

# Ready, Set

# KINDERGARTEN!

Resources for Hamilton County, TN rising  
Kindergarten students and their families



THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

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# NOTE TO PARENTS:

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The baby days are over and now your little one is headed to kindergarten! For parents and kids alike, this new chapter in life can bring about mixed emotions including excitement and nervousness. Each section in this activity book shows ways your child can practice the skills that will help them in kindergarten. This booklet will cover skills in the five key learning areas, as well as information to help both of you be prepared for the first day of school and beyond.

Preparing for kindergarten is an important task, but it doesn't have to be stressful. The tips in this book are designed to be included in your everyday conversation and quality time with your child. Make it fun and take your time! Spend time together and try a few activities each day in the months leading up to the start of school. You can help your child feel competent and confident as they start their new adventure.

No two children are alike. Some like to draw, play with blocks, or sing songs, while others might find it hard to hold a pencil or listen to music. Children learn at different speeds and in different ways. As months progress, try activities in the book again to see if your child has an easier time doing them. You may be surprised at how much they grow in a short time! If you are concerned about your child's development, talk to your pediatrician.

Always remember - with every story you read, skill you teach, or hug you give - you are the first and most influential teacher your child will ever have.



In each skill area, you'll find information about why the activities are important for your 4 to 5-year-old child's development and preparation for Kindergarten. You'll also find examples of additional ways to practice the skills at home. More activities and resources can be found online.



## **Message from the Hamilton County Schools Superintendent and Office of Early Learning**

Welcome to Kindergarten! Hamilton County Schools is thrilled to support you and your child as you embark on this exciting journey. Our Kindergarten educators take great pride in being the first teachers in a child's formal education. Throughout the year, teachers will focus on developing your child's academic, emotional, and social skills.

We recognize children entering Kindergarten have varying skill levels, and our teachers are equipped to support a wide range of abilities and learning styles. Kindergarten is a period of significant growth and change. Your child will learn fundamental skills in reading, writing, and math, as well as practice personal responsibilities like putting on their own coats and washing their hands. Additionally, they will learn social skills, including sharing and following instructions. We are excited to support your student as they gain independence and confidence.

At Hamilton County Schools, we are dedicated to the success of every student, starting in Kindergarten. We are committed to and invested in your child's future. Our teachers strive daily to ensure all children will thrive and experience a future without limits. Every effort we make together invests in the future of our children, our community, and our future.

***Welcome to Hamilton County Schools, and welcome to Kindergarten!***

With Care and Commitment,

Dr. Justin Robertson  
HCS Superintendent

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**HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE**  
**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR**  
**WESTON WAMP**

Dear Hamilton County Parents,

There's nothing quite like the first day of Kindergarten. As a parent of five young children, I know how exciting and stressful it can be.

While being a father comes with its challenges, it's the most honorable title I hold. Hearing about my children's day at school gives me hope for the future of Hamilton County. I would encourage each of you to take an active interest in your child's education, knowing the quality of their education will predict the life they choose to pursue beyond high school.

Preparing our students to be next generation's great leaders starts in these classrooms. I know Hamilton County's next best entrepreneur, educator, doctor, or legislator is in one of these classrooms.

I encourage parents and young children to embrace this exciting time of transition with enthusiasm and curiosity. Kindergarten is a time of big changes and new experiences, and it is normal to feel a mix of emotions. Remember that you are not alone on this journey—our entire community is here to support you every step of the way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Weston Wamp". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Weston Wamp  
Hamilton County Mayor



## City of Chattanooga Department of Early Learning Mayor Tim Kelly

To the Families of Rising Kindergarten Students,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I invite you and your family to take a journey with our community toward getting ready for Kindergarten. We are excited to pledge our partnership and support of Chattanooga 2.0's Kindergarten-Ready booklet.

The City of Chattanooga has taken the stance that "Every Chattanoogaan deserves the opportunity to succeed and thrive, regardless of place, race, or identity." In doing so, the City created the Department of Early Learning which includes several initiatives to support education including:

- Expanding access to early learning for all families
- Integrating our early learning programs from prenatal care to kindergarten
- Training the next generation of excellent early learning professionals
- Partnering with Hamilton County Schools to provide high-quality learning opportunities and services for families
- Making Chattanooga an investment-ready early learning model for the nation

Here in the Department of Early Learning, we recognize that a successful journey in life begins with a strong foundation. And that starts with quality early learning exposure in preparation for kindergarten. Data shows us that children and families in underserved minority communities are less likely to have equitable access to high-quality early learning resources and family supports in places that have a positive influence on long-term quality of life. The outcomes of such deficits result in more than 60% of children entering kindergarten without the skills to be successful.

The Department of Early Learning is dedicated to the safe and healthy development of our city's most valuable assets: our children. We are committed to creating a system that fosters every child's ability to thrive and learn to reach their highest potential. We promote, support, and optimize early childhood development by enhancing the fundamental skill development of our youngest residents. We work to broaden and deepen opportunities and experiences for Chattanooga families and children by strengthening early foundations for little learners and leading sustainable efforts to aid them as they matriculate through their primary and secondary education journey.

We pride ourselves as the home of all things Cradle to Career within the City of Chattanooga government. Our work spans four divisions: AmeriCorps Seniors ( Foster Grandparent) Program, Community Forward Program, Office of Early Learning, and Chattanooga Head Start/Early Head Start Programs. We are also home to several signature programs like Seats for Success, BASICS Chattanooga, and Early Learning Provider Cafes, just to name a few.

A high priority of the Department of Early Learning is to work toward expanding the existence of high-quality early learning opportunities in underserved communities to empower families with children ages 0- 8 to pursue a successful existence in our community. We provide public investment, expertise, and leadership to put resources into the hands of those who nurture and educate our children. We aim to prepare the next generation of future-ready learners.

To learn more about the City of Chattanooga's Department of Early Learning, visit our website at <https://chattanooga.gov/early-learning>.

Let's get READY for Kindergarten..... The journey begins now!!

Sincerely,

Mayor Tim Kelly  
City of Chattanooga

# A Community Supporting Kindergarten Readiness

Chattanooga 2.0 community partners in Hamilton County, TN agree on what it means to be ready for kindergarten and how to support our youngest residents. Children's brains develop most quickly in their first five years. Families, schools, and communities have an important role to play in giving children a strong foundation. We can all support and nurture age-appropriate skills to make sure every child is set up for success in school and beyond. **Will you join us?**

## KINDERGARTEN READY DEFINITION:

Children will grow into strong learners and adults when we support their brain growth before and after Kindergarten. In Hamilton County, we aspire that every rising Kindergartener is physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually prepared for success in Kindergarten. To do this, children need a strong foundation in the following five skill areas.



## Kindergarten-Ready Skill Areas



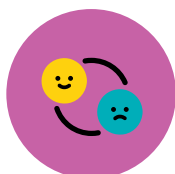
### LANGUAGE SKILLS

Knowing the alphabet and learning to write helps kindergarteners further develop language skills, a key to reading and communicating.



### MATH SKILLS

Identifying colors, patterns, and shapes and basic counting are key to developing harder math skills.



### EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL SKILLS

Learning to name and express feelings helps young students manage their emotions.



### LEARNING SKILLS

A child's curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills are how they learn new things.



### SELF-HELP & MOVEMENT SKILLS

These skills help kindergartners develop writing skills, strengthen their bodies, and grow in confidence and self-esteem.



# Full List of Skills for Success in Kindergarten

**Appropriate for four and five-year-old rising kindergarten students.  
Contact a doctor with any concerns.**

You can help your child build the following skills to get ready for kindergarten through play, the activities listed in this book, and at home. Every child is unique and skills don't develop at the same time. Teachers will be ready for your little one no matter what.

**Remember** - with every story you read, skill you teach, or hug you give, know that you are the first and most influential teacher your child will ever have.

## LANGUAGE



- I can **listen** to a story and **answer** questions about it
- I know my **ABCs**, can identify some letters and sounds of the alphabet, and turn pages in a book right to left on my own
- I can draw you a picture and **tell a story** about it, even if it looks like scribbles
- I recognize my **written name** and can attempt to write it
- I notice words that **rhyme** (bat-cat, ball-tall) and make up nonsense rhymes (foodle, doodle)
- I speak in **complete sentences** of 6-8 words that can be understood by a stranger

## MATH



- I can count to **30**
- I can point to and count 10 objects
- I know my **colors** and can draw **shapes**, such as circle, square, triangle
- I can describe the **position** of objects: up/down, left/ right, behind / beside, in front / on top
- I can recognize and repeat simple **patterns** such as star, moon, star, moon

## HEALTHY FOUNDATION



- I have been to the **dentist** and had my **vision** and **hearing** screenings
- I sleep at least **9 hours** per night, and I eat enough veggies and fruits

## LEARNING



- I can **follow directions** to complete a task
- I can play by myself and also with other children my age
- I show curiosity when I ask who, what, when, where and what/if **questions**
- I am eager to **try new experiences** and activities
- I can **focus** on or complete one activity for 5 minutes before moving on

## SELF-HELP & MOVEMENT



- I move with **control** and balance while walking, running, jumping & climbing
- I can use pencils and crayons to **trace** and scissors to **cut**
- I can control buttons and zippers and dress on my own
- I can use hand-eye coordination to put together a **puzzle**
- When an adult asks me to, I can eat, brush teeth, wash my hands and use the bathroom **all by myself**

## EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL



- I can **share**, take turns, help, compliment, and play well with my friends
- Once I'm 5, I can **adjust** to changes in routine and environment
- I can use words to describe my **emotions** (ex: happy, sad, hungry)
- I seek and accept guidance from caregivers and teachers
- I know my full name, city, phone number, and reliable adult names

**WE CAN ALL HELP GIVE CHILDREN A STRONG FOUNDATION BEFORE KINDERGARTEN.**

Do you want to learn brain-building tips for children YOUNGER than four? Visit the [ChattanoogaBasics.org](http://ChattanoogaBasics.org) website to learn about the 5 simple ways you can help give your child a strong start in life.

# Health and Nutrition

A healthy start to Kindergarten can help give your child a solid foundation for the rest of the school year. Meeting new friends and learning new things is easier when children are well-rested and have had their hearing and vision checked before the start of school. If you're unsure if your child has had the proper immunizations or health screenings, contact your pediatrician.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT A HEALTHY FOUNDATION AT HOME

- **Prioritize Sleep.** Rising Kindergarteners need 9 to 11 hours of good-quality sleep to get them through the day. Kindergarteners do not take naps at school. Good sleep habits are important for children as they get ready to learn. Minimize caffeine, sugar, and stimulating activities like TV, computer/tablet use or video games before bed.
- **Eat breakfast.** Kids who eat breakfast have more energy and better concentration.
- **Try new foods together.** You can work to eat a rainbow of colors every day. Fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, and grains are important foods for your children. Limit candy, juices, and fatty foods.
- **Eat together.** Schedules get busy, but when you can, eating family meals together has many lifelong benefits for children and provides the opportunity for conversation (which is a major brain booster!)
- **Get moving!** Encourage daily outdoor playtime to give children opportunities for physical activity and energetic movement.
- **Water does wonders!** Water improves oral health, energy, and your child's ability to focus.
- **Wash hands.** Encourage kids to wash their hands after going to the toilet, before eating, and whenever hands get dirty. Proper handwashing should take about the same amount of time it takes to sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" or "Happy Birthday".
- **Check in.** Rising Kindergarteners can have big feelings - that is a fact. Check-in with your child to see if they may be hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. Food, water, rest, and connection are things that both adults and children alike need to regulate themselves.

**NOTE:** It is important to check with a child's pediatrician *early* if you think your child is not meeting milestones before Kindergarten. There are many supports in our community to help your child have a strong start to school and meet their unique learning needs.

HCS provides access to a **nutritious meal** for all students! You may even be eligible to receive free or discounted breakfast and lunch. Call HCS Nutrition at (423) 498-7275 for more information.

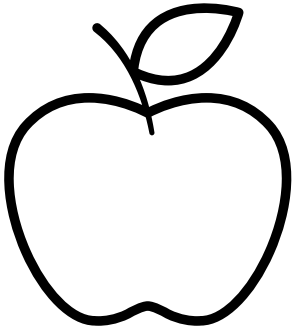




# A Healthy Start to School!



Color and name these healthy foods that will help you grow strong!



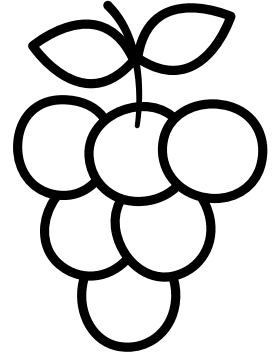
APPLE



BROCCOLI

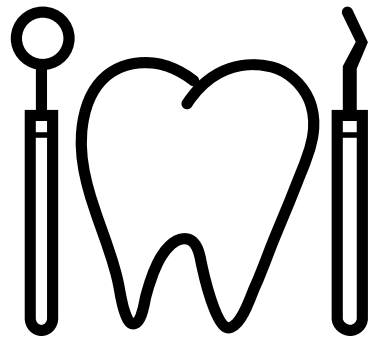


CARROT

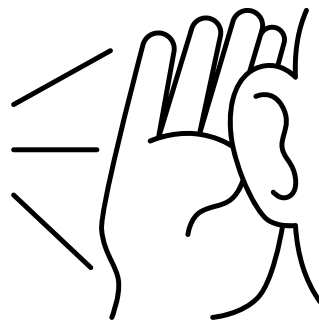


GRAPES

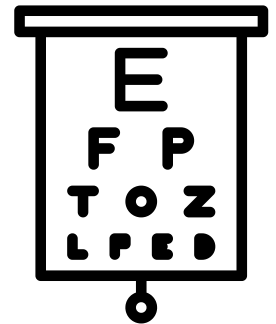
Color each of these healthy activities you should do before Kindergarten.



Visit the dentist



Hearing Test



Eye doctor

Ready, Set, **KINDERGARTEN!**



# Bedtime Routine



We wake up in the morning on school days at   :  :   **AM**



Which means our bedtime for a full 9+ hours of sleep each evening is   :  :   **PM**

### DID YOU KNOW?

Kindergarten students do not take naps during the day.

Circle the parts of *your* bedtime routine. Which step comes first? Which is last?



**SING A SONG**



**BLOW A KISS**



**USE THE BATHROOM**



**GIVE A HUG**



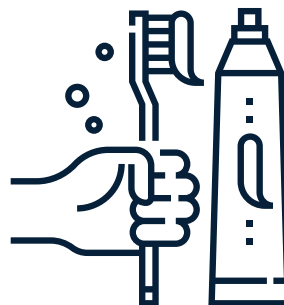
**TAKE A DRINK**



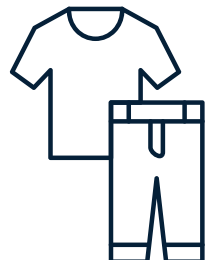
**READ A BOOK  
(Or tell a story)**



**BRUSH MY TEETH**



**PREPARE CLOTHING  
FOR TOMORROW**



# Language Skills

Language and literacy development begins at birth and provides the foundation for a child's success in school. It encompasses the skills related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Early literacy skills are defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that come before, and lead up, to conventional reading and writing.

Learning to read begins long before children start sounding out words on a page. It begins with developing language and vocabulary through conversation and reading to children. Understanding letters as symbols for words and sounds is an important first concept as well.

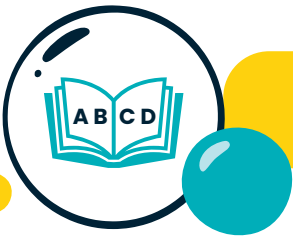
## WAYS TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE SKILLS AT HOME

- **Talk, sing, read, and play** together every day to nurture your child's speech and language skills. Make reading a part of your family's daily routine.
- **Converse.** Describe, explain, and narrate your daily activities. Educational videos are great, but they are one-way. Conversation with caregivers boosts vocabulary, a future reading skill.
- **Play near and talk with other children during play.** When playing with you or with other children, they hear new phrases and words used in a variety of contexts and begin expanding their vocabulary.
- **Read with your child for at least 20 minutes each day.** Ask your child questions about who is in the story. What happened? Where did it take place? Or ask your child to tell you about the story in their own words.
- **I Spy.** Look for easily recognizable symbols (brands, restaurant signs, etc.) and play "I Spy" or matching games to help your child understand that visual images can symbolize the names of places and things.
- **Look for letters all around.** Start with the letters in your child's name, then move on to others. Once mastered, you can begin to point out letter sounds. Being able to recognize their written name is an important skill for Kindergarten.
- **Rhyming game.** Start with a word, such as hat or mop, and take turns saying rhyming words until neither of you can think of any more! Children also enjoy nonsense rhymes (foodle, doodle, loodle).
- **Make it fun.** Give your child fun, sensory-rich ways to practice writing letters, like finger painting, molding play dough or shaping pipe cleaners.



Find free, educational games to support your child's kindergarten-ready skills on the PBS KIDS Video and PBS KIDS Games App and parent website. Learn from your favorite friends like Daniel Tiger, Wild Kratts, Cat in the Hat and more. Scan the code to download today!





# Language Skills

**No matter what book you read to your child, here are a few things to remember:**

- **Choose books that you and your child enjoy!** If you start a book and decide it's not for you, it's OK to put it down and try a different one. Ask your local librarian or bookseller for books they recommend.
- **Read with expression.** Make sound effects, do different voices for characters—whatever makes it fun for you and your child!
- **Make it interactive!** Are there words or phrases that get repeated? Have your child join in.
- **Read the pictures.** Did you know you can read a book without ever reading the words? Look at the pictures and have your child tell you the story they see. You can help them out by asking questions like, “What’s happening here?” “What do you see?” or “What do you think will happen next?”
- **Talk about the book.** The story doesn’t have to end on the last page. Talk about what you read. What did you like? What didn’t you like? Can you connect what you read to your life?

Our **local libraries** are great places to borrow books for free - as well as attend read-alouds and group activities with other children! With a library card you can even borrow audiobooks through the Libby app.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Until their 5th birthday, Signal Centers will send your child a monthly book in the mail from Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library?
































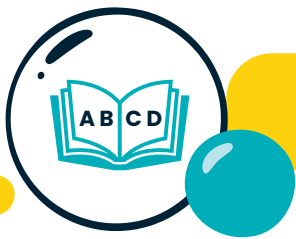
# I Know My ABCs



Follow along the alphabet with your finger. Say each letter out loud as you touch it. What animal starts with each letter? (Hint: the pictures can help you!)

## The Alphabet

 Aa	 Bb	 Cc	 Dd	 Ee
 Ff	 Gg	 Hh	 Ii	 Jj
 Kk	 Ll	 Mm	 Nn	 Oo
 Pp	 Qq	 Rr	 Ss	 Tt
 Uu	 Vv	 Ww	 Xx	 Yy
 Zz	 sh	 ch	 th	



# Write the Alphabet



Handwriting practice sheet for the alphabet, showing uppercase and lowercase letters with stroke order guides. The letters are arranged in rows on a three-line grid (top, middle dashed, bottom). Each letter is light blue and includes numbered arrows indicating the correct stroke order and direction.

Row 1: A a B b C c

Row 2: D d E e F f

Row 3: G g H h I i J j

Row 4: K k L l M m

Row 5: N n O o P p

Row 6: Q q R r S s T t

Row 7: U u V v W w

Row 8: X x

Row 9: Y y Z z

At the bottom right, there is a large yellow-bordered box containing a faint, ghosted image of a child writing on a similar sheet, intended for independent practice.

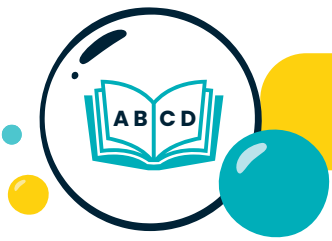
Psst! Can you write your name in the box?

# Tell a Story



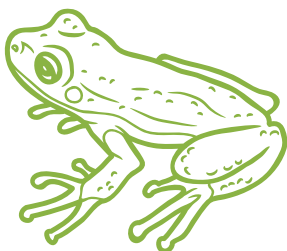
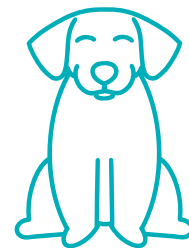
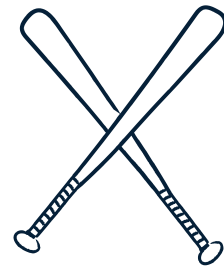
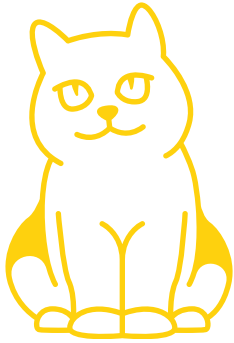
You are creative! Draw a picture on this page and tell your adult a story about it!

Ready, Set, **KINDERGARTEN!**



# Rhyming

Draw a line between the objects that rhyme. Can you name other rhyming words?





# Math Skills

**Color recognition** is an important basic skill that will help children learn about and describe the world around them. Understanding **patterns** (with colors, but also with shapes, letters, even sounds) is valuable for the development of predicting skills, problem-solving, number sense and more.

You can help your child build early math skills by talking about **numbers** and how we use them in everyday life. This will help your child develop basic problem-solving skills, understand patterns and sequences, and support early literacy.

Being able to **sort** objects, solve puzzles, count to 30, and recognize numbers 1-10 will give children a foundation for "Big School" math.

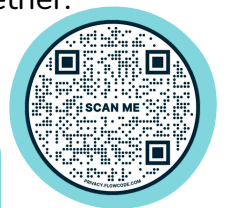
Recognizing, naming, and sorting **shapes** are important geometry skills that will help children become successful with math and special engineering concepts throughout their school years.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT MATH SKILLS AT HOME

- Ask children to **count items** in picture books: How many cats do you see?
- Challenge your child to a **jumping contest** (or other fun activity). Count how many times he or she can jump.
- **Play board games** like Candy Land or Hopscotch in which children count the number of moves.
- Make sandwiches, JELL-O jigglers, or cookies in different shapes. Ask your child **which shape** he or she would like to eat.
- Look for different **shapes and colors** in your house and neighborhood: What shape are the windows? What shape are the plates? What color are the flowers?
- **Color scavenger hunt.** In your yard or at the playground, ask your child to find one object for each color of the rainbow.
- Ask your child to help **sort** things into groups by type, size, color, or shape. They can separate the silverware or laundry, or put their toys into groups by size.
- Build with simple **blocks** and discuss the shapes, number of sides, and how they fit together. Use directional words like 'behind', 'beside', 'above', and 'below.'
- **String beads** of different colors and show your child how to make a pattern with colors.



CDM engages children and families in hands-on exploration of the arts and sciences through exhibits, programs, camps, and events that inspire all children to explore, innovate, create, and play. Visit them year-round! [cdmfun.org](http://cdmfun.org)

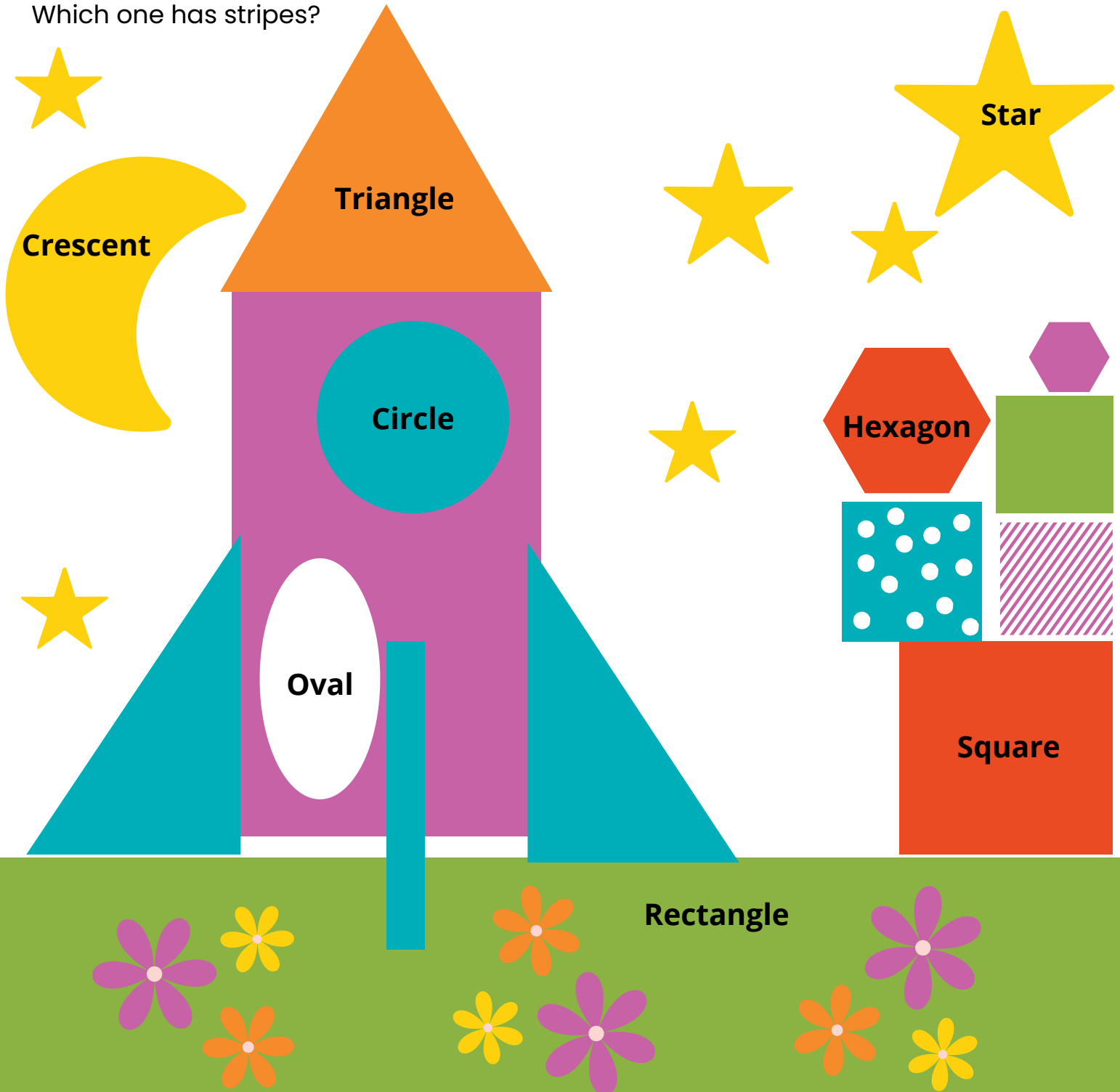




# Name that Shape!

Point at each shape and name the shape as you go! They could be: triangles, circles, squares, rectangles, stars, or ovals, and there's even a hexagon and a crescent! Can you find them all?

Which shape is biggest? Which shape is smallest? Which shape has polka dots? Which one has stripes?



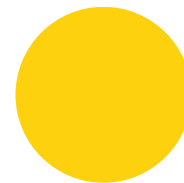
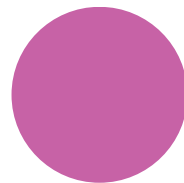
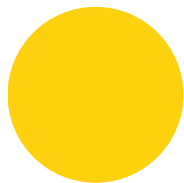
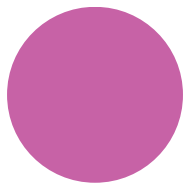
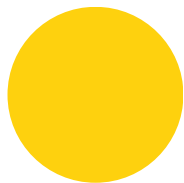


# Colors and Patterns

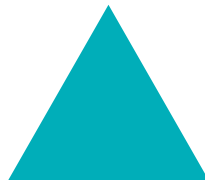
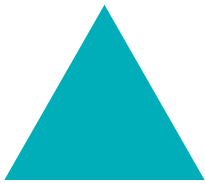
Touch each circle and name its color as you go.



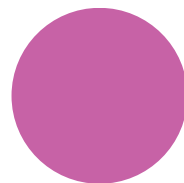
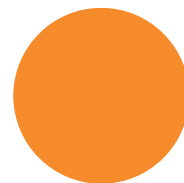
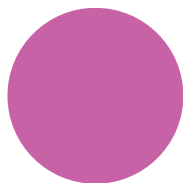
Name which color and shape comes next in the pattern.



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



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# Ready, Set, Counting!

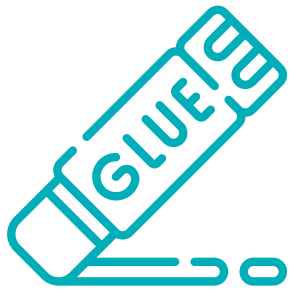
Use your fingers to follow along the chart and count to thirty.

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30



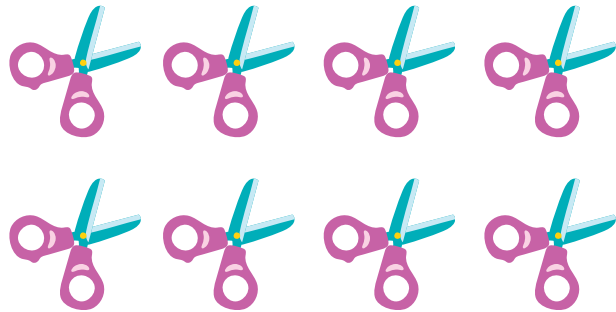
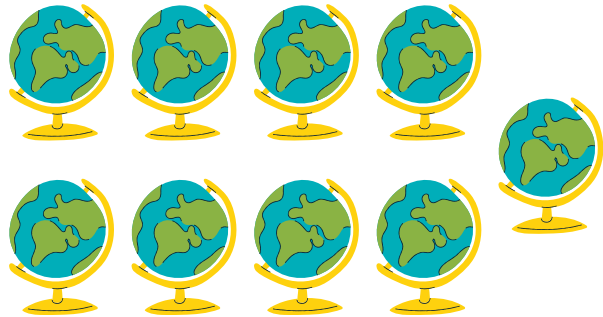
# Counting

Count the items that look the same. How many globes? How many apples?

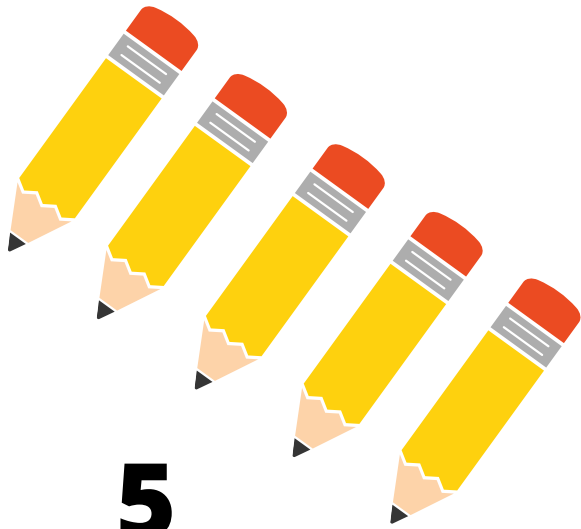


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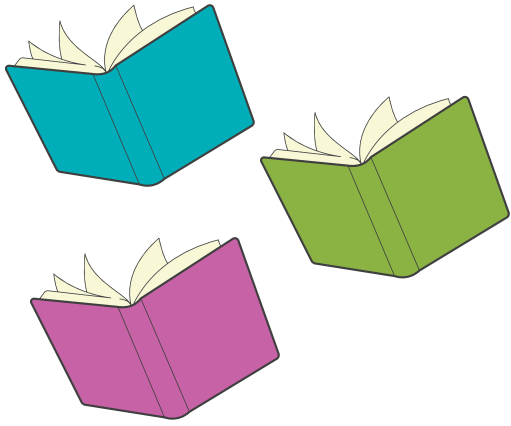
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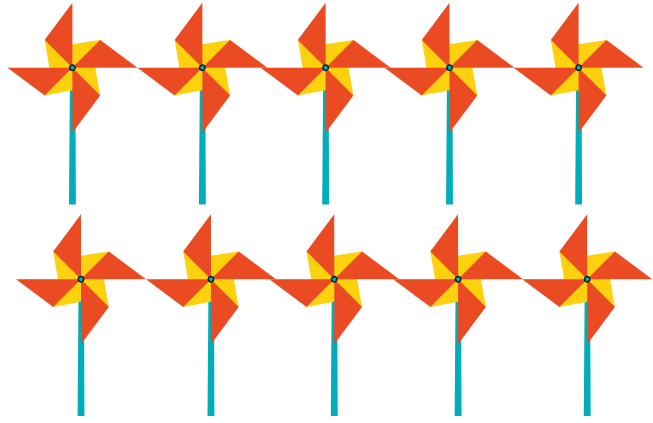
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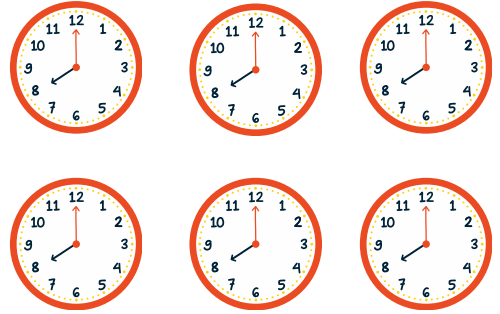
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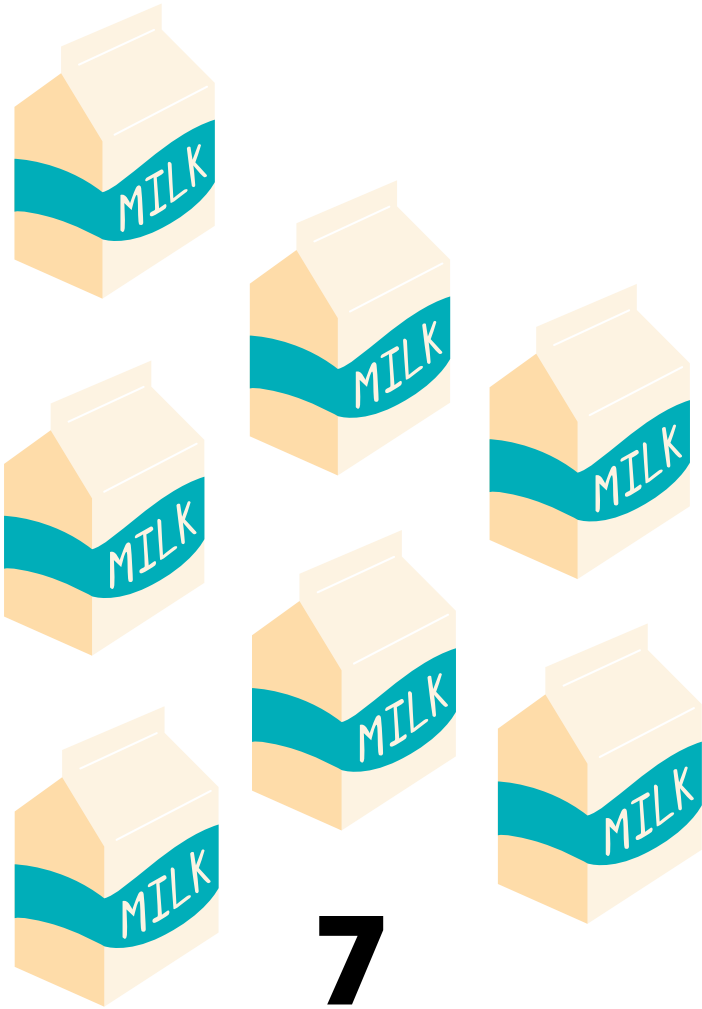
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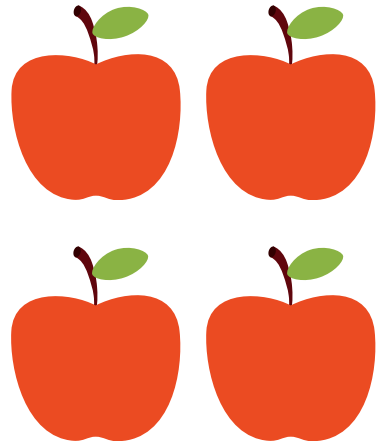
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6



7



4

# Emotional & Social Skills

Emotional and social skills are the way children and adults learn to recognize and manage their emotions, learn to show care and concern for others, make friends and develop relationships with children and adults, and learn to problem solve and make responsible choices.

Children need help learning to describe how they feel and calm down when they are angry, frustrated, and even excited. This is called self-regulation. And you can teach your child some tips to manage their behavior.

Your child will still need you to **help** them:

- Regulate and control their emotions
- Develop relationships with others
- Cooperate, share, and build self-esteem

Building a positive relationship with your child is one of the easiest ways to teach your child emotional and social skills. Spend fun time with your child talking, laughing, taking turns, and sharing, and model what you want to teach them.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT SOCIAL SKILLS AT HOME

- Tell your children it's okay to feel sad, or frustrated and mad, but learning how to breathe can help put us at ease.
- **Read a book** together and talk about the characters.
- **Take a walk.** Unstructured free-play in nature will help to build a strong foundation for positive social skills and mental health. Play is the work of children, in kindergarten and beyond.
- **Sing** favorite songs together.
- Eat dinner together.
- **Build confidence** by encouraging and complimenting them when they are successful in doing a task.
- Screen-free play with trusted play partners.
- Make-believe or pretend play.

The next page is a practice exercise with **Tucker Turtle** who learns to recognize his feelings, stop his body, and take three deep breaths. You can also help your child think of possible solutions when they are angry, such as:

Ask for help.

Say "Please stop."

Wait and take turns.

Ask for a hug.

Share.

## Social Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD).

Hamilton County Schools supports social, emotional, and academic development by providing student services such as school counseling, social workers, behavioral supports, and college and career advising.



# Learn to Breathe

Pretend you're Tucker Turtle who's feeling frustrated! Follow the steps below to practice helping yourself calm down and feel better.



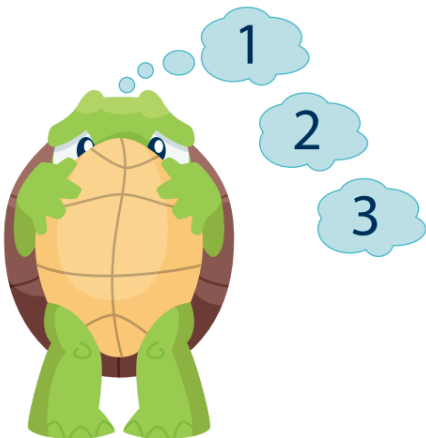
**STEP 1:** Recognize your feelings

*"I feel mad!"*



**STEP 2:** Stop your body.

*Stop yelling, keep your hands and body to yourself.*



**STEP 3:** Tuck inside your shell and take three deep breaths.

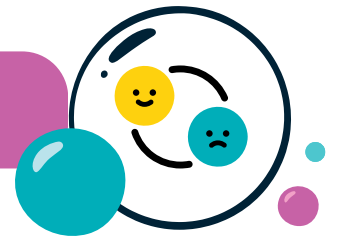


**STEP 4:** Come out when you are calm and think of a solution.

*Ask a parent if you need help.*



# I Can Say How I Feel



Point to the face and name the emotion.



Mad



Happy



Nervous



Sick



Surprised



Sad



Excited



Tired



Love

Ready, Set, **KINDERGARTEN!**

# Learning Skills

## ***How children approach learning:***

Children's learning is connected to their feelings of success and willingness to keep trying when something is hard. Children learn in different ways, but we can help them develop positive attitudes towards learning such as: curiosity, engagement, and persistence; creativity and imagination; and diversity in learning.

Hands-on experiences and nurturing interactions that promote the joy of learning are great ways for your child to learn!

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The Preschool Assessment & Learning Services (PALS) Center provides comprehensive developmental assessments for children aged 3 to 5. Contact them today if you think your child might have a developmental delay.



HCS Exceptional Education partners with families and community agencies to provide inclusive environments and services that meet the unique needs of every eligible special education student including those identified as gifted. Call (423) 498-7113 for more information.





# Ways to Support Learning Skills at Home

- **Encourage independence** - Observe and wait before offering assistance so your child can solve their own problem and decide for themselves whether to ask for help. This can be hard for parents, but just remember - you're giving your child room to grow (and we can always sweep up the cereal). If your child does make a mess by accident, let them know that accidents happen, and give them supplies to clean up the mess on their own.
- **Practice multi-step directions.** Ask your child to pick up their toys in one room, carry them to the toy box in another room, and then wash their hands for dinner.
- **Involve children as partners in carrying out routines and jobs** - Ask your child to help you plan for a family meal. Together, make a list of the things needed from the store. Let your child help find the items at the store.
- **Pretend play** - Pretend play helps with independence, problem-solving, and discovering their likes and dislikes. You can even use pretend play to prepare for scenarios by "rehearsing".  
*Example:* Before their first day of school, play "classroom" with your child to get them in the right mindset and ease any anxiety they might be feeling. **Use dress-up clothes and props for ideas.**
- **Investigate through questions** - How much did it rain? Leave a container or cup outside to measure the rainfall. Show your child how to use a ruler to see how much it rained.
- **Follow your child's lead in activities and conversations.**
- **Ask open-ended questions and keep the rich conversations going** - "I wonder what would happen if we added food coloring to the muffin mix. What do you think?" "I wonder what it would be like to have wings like a bird. What do you think?"
- **Obstacle course!** In your home or outside, obstacle courses help children problem-solve and practice persistence.
- **Answer their questions and have them answer their own questions** - "Why? Why? Why?" Rising kindergarteners are naturally curious. You can teach children about the way the world works by answering their questions. You can also give yourself a mental break and encourage your child's critical thinking by asking them to think about an answer to their own question. "Why do YOU think that is?"
- **All skills are connected** - When you support your child in trying an activity that is hard, for example cutting with scissors (persistence) you are teaching your child to handle frustration (social competence) and promoting fine motor skills (motor development).

# Self-Help and Movement Skills

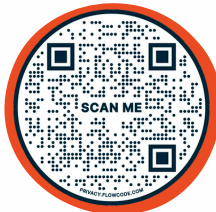
**Gross motor** (whole body) movement helps young developing brains grow. When children move, they build their large muscles, gain coordination, and help both sides of their brain work together. Large muscle movement and play also positively impact attention and mood.

**Fine Motor** skills involve the use of smaller muscles of the hands. These skills are essential for performing everyday skills. Strengthening fine motor development helps with student independence and confidence.

**Independence** is the primary source of self-esteem, but bustling hallways, crowded buses, and cafeterias can be intimidating. Help children become independent at school by discussing and practicing some basic skills that will allow them to say, "I did it myself!"

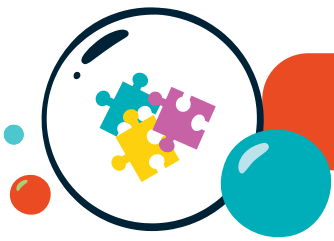
## WAYS TO SUPPORT SELF-HELP & MOVEMENT SKILLS AT HOME

- **Cut with scissors.** It is expected that your child can use safety scissors before the first day.
- **Play with Legos,** small blocks, or put puzzles together.
- Explore with play dough, clay, or flour dough by making letters, animal shapes, balls, snakes, etc.
- **Kick a ball,** play toss with balls or beanbags, and walk in a straight line with hands out for balance.
- **Dance.** Move and clap in rhythm to music, which develops coordination and awareness of their body in relation to others.
- **Unstructured playtime** at a local park or playground: Swing, climb on the monkey bars, play chase. Let your child burn off some energy. They will be happier and sleep better!
- **Get outdoors** and allow your child to get dirty. While it might make you nervous, play that allows your child to take risks *safely* (climbing, sliding, hanging upside down) will also benefit their development.
- Make sure your child can independently wash their hands and use the toilet.
- **Prepare for lunchtime.** Make sure your child can eat independently in a given time period (20-25 minutes). Encourage your child to try new foods and practice opening milk cartons, squeeze pouches, and anything else brought from home.
- **Let your child dress themselves.** Your child will have to close snaps and buttons, zip zippers, put on their coat, and know how to fasten their shoes in Kindergarten.



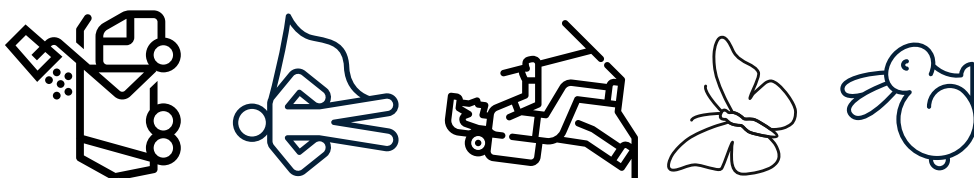
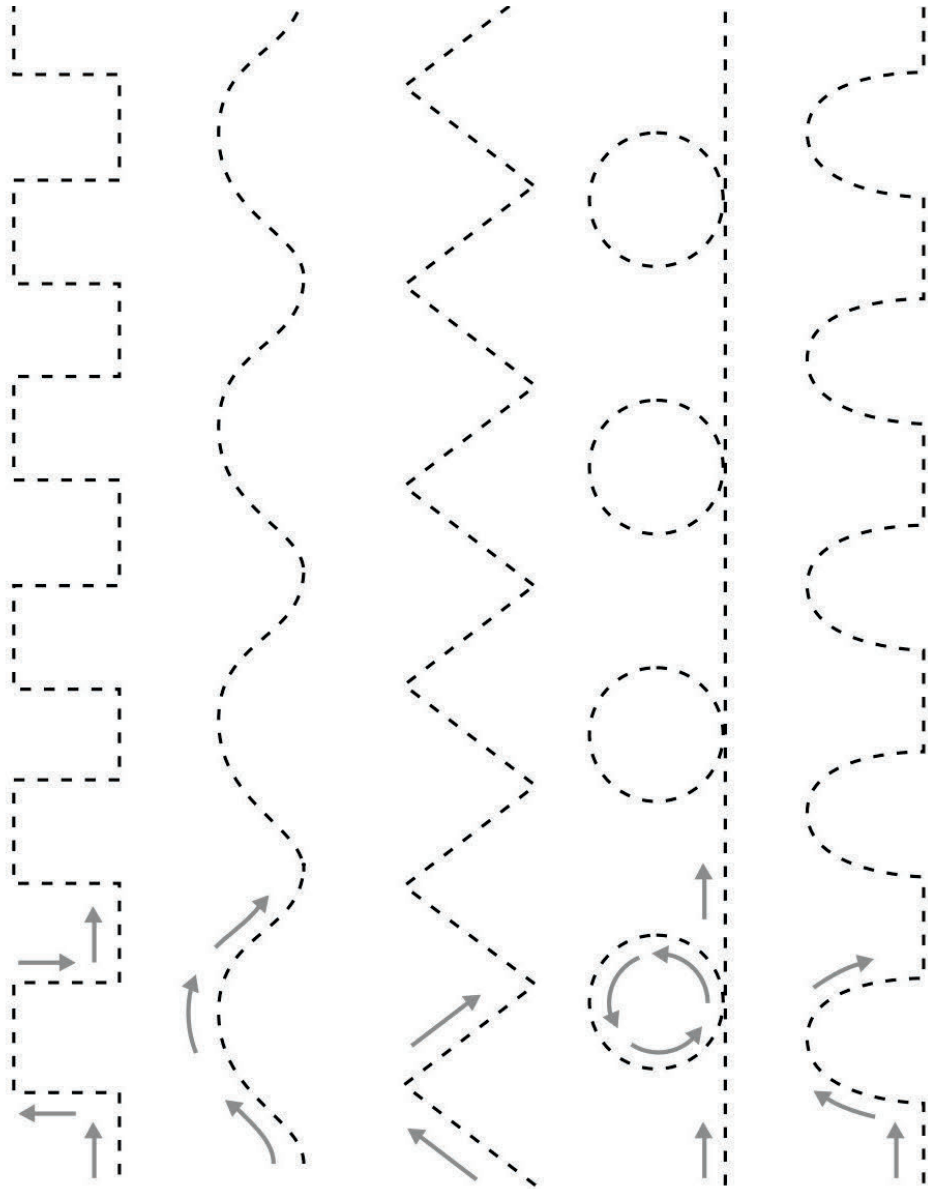
### School-Age Child Care

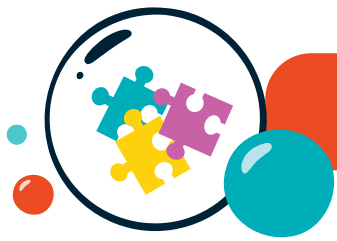
Wondering who can help care for your children before and after school while you're at work? Low-cost before and after school care is available to families starting in August. Call (423) 893-3530 for more information.



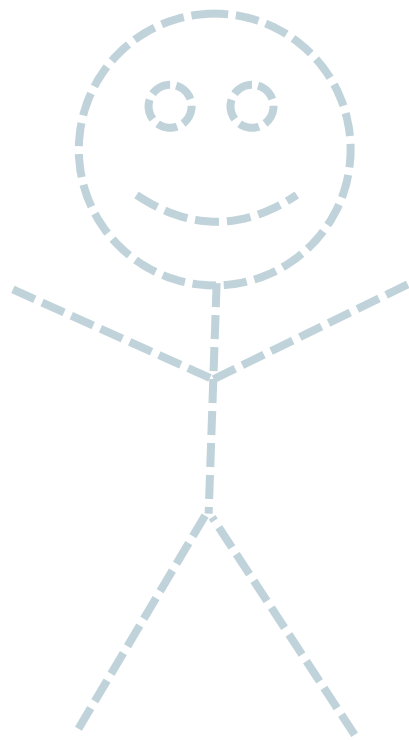
# Practice Tracing

Color the pictures. Trace the line down the path.  
Who do you think will win the race? Why?





# Time to Draw



Trace the stick figure

Draw the stick figure

## Learn to Skip



Skipping helps improve hand-eye coordination and balance, and it's really fun! You can use skipping by itself, playing hopscotch, or using a jump rope. To start, try skipping with one leg in the front in the beginning and later on advance to skipping with both feet.



## Have a Dance Party



Imitating dance steps from music videos or your favorite shows is super fun and teaches large motor skills. Turn on your favorite music and move your body to the beat!

# Ready, Set,

## Kindergarten Poem

Get ready, get set, Kindergarten here we come!  
We know that we're going to have lots of fun.

When you go to school,  
some things will be **new**.  
Like going through lunch lines  
and **bathroom breaks too!**

Some kids will ride a bus,  
Some will **go in a car**,  
some might even **walk** to school  
if it isn't too far.

Your teachers will help  
as you **start your new school**.  
Try to follow directions  
and listen to rules.

You'll be part of a **class**  
with other girls and boys.  
You'll have so many chances  
to **be kind and share toys**.

No one in your classroom  
will be quite the same,  
Though they may have the same lunchbox,  
same shoes or same name!

You'll bring **pencils and paper**,  
and some crayons and glue,  
but the best thing you can bring  
is the **VERY SPECIAL YOU!**





# Self-Care for Adults

As your child's most influential role model, you will lead your child in either good or bad habits. So it's important to instill respect for health and safety, which includes taking care of your own self! This lesson you model can carry over into other aspects of their lives and benefit them for years to come.

## Tips for Adult Self-Care:

- **Take a break.** It's OK to tell your child that you need a moment to calm your own big emotions. Model how you take time for yourself by stepping into the next room and practicing your favorite calming strategy.
- **Box breathing.** Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, hold your breath out for 4 seconds. Repeat.
- **Sleep.** Easier said than done for busy parents, but attempt to get at least the recommended 7 hours of sleep per night.
- **Sunshine.** Taking a walk outside in fresh air and sunshine can lift your mood and boost vitamin D.
- **Dance.** If you feel yourself getting frustrated with your child's developmentally appropriate behavior (like whining), turn on your favorite song and dance like no one's watching. It will make you feel better, and chances are, it will also catch your child's attention enough that they want to join in.
- **Have grace.** It's important to be kind to yourself. It's ok to feel frustrated or scared sometimes. You are doing the best you can and tomorrow is a new day.

If your child is exhibiting challenging behaviors and you want help, visit [TN Voices](#) for free virtual Parenting Solutions classes. They provide tips and strategies for how to mitigate behaviors before they start, while also taking care of yourself. [TNOICES.org](#)

Taking care of young children can feel like a 24/7 job. Asking for help can be challenging, but **utilizing your support systems** like extended family, church communities, or friends to take breaks can help. If the struggle feels more constant, reaching out to your doctor or a mental health professional may provide concrete tools to cope or medical support.

Once you start your Kindergarten journey, there are many partners in your child's education within the **school** and the **district** to help you along the way. If there's ever anything you need, reach out to your child's school to be connected to helpful resources.



**Kindergarten can be a big change for both children and parents. Below are some helpful tips for families from Hamilton County Schools to navigate the transition.**

**School Registration:**

- Make sure you have all the necessary documents on hand before you get started
  - 2 proofs of residence
  - Student's birth certificate (preferred)
  - Student's TN Immunization Form and physical documentation
- Register your student online at [www.hcde.org/registration](http://www.hcde.org/registration)
  - If you need assistance, contact the Family Connection Center, 423-843-4799

**Create a PowerSchool Parent Portal Account**

PowerSchool is a web-based student information system that provides parents, students, and teachers with a tool to track and communicate student performance. PowerSchool empowers families to engage in their child’s learning journey. The Parent Portal account is separate from student registration, and you need this account to access all of the features in PowerSchool.

1. **Contact your child’s school to get your Parent Access ID and Password**
2. Go to [powerschool.hcde.org](http://powerschool.hcde.org)
4. Sign in with your Parent Portal PowerSchool username and password
  - Check weekly for grades, assignments, and attendance updates
  - Download the PowerSchool App for easy access using District Code: **ZRCD**

For detailed instructions on how to create a PowerSchool Parent Portal account, visit [www.hcde.org/parentportal](http://www.hcde.org/parentportal) or ask your school for assistance.

Parent Access ID:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Access Password:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## What can I expect the first week?

Your student will participate in a phase-in process scheduled by your school. This means your student will not start school full-time right away. This allows your student a chance to acclimate to a new environment and/or reacquaint themselves. It offers each child an opportunity to feel a sense of security and build trust within the classroom. Contact your school for the phase-in schedule.

It's going to be hard to say goodbye to your child on the first day of school, and that is okay! Your child will experience lots of emotions about the first week of school too.

Don't be surprised if there aren't a lot of academics going on the first week. The first week is about building relationships and learning classroom expectations.

Expect important communications from your school about the school year, so make sure they have your most current contact information. Follow the school's social media page and website for the most current information.

## What do teachers want you to know?

- Teachers are excited to be partners in your child's education!
- Keeping lines of communication open throughout the school year will be key to the teacher-family partnership.
- This is a great time to start having conversations with your child about what they did during the day. Ask specific questions and encourage your child to share their curiosity and learning with you.
- Learning at home is critical. Read to your child for 20 minutes a day and encourage writing exploration.
- The more self-control your child has, the more successful they will be in school. Children need practice in deciding how and when to express their feelings. Help develop and practice those skills at home.
- Daily school attendance in kindergarten is required in Tennessee. Regular school attendance helps your child grow in learning and in developing social skills.



# Resources for Families

## HCS EdConnect

No-cost high-speed internet is available to qualifying Hamilton County School families. Ask your school about enrolling!

## School Nutrition

Nutritious meals are available to all students, and some families may be able to receive free or discounted breakfast and lunch meals. Call (423) 498-7275 for more information.

## Transportation

Safe and efficient transportation is available for students to and from school each day. Call (423) 498-5555 or check our bus stop locator.

## School Age Child Care

Low-cost before and after-school care is available to families. Call (423) 893-3530 for more information.

## Exceptional Education

Eligible students have access to services such as small group instruction, special classes, enrichment classes, and home-bound schooling. Call (423) 498-7113 for more information.

## Literacy

Find information, activities, videos, events, and resources on foundational literacy skills at [hcde.org/literacy](http://hcde.org/literacy).

## International Welcome Center

The IWC supports the needs of our international students and families. Call (423) 489-7360 for an appointment.

## HCS Family Guide



## HCS Communications

Important communications are sent regularly to families by phone, text, and email. Make sure to keep your contact information current in PowerSchool!

## HCS School Board

Stay informed about school governance and learn more about your school board member at [www.hcde.org/district/school\\_board](http://www.hcde.org/district/school_board).

## Back to School Bash

An annual event is held on the Saturday before the first day of school offering school supplies for families and connections to many community resources.



HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS  
**FAMILY CONNECTION**  
CENTER

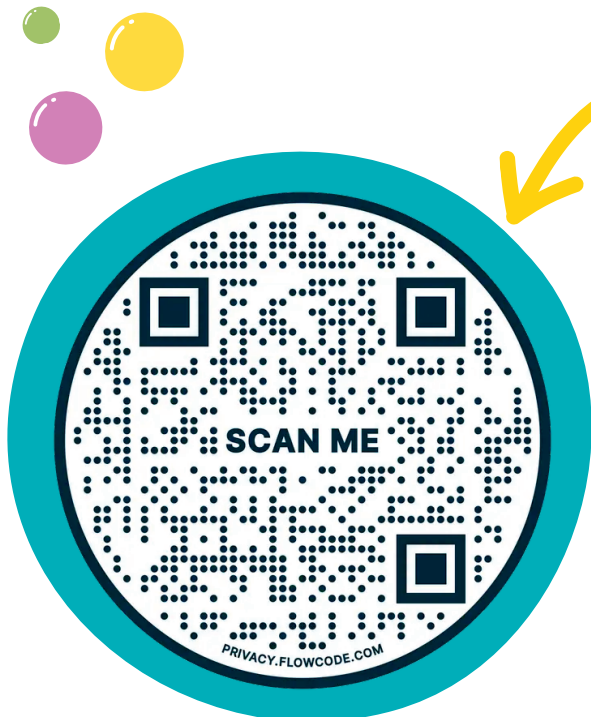
[www.hcde.org/FCC](http://www.hcde.org/FCC)

3074 Hickory Valley Road  
Chattanooga, TN 37421

[FamilyConnectionCenter@hcde.org](mailto:FamilyConnectionCenter@hcde.org)  
423-843-4799

# THANK YOU

Chattanooga 2.0 would like to thank the many community partners who collaborated on this book for their continued commitment to early learning and the children of our community.



**FIND THE FULL K-READY  
SKILLS LIST AND FREE  
RESOURCES TO SUPPORT  
YOUR CHILD BY SCANNING  
THE QR CODE!**

[chatt2.org/Kready](http://chatt2.org/Kready)

# See you in August!



[chatt2.org/Kready](https://chatt2.org/Kready)