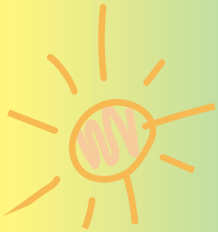


Ready, set, go... Kindergarten!

A family guide to prepare your child for kindergarten with fun activities and important information

Created by Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Educational Service District, Great Start Collaborative, and local schools

Welcome to Kindergarten!

Typical requirements for kindergarten entry

How old must my child be to enter kindergarten?

To enroll in kindergarten, a child must be 5 years of age by September 1 of the enrollment year. If your child turns 5 between Sept. 1 and Dec. 1 and you have questions about enrollment, contact your local district.

What documents do we need to provide for registration?

✓ Original birth certificate
✓ Updated immunization record or immunization waiver (CDC immunization recommendations)
✓ Proof of residency (driver's license, lease/rental agreement, utility bill, etc.)
✓ School district kindergarten forms (Provided by school district. May be accessed online, mailed by request or pick up at school office.)
✓ Individual districts may require evidence of health, vision, hearing and dental screenings. (Typically the Health Appraisal Form is used.)

Call your local Health Department or your child's physician for more information.

Health Department of Northwest Michigan
(800) 432-4121
Counties included: Otsego, Antrim, Charlevoix & Emmet

Health Department #4
(800) 221-0294 or (231) 627-8850
Counties included: Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Montmorency & Alpena

Check out the interactive map for Health Departments

To use the QR codes throughout this document, use your phone's camera to hover over the code. A link will appear on your screen; tap it to access the website.

How do I register my child for Kindergarten?

Start early!

Make the call to your local school district early to obtain kindergarten registration dates. Many districts start registration as early as February. If before/after school care is needed, ask about the available programs. Registration for these programs is generally done in the spring BEFORE the school year begins. Here are a few tips:

- Inquire about transportation – will your child be bused or will you have to transport your child?
- Take your child on a tour of the new school. Ask at registration when this would be possible. It may be in-person or virtual.
- Be sure to point out bathrooms, cubbies/lockers, gym/music/library room and lunch room.
- Visit the school's playground during the summer.
- Most of all, enjoy this next phase with your child!

Local School District Contact Information

Cheboygan
East Elementary
(231) 627-5211

Gaylord
N. Ohio-S. Maple
(989) 705-3027

Vanderbilt
Vanderbilt Elem.
(989) 983-2561

Inland Lakes
Inland Lakes Elem.
(989) 983-2561

Johannesburg
Johannesburg Elem.
(989) 731-2040 x2108

Lewiston
Lewiston Elem.
(989) 786-2253 x3100

Mackinaw City
Mackinaw City Elem.
(231) 436-5587

Onaway
Onaway Elem.
(989) 733-4900

Posen
Posen Elementary
(989) 248-6500

Rogers City
Rogers City Elem.
(989) 248-6500

Wolverine
Wolverine Elem.
(231) 525-8201

COP ESD
Early Childhood
(231) 238-9394

Play to Help Your Child Learn

Many things that help your child learn are easy, free, and fun. You probably do many of these activities already without even knowing it. Just spending 20 minutes a day can make a big difference!

Language:

- Talk, share rhymes, sing songs and tell jokes or stories with your child as often as you can. Do these things while you are driving in the car, waiting at the doctor's office, in line at a store or cooking dinner.
- Talk with your child about all the things you do with them each day.
- Teach new words to your child.
- Make up verses to your favorite songs.
- Explore nursery rhymes together such as *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, *Mary had a Little Lamb,* and *Little Miss Muffet*.
- Cook with your child, talk about what you are doing as you follow a recipe or make meals.

A few helpful tips from our COPESD Literacy Coach

The more your child hears words and sentences, and practices using them with you, the more your child will understand how language works.

Listen carefully when your child is talking. Get down at their level and show them you are interested in what they have to say. Take turns talking and listening. Ask follow-up questions.

Tell your child a story about something fun you did as a child or things you remember about your childhood.
As your child is listening to your stories, they are learning new words.
Ask your child to tell you a story.
When using new words, pause to talk about what the word means.

Play a listening and remembering game

Give your child instructions about something you'd like them to do. Have them repeat the instructions back to you and then carry them out. You can start with one instruction, and gradually increase to two or three instructions:

"Please put your toys away, wash your hands and come sit down for a snack."

"First draw a picture, then cut it out and then glue it to this piece of paper."

You are the first and best teacher for your child.
Being involved in your child's education will make a difference.

Explore the Community

Visit places in your community. Often, there are a lot of new things to talk about. Look at different items in the grocery store, visit the laundromat, parks and library. Talk about all the people and things you see. When you get back home, ask your child to draw a picture of something they remember from the day. Have your child describe the details to a friend or family member.

Play "Let's Pretend!"

Pretend to go places or act out an event your child has attended. Pretend you are: At a restaurant, birthday party, taking a trip on an airplane, at the doctor's office, or on a camping trip or hike in the woods!

Read

Read to your child every day. Read anything and everything with your child.

✓ Read the cereal box at breakfast.
✓ Read the street signs while in your car.
✓ Read the menu at a restaurant.
✓ Read or listen to a book or two before bed.

Letters

Explore letters by helping your child to recognize and name the uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet, as well as the sounds the letters make. The more letter names and sounds children know before entering kindergarten, the better!

Tip: Run you finger under the words as you read to your child.

→ Go on a letter search, looking in old magazines and junk mail. Circle the first letter of your child's name. Talk about the sound the letter makes.

Check out this video!
It tells you the sounds each letter makes. →

→ Look for items around the house that start with a letter or letter sound Play "I Spy" using the letter in your child's name. Select an object that they can see and announce the letter of your object. *"I spy with my little eye something that starts with the letter c."* You can also use a letter sound. *"I spy with my little eye something that starts with a letter that makes the "duh" sound."*

→ Point out words you see in your environment throughout the day. Example: *"That sign says the store is Open. The first letter is O and it makes the ooooh sound. Oooopen."* Talking and reading aloud to children are two of the most important activities to early success in school!

← This Talking is Teaching Calendar has daily activities that are fun and educational.

Learning letters is fun!

Math

Math is important! It's all around us and can be found in everyday moments. Try some of these ideas and have fun doing math with your child!

- **Practice counting from 0-20.**
- **Head outside and collect some rocks or leaves to count.**
- **Put some objects around a room, such as spoons or socks, and have your child gather them together and then count.**

Identify numbers

Numbers are all around us! Look for them with your child around the house:

- Calendars
- Notes
- Rulers
- Magazines
- Identify shapes and sizes
- Look for circles, squares, rectangles or ovals in our everyday world and share your observation with your child
- Head to a playground and have your child hunt for shapes
- Take a photo with your child holding a shape, such as a circle/ball or a rectangle/ cereal box.
- Make a book or flashcards with the photos
- Talk about position and order
- Look for things that are up, down, front, back, top, bottom, first, second, next, before and after.
- Sort & Pattern: Use everyday household objects, such as coins or pasta to sort by shape, size, color or type. Create patterns that repeat, like shoe-sock-shoe-sock. Help your child keep the patterning going.

Check out these math resources

LET'S TALK ABOUT MATH!

YOUNG MATHEMATICIANS

Family math ideas & games!

Fine Motor Skills

Strengthening hand and finger muscles will help your child get ready to write.

- Give your child the chance to use markers, crayons and pencils often.
- Show them how to use scissors, and let them practice cutting strips of paper or coupons.
- Let them use tongs or tweezers to pick up small things.
- Encourage your child to dig with their hands or with small shovels.
- Play with playdough together or string beads.

Playdough Recipe

2 c flour
3/4 c salt
4 tsp Cream of Tartar
2 c warm water
2 TBSP vegetable oil
Food coloring (optional)
Quart-size bags

Add first five ingredients into a pot and stir well. Add food coloring (if you'd like), until it's the color you desire. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Continue until dough has thickened and begins to form a ball. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Knead until smooth. Use immediately or store in a sealable bag until you're ready to use (should last a few months).

Draw, Scribble, and Write

The first stages of writing are drawing and scribbling.

✓ If you are making a list, invite your child to make one too (even if they just scribble).

✓ Have them practice drawing or writing letters in sand, in shaving cream, in the air, with sidewalk chalk, etc.

✓ Write your child's name in highlighter and have them trace over it. Be sure to use a capital letter at the beginning and lower case letters for the rest: "David," not, "DAVID." If your child masters their first name, start working on their last name.

Gross Motor Skills

Working on gross motor skills helps a child gain strength and confidence in their body. It also helps them get exercise and stay active, which is important for a healthy lifestyle.

Exercise

→ Run, jump, skip, gallop, march, etc.
→ Dance together
→ Play catch
→ Kick a ball
→ Help your child learn how to pump their legs to swing

Limit Screen Time

→ Less TV, computer, tablets, and video games
→ Focus on active learning experiences

Just get outside and play!

Social and Emotional Skills

Social and emotional skills include listening to adults, getting along with others and learning how to work together. Your child may need your help learning how to share, take turns, and problem solve. Attending a preschool or daycare will help your child to practice these skills.

Noticing Feelings

Help your child notice when they feel hungry, thirsty, hot, cold, angry, happy, sad, etc. Giving them a way to express how they are feeling will help them communicate better.

Teach that it's ok to have feelings, but it's not okay to hurt others, take toys, or have a tantrum. Say things like, *"I can see that you're angry, but you can't hit others. Ask Jacob if you can play with the toy when he's done."*

Notice when other children are sharing and talk with your child about what you see. What happens when someone doesn't share? Model for your child how to ask a friend to share.

Practice Listening

Take turns telling stories and then take time to ask questions about the stories Play games that involve following directions and taking turns, such as: "Candy Land," "Chutes and Ladders," and "Simon Says."

Routines

Routines are like instructions. They are activities that happen at about the same time and in about the same way each day. They provide comfort and a sense of safety to young children because they develop relationships with the grown ups in their life. Knowing what comes next helps kids gain a sense of belonging, self-confidence and independence and offers stability during times of change or stress.

Self-Help Skills

Allowing your child to do daily tasks on their own is an important step towards developing self help skills and being responsible for themselves and their belongings.

Dressing Skills

- Have clothing available for your child that is easy for them to put on and take off by themselves.
- Work with your child on snapping and zipping pants.
- Have your child practice putting jackets and shoes on and off by themselves.

Bathroom Needs

Your child should be able to use the bathroom without help. This includes taking pants down, wiping, pulling pants back up, and flushing the toilet.

Being Responsible for Self

Responsibility is an important skill that will last a lifetime and gives your child an advantage in the classroom.

- Have a spot where your child can hang up their jackets and store their shoes, hats and mittens.
- Have your child practice hanging up their backpack.
- Allow your child to make choices for breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner.
- Kids love to help cook! Invite your child to help make food at mealtimes, set the table, open drink containers and even pour their own drinks.
- Have your child take care of their own plate, cups, silverware and napkins after meal times.
- Practice washing hands after using the bathroom, blowing their nose, along with before and after eating.

VERY IMPORTANT: Encourage your child to solve problems on their own after modeling and practicing a few ways to solve the problem.

Emergency Information

Your child should know their own first and last name, address and phone number. They should know their parents/caregivers name as well.

Kids love to sing!

Put your emergency information to a tune and sing the song together!

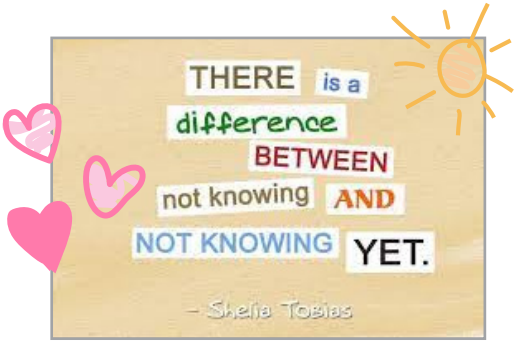
Books to help with the transition

Visit your local library to borrow these books to help ease the transition into Kindergarten!

- Wemberly Worried
- Kindergarten, Here I Come!
- Miss Bindergarten Gets ready for Kindergarten
- Llama Llama Misses Mama
- Lena's Shoes Are Nervous: A First-Day-of-School Dilemma
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Ruby Rose, Off To School She Goes
- On the First Day of Kindergarten

Check with your local library for quality online resources and be sure to ask about online read aloud stories. Some examples include TumbleBooks and Michigan E-Library: Kids section.

SHOW THIS KINDERGARTEN FAMILY GUIDE TO YOUR LOCAL LIBRARIAN FOR A FREE BOOK!



Give Michigan's Kids a Great Start

Cheboygan Otsego Presque Isle Educational Service District,
Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition

Great Start Collaborative
Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Counties

CONTACT US

COPESD
TO ENGAGE LEARNERS IN WAYS THAT FOSTER GROWTH & SUCCESS

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Kindergarten!