program (1998) found that children who attended pre-kindergarten had higher academic and social ratings by their kindergarten teachers and better kindergarten attendance than children who did not attend preschool programs. Participation in a high-quality preschool program also helped children develop social and pre-

academic skills that helped them succeed in kindergarten and throughout their educational experiences.

According to the Georgia Pre-kindergarten Program, (1998) preschool education "provides activities that best stimulate children's social, intellectual, physical and emotional growth and suggests that children form much of their intellect before they ever step into a classroom" (p. 1).

What preschooler's should be taught, as well as when and how, are controversial topics among parents and educators. According to the National School Board Association (1988), early childhood learning activities must be appropriate to the child's age and stage and personal interest to be successful.

According to the Georgia Office of School Readiness (1997) and the United States Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement, (1993) The following activities and expectations should be present at different age levels.

Birth to 12 months (0 to 1 year) At this age level a child will be developing motor skills. Parents need to interact with the child to create a bond of trust, social, and emotional growth. Children at this age require safe surroundings in which to develop opportunities to use their large muscles needed for independent movement.

12 to 24 months (1 to 2 years) Parents should allow children at this age to explore their environment. Children are also becoming aware of

others and their own feelings. Children's vocabularies are expanding from about 250 to 1000 or more words during this year. They are able to put together two, three, and four word sentences. Therefore, the parent needs to be engaged in a variety of sensory activities with the child.

Parents should expand on children's words by reading, singing, use puppets, books, records and tapes with the child.

24-36 months (2 to 3 years) Children at this age level are just starting to play with other children. They are starting to understand that other people have feelings too. At this age level the child is more cooperative and willing to try new things. Parents need to continue to talk with their child rather than to them. This involves the child and improves his/her communication abilities. At this age level the small motor skills need to begin to be developed through scribbling and pretend writing.

36-48 months (3 to 4 years) Children at this age level should be interacting with other children in order to help them learn self-control. They should be encouraged to work out problems, share, listen to other speak to them, take turns, create, and explore. Parents should provide social opportunities for their children, picture books to enhance their linguistic skills and art materials for their creative abilities. Parents should use simple positive statements and allow children to talk back in conversations. They may be aggressive in their play or could show extremes from being loud and adventurous to acting shy and



dependent. Children will enjoy more group activities because they have longer attention spans, and better social skills.

### Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements

In 1995 Washington State adopted the new Essential Academic Learning Requirements, (EALRs), in order to raise the academic requirement for all children. Those expectations are as follows for Kindergartners.

#### Communication

Does each child:

1. Speak clearly to others?
2. Listen for specific information in stories or directions?
3. Imitate patterns of language? (Kapinus, 1998a, p. 6)

#### Mathematics

Does each child:

1. Recognize, conserve, count, compare, and order numbers or objects?
2. Solve simple addition and subtraction problems with concrete models?
3. Compare, describe, and classify shapes?
4. Determine the likelihood of an event in a real world context?
5. Collect and sort data in order to answer questions?

6. Describe and create patterns? (Hopkins, 1998, p. 3)

### Reading

Does each child:

1. Understand that pictures and text convey meaning?
2. Show an awareness of print in the environment?
3. Know and use letters and their sounds to predict and confirm text?
4. Recognize some words in different contexts?
5. Understand the way we read affects the meaning?
6. Reread a range of books and explore new ones? (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1998, p.8)

### Writing

Does each child:

1. Participate in group writing activities?
2. Demonstrate an awareness of directionality (left to right, Top to bottom)?
3. Write the letters of the alphabet, uppercase and lowercase?
4. Write own name and a few words?
4. Describe drawings in a meaningful way? (Kapinus, 1998b, p. 5)

## Summary

A review of the literature has shown evidence for the benefits of readiness in the formal education of school age children. Parents or care givers need to be involved with their preschool age child from birth to ensure a successful transition into the formal kindergarten classroom setting.

A number of factors influence a child's readiness. They are:

1. Having a mother whom did not finish high school.
2. Having a mother whose primary language is not English.
3. Being born to an unmarried mother
4. Living in a single-parent household .
5. Living in poverty.

An outline of expectations for children from birth to kindergarten indicates the parent's involvement in his or her child's education is a crucial factor for success. When families and schools work together as partners, they promote success for their students. Parental involvement is critical in facilitating children's development and achievement and in preventing and remedying educational and developmental problems.

By adapting and promoting readiness into their everyday routines, parents can enhance the lives of their preschool age child. This enables parents to take part in their preschooler's education as their first teacher. Parents are also giving their child the tools to be a successful life long learner. Higher expectations are being required for each child to have a

successful and productive education. Therefore, readiness is more important than ever in creating a productive citizen in our society.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### PROCEDURES OF THE PROJECT

The author first became interested in the subject of readiness the second year in her teaching career. While teaching kindergarten through fifth grade general music, she was surprised to see the difference of levels of readiness in the kindergarten students she taught. Out of the four kindergarten classes, the readiness ranged from low to high in knowledge and abilities in the four developmental areas of social, emotional, academic, and physical readiness.

A review of current research available on the subject of kindergarten readiness at Central Washington University and Yakima Valley Community College Libraries and searches on the World Wide Web were combined with information gathered from the school district for which the author works for. The author designed suggested activities for the parent or caregiver in mind. An inventory of sources on the topic of school readiness was gathered for parents and care givers of preschool aged children.

The author using personal, professional experience as a teacher of thirteen years and the expertise of her district's preschool teachers, developed a handbook to be used by the parents and care givers of preschool aged children. This handbook has been designed to aid

parents or care givers in guiding their preschooler towards a successful formal education. The handbook will allow parents or care givers to be more involved in their child's first five years of learning. It will also enable the preschooler to have a better chance for success in his or her education. The handbook consists of suggested activities in four developmental areas. These activities were developed by the author with the parent or care giver in mind. The activities are designed for the parent or care giver to incorporate within their everyday routine. The activities in the handbook are organized in order of age levels and the four developmental areas. The four developmental areas are social, emotional, academic and physical readiness. Since social and emotional are identified by preschool teachers as one area, they will be combined for the activities. These activities are designed to further increase the parent or care giver's involvement in the readiness of their preschooler.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PROJECT

A handbook that includes information, activities, and resources was developed by the author. These activities are designed for the parent or care giver to incorporate within their everyday routine. The activities are organized in order of age levels and the four developmental areas of social, emotional, academic, and physical readiness. Since the areas of social and emotional are identified by preschool teachers as one topic, they will be combined together for the activities in the handbook. The handbook the author developed is organized into the following sections.

#### 1. Social and Emotional Readiness.

- a. Birth to one year of age.
- b. One to two years of age.
- c. Two to three years of age.
- d. Three to four years of age.
- e. Four to five years of age.

#### 2. Academic Readiness

- a. Birth to one year of age.
- b. One to two years of age.
- c. Two to three years of age.
- d. Three to four years of age.

e. Four to five years of age.

### 3. Physical Readiness.

a. Birth to one year of age.

b. One to two years of age.

c. Two to three years of age.

d. Three to four years of age.

e. Four to five years of age.

The author has produced a list of suggested activities for each section of the project. The author incorporated personal, professional experience and the experience of other professional educators in the direct field of preschool education. The suggested activities that were developed are to enable the child's parent or care giver to be more involved within his or her own child's education. The suggested activities included in this handbook were chosen on the basis of the author's understanding of the student's need, age level, and developmental status. The completed handbook can be found in the Appendix.

The author found the book, The Baby Book by William Sears, M. D. & Martha Sears, R. N., a helpful resource while compiling the parent handbook. Other resources that were used were early childhood education web sites and preschool teachers in the district in which the author teaches.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

A review of the literature has established a link between readiness skills a child learns in home environment and being successful in the first year of a child's education. The author, a fourth grade teacher, developed a handbook of suggested activities for the child's parent or caregiver in the developmental stages of the first five years of a child's life. The handbook was developed for the parent or caregiver and not as a teaching tool for an institutional setting.

#### Conclusions

The author gave copies of the parent handbook to parents of preschoolers in the school district in which she is employed. Many parents and caregivers were very appreciative of receiving it and found much of the information and activities helpful. Due to the profound level of anticipation towards the Washington Academic Student Learning requirements, the parents were grateful to have some sort of material to help them prepare their child's future education in school.

Kindergarten Readiness taught by the child's parent or caregiver is

the greatest asset to a pre school child's success in education. It eliminates one step that would impede the ultimate goal for a successful educational experience. If the child is not ready he or she will not learn at the rate of his or her peers. The child will fall behind and develop a negative attitude towards the educational process.

### Recommendations

The main idea of this handbook was to provide parents and caregivers with ways to become more involved at home with the readiness of their child. The suggested activities were designed to use with children ages birth to five years of age. The activities were not designed for the classroom setting. It is the author's intent to give parents and caregivers ideas to generate more teaching opportunities as they arise in their child's life.

It is the recommendation of the author that these and any other activities the parent or caregiver use, be done on a daily basis. This not only guarantees the child daily interaction with their parent or caregiver, but also allows the child to become comfortable with a routine, develop social skills, and encourages learning.

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# Appendix

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# The Handbook

IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR KINDERGARTEN ?  
A Handbook for Parents and Care Givers

by  
Cynthia L. Nott



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## Introduction

As educational institutes change, higher expectations are required for each child to have a successful and productive education. By being an active participant in your child's preschool education you have given him or her a head start on being a life long learner.

This handbook has been put together with you the parent or care giver in mind. These suggested activities have been adapted to help you, as the parent-teacher deal with everyday life and situations that need to be learned by preschool children. This handbook is to inform you as the principal care giver, of what is to be common knowledge of kindergarten age children and the expectations of the school district you live in.

Children that enter kindergarten in the public school systems are expected to know and understand various levels in these four developmental areas; emotional, social, physical, and academic skills. Emotional and social have been combined since they are addressed together in the public school systems. These developmental skill groups are extremely important and valuable to the child's formal educational experience.

With this handbook you as the parent or care giver will be able to be involved in your child's first educational setting, your home. After all you are your child's first and most important teacher.

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# Suggested Activities

## Suggested Activities for Birth to One Year

### Social/Emotional

From birth to one year of age, your child's social and emotional connection with you is extremely important. You are your child's model for this area of development. Your child will signal you by using social gestures or body language. You can improve your awareness of your child's needs by using a "Social Signal Chart". (See: A-1). By using the "Social Signal Chart" you will be able to recognize and respond to your child and start understanding what he or she needs are.

### Physical

From Birth to one year of age your child will go through a wide range of physical abilities as he or she develops. Your child will need encouragement at times to develop both large and small motor skills to enable him or her to advance to the next stage of development. By making this a game and involving more social/emotional interaction time you and your child will start to understand each other more. The following is a suggested list of Physical Activities you can use:

Playing Airplane - Place your child on his or her tummy and you will notice how he or she will automatically flap his or her arms, peddles his or her legs, rock back and forth and arches his or her neck for the "takeoff". This strengthens neck, back, stomach, leg, and arm muscles.

Pushing off - By pushing your hand against the soles of his or her feet while in the "Airplane" position, your child can propel him/herself down the "runway". This strengthens leg and feet muscles.

Pushing up - Just as it sounds, your child will start doing push ups in order to get a better view of his or her surroundings. This strengthens arm, chest, neck, and back muscles.

Pulling to sit or to stand - Pulling your child up by the hands and allowing them to do most of the work, builds strong arm and shoulder muscles.

Rolling over - When the child use the push up position, he or she will automatically start rolling over. This roll over position allows the child to view his or her upper surroundings.

Grab and pull - Allowing the child to grasp objects and pull the object towards them, is starting to work on eye hand coordination.

Table fun - Placing cut up foods on the serving tray of the high chair in front of the child will automatically trigger the child's curiosity and the child will start to feed him/herself.

### Academic

From birth to one year of age there are not many academic activities that a child can do on his or her own. You the parent or care giver should develop a daily routine of talking, reading, and interacting with your child other than diaper changes and feedings. By listening to your voice your child will begin to identify words and meanings. He or she will also begin to imitate you and sounds that surround him or her.

## Suggested Activities for One to Two Years

### Social/Emotional

From one to two years of age your child's social and emotional connection with you is still very important. However, your child will start to develop new social contacts with other children if they have the opportunity. For example arranging a "play-time" or "play-date" with other children their age is an excellent way to allow your child to develop his or her social skills with others besides you. This is a necessary step for your child's independence and ability to be separated from you for short periods of time

Another great way to socialize your child is to take him or her shopping. This is a terrific way to surround your child with meaningful talk. He or she needs to hear a lot of words in order to learn to communicate themselves.

Place your child in the grocery cart facing you. Walk slowly up and down the aisles. Explain what you are picking up and where you are going to place the item. Make sure you are talking to your child and using his or her name often. Let your child practice his or her "HI's" and "bye-bye's" on the clerks or others in the store. Let your child feel some of the items you are choosing. Tell him or her the items texture, color, or smell.

### Physical

Your child also needs opportunities to explore a safe environment. By allowing him or her to use his or her big muscles for crawling and climbing your child will begin to gain strength in his or her bodies. Your child will begin to stand up almost immediately from a sitting position. He or she will take few unassisted steps but will still rely on you for a longer walk in the room.

You can help this new walker by getting a few toys that aide in his or her walking balance. For example, a play lawn mower, little shopping cart, or other toys that a child can walk behind and push. There are also toys that a child can sit astride and maneuver with his or her feet.

You can also let your child follow you in the yard or the house as you work. This is allowing him or her to walk and socialize with you and enhance his or her mobility skills.

### Academics

Besides your child's ability to get around by walking, he or she will begin to use his hands more too. This new skill allows him or her to gain access into cabinets, drawers, and just about anything that's not locked. The kitchen seems to be the favorite of all rooms to practice this skill. When your child does get into and empties out a cabinet, notice how he or she sings or talks himself or herself through the process. You can teach your child how measuring cups fit inside on another or pots and pans as well. This great organization practice.

Your child is also beginning to process the meaning of ownership. He or she will protest when the item he or she is focusing on is being touched or played with by another. If you model sharing, as time goes on your child will begin to understand this behavior and demonstrate it too.

Your child needs to learn about "cause and effect" as well. That means things he or she do produce certain results. For example, if your child is stacking blocks and the stack gets too tall, he or she needs to learn for themselves that the stack of blocks will fall over at some point. Your child will probably repeat this process until he or she tires of picking up the blocks.

Your child also needs to be allowed to touch, taste, smell, hear and see new things from his or her own view point. A child's curiosity is a never ending fact. He or she will investigate everything. You need to make sure this is done safely.

## Suggested Activities for Two to Three Years

### Social/Emotional

From two to three years of age your child still has a very strong social and emotional bond toward you. However, this is the prime time to start introducing him or her to other children his or her age. Socialization and interaction with others is a large part of a successful education. Being able to take turns, to be aware of others feelings, and watching others to learn correct social behavior are all areas your child will begin to develop at the age two to three years. Your child will start to imitate you and other adults as well. By modeling appropriate behavior, your child will learn correct social behaviors skills .

## Physical

Your two to three year old child should now be able to follow simple two step directions given by you or any adult caretaker. He or she is walking, running, squatting down and jumping. Activities that require use of the larger muscles in the body are encouraged for the development of these areas. Outdoor games that require directions and movement can be used. (Mother may I ?, Follow-the-leader).

Developing your child's hand coordination is another area that you can help with. You can encourage your child to do so with large puzzles, large beads to string together, scribbling or even simple cutting activities with child scissors. Most important is to make it fun!

## Academics

The single most important way for your child to develop the knowledge he or she will need to succeed in reading is for you to read aloud to your child. By modeling reading to your child, you create interest in the written words. Show your child the words as you read. Point to the words you are reading. Explain to him or her that letters are used to make up the words we read.

As a mealtime activity, use large plastic letters, or a place mat that has the alphabet on it to start discovery games. For example, choose a letter and everyone at the table has to name an item that starts with that letter. This will not only develop your child's alphabet skills but will increase their socialization, recall, and vocabulary skills.

## Suggested Activities for Three to Four Years

### Social/Emotional

At the age of three to four years of age you will begin to see some new behaviors arise. Do not be alarmed! These are normal stages all children go through. You will begin to see a bossy, boastful, noisy and sometimes dominating child. He or she is trying to establish him or herself among others. Sometimes you will see hitting or grabbing for what they want. This is part of learning correct social behaviors. If the action you witness is inappropriate, correct your child with the proper behavior and words to use.

Your child will begin to test your limits, and boundaries you have set. **STICK TO THEM!** Remember you are the parent in this situation. You can still be a loving parent and discipline your child's improper behaviors without losing your bond. Your child needs you to be the parent every once-in-a-while to begin to respect you.

### Physical

Your child will start to play with others more rather than beside them. He or she is more likely to take turns, share, be friendly, giving, and begin to understand that other people have feelings and rights too. Sometimes play starts to get a little rough and more physical.

Your three to four year old will also exhibit a more graceful ability to skip, run, jump with both feet, catch a ball, climb up and down stairs, and dance to music. Your child has a greater control over hand and arm muscles which start to reflect in his or her drawings.

### Academics

Your child's language abilities will begin to bloom through books, games, songs, science and art activities he or she participates in. He or she will have a greater ability as a talker. He or she will speak in sentences and continue to add more words to his or her vocabulary.

Start to give your child positive redirections when giving directions to correct an unwanted behavior. For example, tell your child what to do instead of what not to do. " Sit on the chair" instead of " Don't stand on the chair". This way your child begins to understand cause and effect actions. Remember to praise and reward your child when he or she has earned it.

## Suggested Activities for Four to Five Years

### Social/Emotional

At the age of four to five years, your child will begin to play cooperatively with friends. He or she will be able to follow the rules of a game and understand directions. Your child will also begin to demonstrate independence from mom and dad. He or she will ask for help, share more, and respect other children's property.

Your child will form friendships with peers and be able to accept some responsibility for some actions. At this age your child will be able to focus on tasks and be flexible when confronted with new situations. Your child will also have a sense of pride about their accomplishments regardless of the size.

### Physical

A four to five year old child can dress him/herself, use the bathroom and eat without help. Your child should be able to speak clearly enough that others can understand them. He or she can balance on one foot, jump, hop, skip, ride a trike, and in other ways show coordination of large muscles.



Your child will show coordination of small muscles by demonstrating abilities to color, paint, and cut with scissors. At this time your child will also display his or her hand preference. Regardless of your preference, your child will have his or her own. Don't discourage this from happening.

### Academics

As your child reaches this age he or she should be able to recite the alphabet, identify his or her birthday, count to 20 or higher, and be able to rhyme words. Your child should also be able to identify common shapes, such as circles, squares, and triangles. He or she should understand basic contrasts, such as in and out, empty and full, top and bottom. He or she should also recognize the primary colors.

Some activities you can do around the house to improve your child's number concepts and daily routines are:

- ◆ Have your child help you set the table for dinner. Ask him or her how many plates, forks, etc. you will need tonight.
- ◆ Have your child help in the kitchen with simple processes like, measuring ingredients for a recipe, putting away items in their correct places.
- ◆ Recite his or her address, phone number, emergency numbers, and names of family members.
- ◆ Play games that require simple scoring such as, basketball, soccer, dominos, or any game with dice to roll.

At this point if you are uncertain about whether your child is ready for kindergarten, the place to start may be as close as the nearest school. The principal or the kindergarten teachers there should be able to offer some advice that can help and also explain what their program offers students.

There are many things to keep in mind through your child's education. Most important of them all is the fact that you are the child's parent and his or her first and foremost teacher. You will set the example and the attitude of your child's learning experience. Remember to keep things interesting and fun for you and your child. He or she will then have a tremendous advantage towards a successful and positive formal educational experience.

# Parent Resources

## A Parent's Guide to Preschool Media and Products Available

### Books:

Growing with Games Make Your Own Educational Games \$14.95  
Sally Goldberg (1985)

Kindergarten: Ready or Not? A Parent's Guide \$37.50  
S.A. Walmsley & B.B. Walmsley (1996)

Little Kids Can Write Book Too! \$13.99  
Diane Bonica

My Very First Books to Make and Read \$14.99  
Jeri A. Carroll, Kathy Dunlavy, and Tom Foster

One, Two Buckle My Shoe Math Activities for Young Children \$8.95  
Sam Ed. Brown (1982)

Tangram Blocks Exploration \$12.95  
Marian Pastermark & Linda Silvey (1998)

Teaching Props Simple Props to Make for Working with Young Children \$15.95  
The Totlin Staff (1992)

The Complete Letter Book \$13.99  
Michele Borba and Dan Ungaro

The Baby Book Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby From Birth to Age Two \$21.95  
William Sears, M. D. & Martha Sears, R. N.

What to Expect When You're Expecting \$10.95  
Eisenburg, Murkoff, and Hathaway (1991)

Writing Fun With Phonics \$14.99  
Jeri A. Carroll and Dennis Kear

52 Ways to Help Your Children Learn FREE  
(English and Spanish)  
Washington Education Association

### Classes:

Kids are worth it!  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

Battles, Hassles, Tantrums and Tears  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

Can We Talk?  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

To Dance or to Wrestle: A Parent's Struggle to Deal with Anger  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

You're Driving Me Crazy!  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

Living in Step, Learning in Step  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

Siblings Without Rivalry  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

Raising Your Spirited Child  
Held at Women's Health Center  
2811 Tieton Drive  
Yakima, WA. 98902  
575-8484

Manipulatives:

Teddy Bear Counters      \$12.95  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

Teddy Bear Counter Stamps      \$7.95  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

Sorting/Counting Set      \$27.95  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

Animal Math Sorting/Counting Set      \$21.75  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

Learning with Teddy Bears: More Problem Solving Activities for Young Children      \$12.50  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

Color Beads      \$13.95  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

The "M&M's" Counting Book      \$6.95  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

100 Colored Blocks      \$31.00  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

Attribute Shapes      \$22.95  
Cuisenaire Dale Seymour  
1-800-237-0338  
<http://www.cuisenaire-dsp.com>

Magazines:

American Baby (For expecting and new parents)

P.O.Box 5162

Pittfield, MA. 01203-5162

<http://www.parentsoup.com/americanbaby>

Child Birth Planner (The essential guide for today's parents)

P.O. Box 3272

Harlan, IA 51593-2452

Yakima's Child( A Magazine for Parents)

2811 Tieton Drive

Yakima, WA. 9892-02

509-575-8484

Videos:

Barney In Concert Ages 2-8 \$8.99

300 East Bethany Road

P.O. Box 8000

Allen, TX. 75002-1306

1-800-527-4747

Telatubbies Sing-a-long \$12.99

PBS Kids

Warner Brothers

Telatubbies Nursery Rhymes \$12.99

PBS Kids

Warner Brothers

Telatubbies Here Comes the Telatubbies \$12.99

PBS Kids

Warner Brothers

Schoolhouse Rock Videos

ABC Videos

American Broadcasting Company

Multiplication Rock \$11.99

Grammar Rock \$11.99

Science Rock \$11.99

America Rock \$11.99

## Web Sites:

Interactive learning  
[enchantedlearning.com/](http://enchantedlearning.com/)

Virtual coloring pages  
[crayola.com/](http://crayola.com/)

Electronic Zoo  
[netvet.wustl.edu/ssi.htm](http://netvet.wustl.edu/ssi.htm)

Sea World  
[seaworld.org/](http://seaworld.org/)

Disney World  
[disney.go.com/](http://disney.go.com/)

Virtual Legos  
[lego.com/](http://lego.com/)

Virtual playing  
[Cyberkids.com/](http://Cyberkids.com/)

National Geographic  
[nationalgeographic.com/](http://nationalgeographic.com/)

NASA  
[gsfc.nasa.gov/NASA.homepage.html](http://gsfc.nasa.gov/NASA.homepage.html)

Coloring Patterns  
[itdc.shcss.k12.ca.us/projects/patterns](http://itdc.shcss.k12.ca.us/projects/patterns)

Exploring  
<http://www.liveandlearn.com/>

Colors  
<http://www.cgame/colors.html>

Math  
<http://www.mgame/game.html>

Animated Pictures  
<http://www.animate/game.html>

GAMES



## GAMES FOR 3-4 YEAR OLDS

### IDENTIFYING OBJECTS:

Language Skills Development.

Why: Many times children have difficulty naming objects or items. Assist them in increasing their language skills with this activity.

What you need: Nothing special.

#### What to do:

1. Take a walk around your house inside and outside with your child.
2. Point to an object and ask your child to name it.
3. Next, ask how the object is used.
4. Name the part of the object, such as: Lamp - switch, base, shade, bulb, cord, etc.
5. Continue naming objects and telling all of the parts.

#### What else you can do:

Put small items in a paper bag or box. Pull out an item and have the child name it.

### FINGER TAG:

Visual Skills Development.

#### Why:

Help develop you child's ability to follow fixed and moving objects with his or her eyes.

#### What you need:

Just yourself.

#### What to do:

1. Explain to your child how to play tag. Emphasize that the goal of the game is to try to catch someone. Then say: "Only in this game today you will try to catch my finger".
  2. Sit face to face with your child.
  3. Ask your child to follow your finger with his or her eyes and not move his or her head. Hold your finger approximately 18 inches from your child and begin to move your finger. Vary the speed and direction.
  4. After your child can follow the moving finger with his or her eyes, have him or her "catch" the moving finger. Emphasize to him or her that it is important to keep his or her eyes on the finger at all times.
- IMPORTANT: Rest at any sign of fatigue.

## FINDING WHAT'S NEW:

Language Skills Development.

### Why:

Helping you child learn the names of unfamiliar objects will increase the vocabulary.

### What you need:

Magazines or catalogs, paper and pencil.

### What to do:

1. Look through the catalog with your child. You will be searching for things that are new to your child to help increase his or her vocabulary.
2. When something new is found write down the new word and keep a list. You may want to cut the picture out and glue it on the paper.
3. Ask your child if he or she knows what this new thing is or how to use it. You will then explain.
4. After four to six new items are found, go back to the list and have the child tell you what the first item was.

### What else you can do:

1. Have your child tell someone else in the family what the new thing is and its use.
2. Pick out two new things at the grocery store or other stores you visit.

## RECALLING OBJECTS:

Language Skill Development.

### Why:

Develop you child's memory of language items by playing this recall game.

### What you need:

Nothing special.

### What to do:

1. Try to get as much conversation going as possible .
2. Say to your child: "let's think about our hands today. Let's see how many things we can name that we wear on our hands."
3. Mittens, gloves, rings, nail polish are all good answers. Ask your child how may kinds of gloves are there, and can they name some? (work, snow, etc.)

### What else can you do:

1. Use this game to tell about other body parts.
2. Think of all the things that are different colors. (red, blue, etc.)
3. Think of all the things that are different shapes. (square, Circle, etc.)
4. Think of all the things that have wheels.

5. Think of all the things we ride in or on.
6. Tell all of the things you have seen at grandma's house, grocery store, day care, etc.

### PICTURE HUNT

Visual Skill Development.

#### Why:

Discrimination items from their background is an important visual skill.

#### What you need:

A complex picture with lots of details.

#### What to do:

1. Look at the picture with your child. Pick out one or two items in the picture that would not be noticed without looking at the picture for several minutes.
2. Tell your child that you are going to describe an item that is hidden in this picture, and he or she is to try to find it.
3. Give lots of good descriptions. If your child still has difficulty finding the object, tell him or her what part of the picture it is in.
4. Take turns finding objects in the picture. Encourage your child to use good descriptive words.

### BODY - COLOR RACE

Gross Motor Skill Development.

#### Why:

Teaches body parts and colors.

#### What you need:

A colorful room.

#### What to do:

1. Give your child specific directions such as :
  - Put your hand on something green.
  - Stand on something brown.
  - Touch your elbow to something pink.
  - Sit on something blue.
2. If your child answers correctly, then let him or her give you the next direction. Try to use as many body parts as possible and all the colors in the room.

### CLAP AND TAP

Auditory Skill Development.

#### Why:

The child will develop the skill of repeating sounds.

What you need:

Stick or pencil, use of hands and feet.

What to do:

1. Make a pattern clapping your hands or tapping your feet. Begin with a three- part pattern such as : clap, clap, pause, clap.
2. Ask your child to repeat the pattern in the same sequence or as he or she hears the sounds.
3. Increase the length of the pattern as the child is able to.

What else can you do:

Use a stick or pencil to tap a pattern o the edge of a table. Let your child make up a pattern for you to repeat back.

## GAMES FOR 4-5 YEAR OLDS

### NUMBER COVER UP

Visual Skill Development.

Why:

Matching numbers requires visual discrimination ability.

What you need:

Two sets of number cards, 1 through 10.

What to do:

1. Spread on set of number cards out on the floor.
2. Mix up the second set of number cards and hand them to your child.
3. Ask your child to cover the cards on the floor with the identical card in his or her set.
4. If you find that this is easy for your child, you may want to time him or her and keep track of the amount of time it takes for him or her to cover up the cards on the floor.

What else you can do:

You can vary the placement of the number so that your child has to search to find them.

### LEARNING TO USE SCISSORS

Fine Motor Skill Development

Why:

To help your child learn complete control of his or her scissors before advancing to small complex cuttings.

What you need:

Child size scissors, large pieces of paper, markers.

What to do:

1. Draw straight lines and turns on paper. (see Appendix #8).
2. Draw large shapes. (square, circle, etc.)
3. Continue to reduce the angles.

What else you can do:

Have your child make a picture with the different shapes. Let him or her outline or color parts of space to complete his or her picture.

THE LITTLE SQUEEZE

Fine Motor Skill Development.

Why:

Squeezing a paper punch builds up the finger muscles so they can manipulate scissors.

What you need:

Paper punch, paper of any kind.

What to do:

Child is to punch out holes with paper punch. That's easy - but what do you do with the holes? Here are some ideas:

1. Punch holes over a target. Give points to the sections where the holes land.
2. Punch holes over a section of tiled floor. Then have child sweep them up.
3. Glue holes to another piece of paper to create a picture.
4. Fill a jar with the holes as you punch them.

CHEERIOS COUNTING

Visual Skill Development.

Why:

Seeing and understanding one-to-one correspondence is basic to understanding of numbers and counting.

What you need:

Several small objects such as buttons or Cheerios cereal. (see Appendix #4, #7)

What to do:

1. Make a row of buttons or Cheerios equally spaced.
2. Ask your child to make a row just like yours.
3. If your child can count, have him or her count each set as you make them.

## FOLLOW THE DOTS

Sequencing Development.

### Why:

Developing the sequencing skill is an important skill towards following directions correctly and reading.

### What you need:

Dot-to-dot books, or you can make up your own patterns for your child to follow, pencil or crayons.

### What to do:

1. Make a follow the dots paper by using numbers or the alphabet.
2. Lead your child through the first one or two activities.
3. After your child gets the idea, have him or her design one for you to do.

## COLOR BY KEY

Sequencing Development.

### Why:

To give the child the opportunity to do a think and do activity emphasizing visual perception as well as practice coloring within the lines.

### What you need:

(See: A-9), crayons.

### What to do:

1. Use two or three numbers to begin with.
2. Help your child on one or two items on the worksheet.
3. Emphasize the importance of staying in the lines to your child.
4. Let your child create his or her own color pattern with a key.

## A Final Check List for the Preschooler

To be ready for school means that children have an understanding of what school is all about, and why he or she is there. The following will discuss the importance of Social Skills within a public school setting.

Children need to be able to be away from their parents or caregivers for a few hours without getting upset. They also need to be happy about going to school and to be willing and able to do what is asked of them by the teacher. This means they are able to respect their teacher and learn to follow the group's rules. Children also need to be able to get along well with other children and to know how to accomplish certain tasks on their own.

Here are a few Life Skill examples to get your child prepared to enter the school setting:

- Your child should understand that in the school setting, he or she is expected to do what the teacher asks.
- Your child should be comfortable away from his or her parent or caregiver, and be with new adults and children.
- Your child should be able to play with other children without having a lot of arguments.
- Your child should be able to take off and put on his or her outer clothing by themselves.
- Your child should be well acquainted with a simple daily routine and sometimes small changes in that routine.

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# Activity Sheets



## Social Signal Chart

While there are hundreds of signals your baby will send to you, these are a few that have been recognized by the author.

### Social Signal

### What Baby's is Trying to Say

### How Baby Reacts

Leans toward me, eyes wide open, arms in embracing motion.

"Let's play!"

Talks nonstop for 2-3 minutes

Makes short, breathy cries.

"I'm going to cry unless you pick me up."

Quieted when picked up.

Smacks lips and clutches at Clothing.

"I want to nurse."

Happily ate.

Fusses and arches back when held.

"I want to be put down."

Kicked and quieted down.

Fusses when put down.

"I want to move around."

Quieted when walked and rocked.

Rubs eyes and ears.

"I'm tired."

Went to sleep when put in crib.

Fusses and red in the face after eating.

"I need to be burped."

Color to normal and quiet after being burped.

# As I Grow

## Please.....

**Understand** that I am growing up and changing very fast. It must be difficult to keep pace with me, but please try.

**Listen to me** and give me brief, clear answers to my questions. Then I will keep sharing my thoughts and feelings.

**Reward me** for telling the truth. Then I am not frightened into lying.

**Tell me** when you make mistakes and what you learned from them. Then I can accept that I am OK, even when I blunder.

**Pay attention** to me, and spend time with me. Then I can believe that I am important and worthwhile.

**Do the things** you want me to do. Then I have a good, positive model.

**Trust** and respect me, Even though I am smaller than you, I have feelings and needs just like you.

**Compliment** and appreciate me. Then I'll feel good, and I'll want to continue to please you.

**Help me** explore my unique interests, talents and potential. In order for me to be happy, I need to be me, and not you or someone you want me to be.

**Be an individual** and create your own happiness. then you can teach me the same, and I can live a happy, successful and fulfilling life.

**Thank you for hearing me, I love you!**

# BABY'S BODY

Growing from head to toe!

## 0-3 MONTHS

I can

♥hear ♥see ♥smile

♥suck ♥make noises

♥move my arms and legs

♥lift up my head (while on my stomach)

♥feel you cuddle and touch me and I like it

Please play with me!

•talk and sing •play soft music

•put mobiles 9-12 inches from my face

•change my position...so I can see different views and colorful things

•let me do the extra sucking

I need (suck as pacifiers or finger).....

•smile and play face games (stick out tongue, close eyes)

•hold and cuddle me often

•get down on the floor with me

•I'd like to watch the action from an...

•infant seat when you can't hold me!

## 3-5 MONTHS

♥reach for things

♥hold on to things

♥watch things move from side to side

♥bring my hands together

♥laugh & squeal

Your baby is growing bigger, healthier and more beautiful every day.

•keep talking and singing & cuddling

•play music (children's favorite songs)

•let me touch & hold things that feel different

•play pat-a-cake (pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man...)

•show me you enjoy my expressions of love (my smiles)

•pull me gently to sitting position

## 5-8 MONTHS

♥sit without help

♥look for my toys ♥turn to sounds

♥pass my toys from hand to hand

♥begin to stand up

♥pick up small objects

♥feed myself crackers

♥crawl

•give me finger foods

•play music or radio

•give me a safe home so I can explore

•give me Q.U.I.E.T time

•let me play alone (in my crib or playpen)

•have toys on floor so I can reach for them

•play peek-a-boo & pat-a-cake

**0**



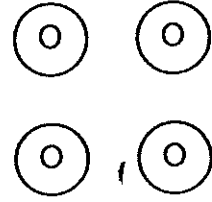
**1**



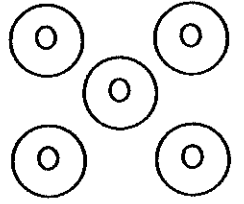
**2**



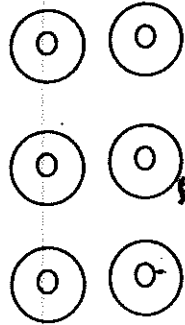
**3**



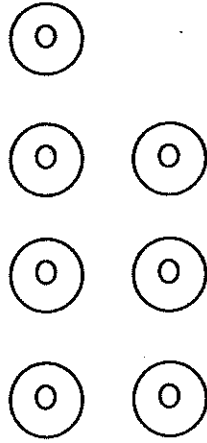
**4**



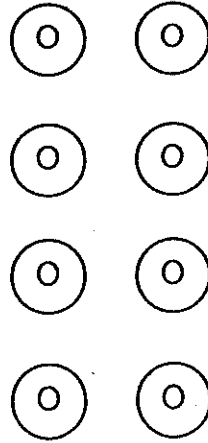
**5**



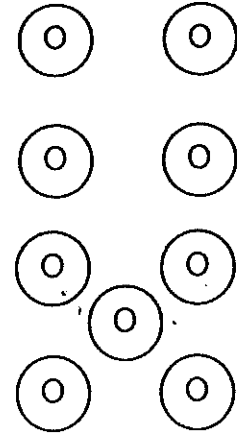
**6**



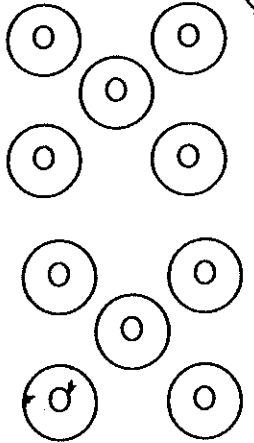
**7**



**8**



**9**



**10**

# Fingerplay

## Five Little Penguins

Five little penguins

Sliding on the ice.

My, oh my, don't they look nice?

Then one fell down and landed with a  
frown.

## Four little penguins

(Repeat until one penguin remains.)

One little penguin

Sliding on the ice.

My, oh my, doesn't he look nice?

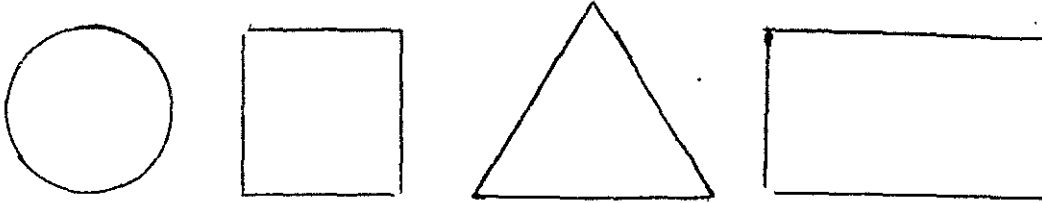
Then he fell down and landed with a  
frown.

No more penguins sliding on the ice!

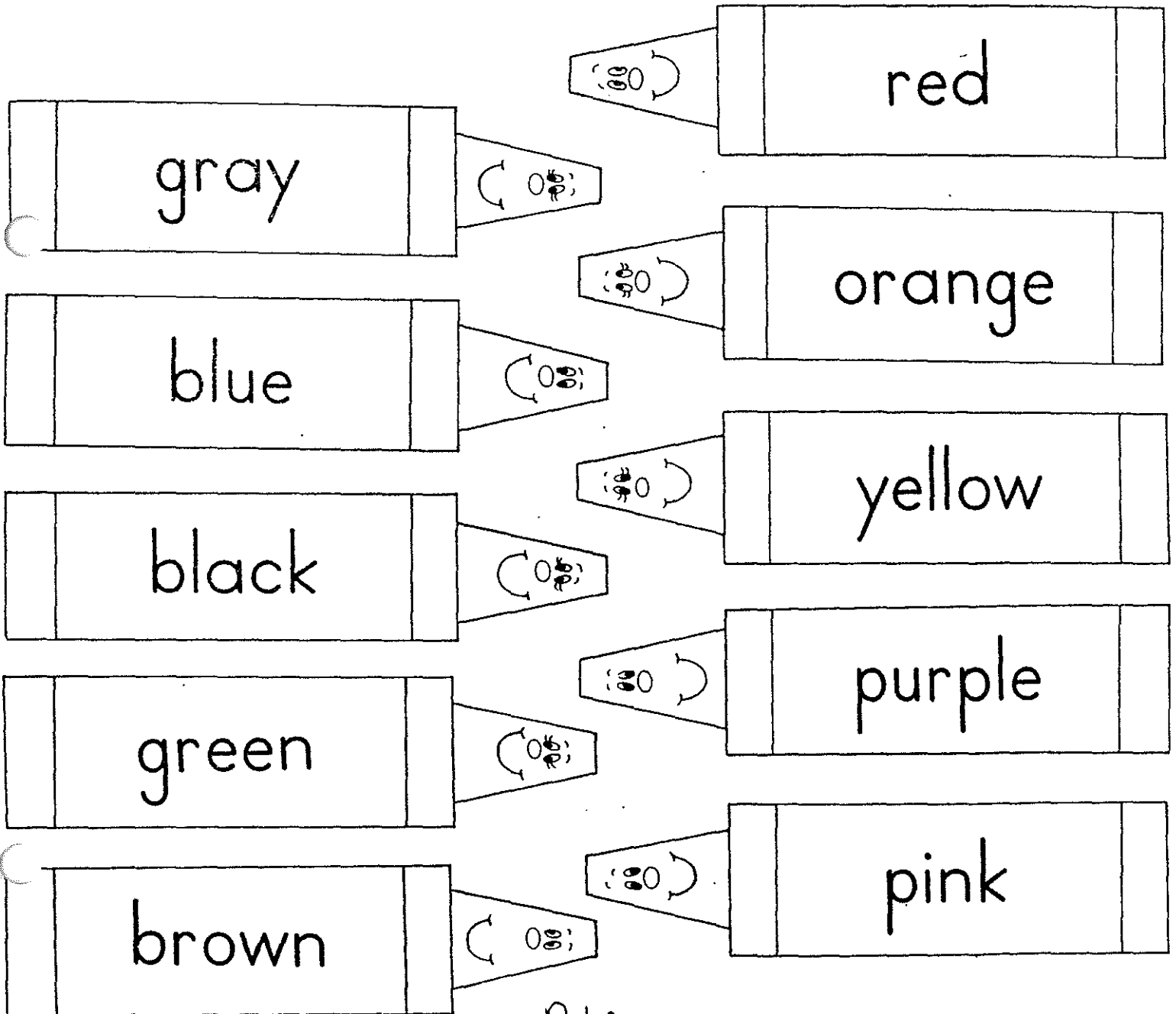
Place five puppets on fingers. Recite poem.  
As each penguin falls down, fold finger down  
or remove puppet. Make a sliding motion  
with hand when penguins are "sliding on the  
ice." Shake head "no" on last line.

Can name the days of the week. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Can name the following shapes.



Can recognize the following colors. If the color matches the color name, they're correct. If the color is different from the color name, that is the way they identified it.



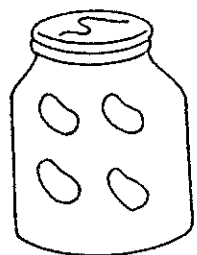
Count the number of jelly beans in each jar. Draw a line to connect the jar to the correct number.



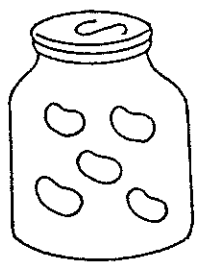
1



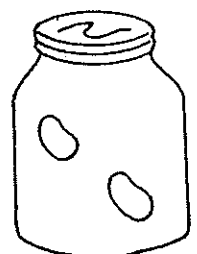
2



3



4



5

Can count orally to \_\_\_\_\_ (stopped at 25)  
Can count objects up to \_\_\_\_\_ (stopped at 25)

Use scissors to cut on the heavy lines.

