

## Record Your Child's Best Work In a "Home Portfolio"

As you prepare for kindergarten, create a portfolio of your child's best work done at home. Keep it in a box or scrapbook. Here are some ideas about what you might include—but it's limited only by your imagination and that of your child.

- ✓ Drawings and paintings—along with a sentence or two in which your child describes the picture and why it's an example of "best" work
- ✓ A copy of "writing" your child has done—you can "translate" what it says
- ✓ A story your child has dictated to you
- ✓ A sample of your child's attempt at printing his name
- ✓ A photograph of something your child planted or made
- ✓ A list of your child's favorite stories

### Learning Styles

Your child's learning style is one of the factors the teacher will assess during kindergarten. Watch your child for clues about how he/she learns best. Share your observations with your child's teacher—your insights will help her understand your child's learning needs. If your child is always active, as many children are, she may find it hard to learn while sitting still. Here are some learning ideas that involve the entire body:

- ✓ Have your child draw and scribble on giant sheets of paper, using thick markers or large paintbrushes
- ✓ "Write" with a flashlight in a dark room
- ✓ Draw letters, numbers and pictures in the sand
- ✓ Make letters from bread dough, macaroni, yarn, clay, toothpicks, straws, twigs, wire
- ✓ After you read a story, act it out together
- ✓ Draw a number line on the sidewalk or driveway and count, add and subtract by moving along the number line
- ✓ Have your child use different parts of the body to measure things—how many "feet" long is your kitchen? How many "arms" long?



## Going Through Stages

Every child develops at a different pace which is unique to them. Here are some things we know about the stage most children are at in kindergarten:

- ✚ Children see the world differently than adults (teachers will implement programs that will meet your child's developmental needs).
- ✚ As children's thinking at this age is closely tied to concrete objects and experience, they learn best by doing (teachers help kindergarten children to learn from their own personal experiences).
- ✚ Children make sense of their world through make-believe and play; so much of their learning in kindergarten needs to resemble play.
- ✚ Children learn from their direct experience in the here and now.

The most important goal of kindergarten is to nurture your child's development. We place most emphasis on experiences that reward curiosity, thought and imagination.



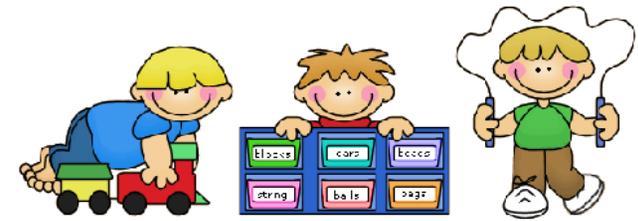
## Getting Ready for Kindergarten

401 North Star Rd. Quesnel, BC V2J 5K2

Phone: 250-992-8802

Fax: 250-992-7652

[www.sd28.bc.ca](http://www.sd28.bc.ca)



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# Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Starting school is a big step in your child's life. It is an exciting time — a time for many firsts. Your child is entering a school system that values the uniqueness and diversity of all learners and works to provide each and every student with an outstanding education. We look forward to working with you and your child in the next school year and in the years to come. Before the first day of school, take some time to visit the school with your child so that the route to school, the building, and the school surroundings become familiar.



## At School – children will

- ✚ Make a variety of choices (e.g., choosing activities in the class, materials to use)
- ✚ Share materials and space with other children
- ✚ Need to adapt to new people, situations, and routines
- ✚ Dress themselves to go home and play outside
- ✚ Communicate needs to other children and adults
- ✚ See adults and other children write for different purposes. Children will use materials for writing (e.g., crayons, markers)
- ✚ Listen to stories, poems, rhymes, and books with information. They will have books to hold, look at and read.

## At Home – To prepare your child, you can:

- ✚ Help your child make choices at home (e.g., clothes to wear, activities to do)
- ✚ Provide opportunities for your child to be with other children, to learn to share, wait and take turns
- ✚ Provide new situations for your child (e.g., going to the library for story time). Talk about what to expect beforehand. Respond positively to your child's efforts to adapt.
- ✚ Encourage your child to practice putting on jackets, snow pants, boots, etc. independently
- ✚ Encourage your child to use language to make needs known and to solve problems (e.g., getting a drink, going to the bathroom, asking for help)
- ✚ Involve your child in writing (e.g., drawing, making cards, and signing). Talk about your child's name and the letters in their name. Encourage and celebrate your child's attempts to write. When learning to print their name, use lower case letters.
- ✚ Tell stories and say poems and rhymes in your own language. Read to your child and talk about the pictures, the ideas and the words and letters. Point out words, numbers and signs in the community. Visit the library.

## Play Is Your Child's Homework

Watch your child at play—your observations will give you insights into how she prefers to learn. All play—in fact, anything your child is doing—can be a learning experience.

Here are some ideas to help you make the most of those opportunities during the next months as you prepare for the start of school.



## Reading and Writing

- 🕒 Make your own alphabet book. Let your child decorate each page with drawings and cut out pictures. Read the book together.
- 🕒 Play "Go Fish." Put letters of the alphabet that your child knows on inexpensive playing cards. After shuffling, give seven cards to each player. Take turns asking each other for cards—for example, "Do you have a 'c'?" Each time you make a pair, discard it. When this game gets too easy for your child; use words instead of letters.
- 🕒 Make sandpaper letters. Have your child run his hands over the letters. Add a challenge by having him touch the letter with his eyes closed to guess which one it is.
- 🕒 Have your child "write" his own shopping list when you make out yours. Ask him to "read" his list to you. When you go shopping, let him find suitable items from his list.
- 🕒 Make a salt tray by pouring a thick layer of salt onto a plate or cookie sheet. Your child can print letters with their finger in the salt.

## Math

- 🕒 Play a guessing game. Put buttons or jelly beans in a small jar. Have everyone in the family guess how many items are in the jar, then count them and give a prize to the winner. Keep the number of items small.
- 🕒 Play bingo and dominoes.
- 🕒 Play "store". Put price tags on toys (under 20 cents) and let your child use pennies, nickels and dimes to pay for them. Then switch places—let your child be the shopkeeper and "make change".



## Play is the Way

Children learn best when they are having fun. Playing, experimenting, doing things, taking on different roles, imagining, pretending—these are all important learning techniques. Play continues to be important in the early grades and throughout school and life. For this reason, play is also an important part of the kindergarten program. When children are playing in the kindergarten class, they aren't taking a break from learning, and the teacher isn't taking a break from teaching. Through play, children learn academic skills such as reading, writing, math and science. They also learn problem-

solving, creative thinking, and social skills.

Of course, kindergarten classes also have learning activities that you may think are more typical of school. Teachers do direct teaching with the whole class—such as identifying letters of the alphabet and their sounds, demonstrating numbers, and illustrating science facts. Together, the class looks at the calendar every day as a way of learning about concepts such as days of the week, seasons, weather and special occasions. Students spend time putting pencil to paper—printing letters, words and numbers.

At this age, play is an important way of learning for your child. As he plays, he learns about the world and how it works, about other people, about himself.

## A parent is a child's first and most important teacher



### At school, children will:

- 🌈 Explore the natural things in their world
- 🌈 Learn about numbers, shapes, patterns, sorting, estimating, measuring, and talk about their observations
- 🌈 Have opportunities to create pictures, structures, music, songs, and rhymes and engage in dramatic play
- 🌈 Use different types of materials and equipment to develop large and small muscles

### At home, to prepare your child, you can:

- 🌈 Talk with your child about the things they see or hear on walks and trips. Notice changes that occur (e.g., seasons, growth, construction)
- 🌈 Involve your child in sorting activities (e.g., toys, clothes, putting away food). When cooking, talk about how much is needed and let them fill and pour. Talk about shapes and patterns in their environment. Play games with your child (e.g., matching and counting, cards, simple board games)
- 🌈 Encourage your child's use of imagination through drawing, building, moving to music, and acting out

*Everything I need to know, I learned in Kindergarten*

- Robert Fulgum