



Cannon Falls School District
820 East Minnesota Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009
www.cannonfallsschools.com



By keeping it REAL we will respect ourselves, others, and our community and we will be responsible for learning.

Kindergarten Kick Start



The Road to Kindergarten in Cannon Falls, Minnesota

Sending your child to kindergarten is a big step. You and your family have been preparing for this day since your child was born. Every time you spend quality time together, you are preparing your child to be a successful learner. All of these things and many more help prepare your child for kindergarten.

The year before kindergarten is a busy one. This booklet gives ideas for how you can prepare your child for elementary school with fun activities to build the skills your child needs to do well in kindergarten. Have fun doing these things together. Remember YOU are your child's first and most important teacher!



A “to do” list for getting your child ready for kindergarten

Attend Early Childhood Screening. This screening is free and is required before your child can attend kindergarten.

- Cannon Falls Area Schools prefer to screen children at age 3, but they will screen 4 and 5 year olds. Don't wait until they are 4 or 5 since the screening tool is individualized/scored based on your child's exact age. Waiting until they are older does not mean they will do better.
- Screening is a quick check of your child's overall health and development.
- For more information about screening and how to schedule an appointment check out our school website at: www.cannonfallsschools.com.

Attend your school's Kindergarten Round Up in late winter.

- If you are unable to attend, be sure to contact the school and ask any questions you may have.
- If you can, spend some time playing on the school playground.
- It is important for your child to start seeing the school as their school and to get excited about attending school there in the fall.

Visit your doctor and dentist regularly.

Personal & Social Development

Personal and social skills are important for children entering kindergarten. Young children who are able to understand, and express their own feelings, and interact with other children and adults, do better in school.

Personal Development:

- How children feel about themselves (self-concept)
- How they understand and express their feelings
- How they understand the feelings of other people

Social Development:

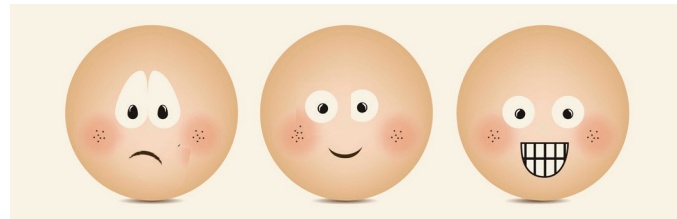
How children interact with others, both children and adults.



HAPPY

SCARED

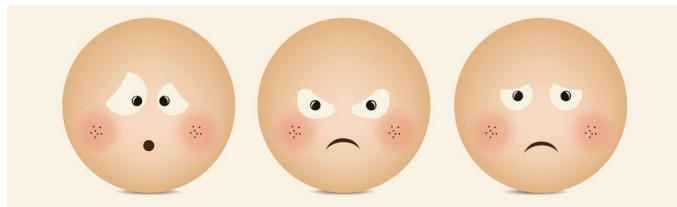
EXCITED



DISAPPOINTED

HOPEFUL

PROUD



WORRIED

ANGRY

SAD

Play games and let your child lose and win. They must be able to deal with both appropriately.

Personal and Social Skills for Soon-To-Be Kindergartners

- 1 Self-advocacy or standing up for oneself.
Use "I" statements to express needs and wants. (For Example: I need help with my boots or I want another snack please.)
- 2 Play with children of the same age.
Children need to have social experiences and regular interactions with children. Set up play dates, attend open gym or library story hour, or meet other children at the park.
- 3 Interact respectfully with others.
Use "we" statements instead of "I" statements when working with others. (For example: we share with others, we wait for a turn.)
- 4 Listen to, process and follow 2-3 step directions.
Children entering kindergarten need to be able to listen to and follow directions given by their teacher. (For example: put your books away and line up for music.)
- 5 Allow your child to experience different social settings outside of their comfort zone.
Children need to experience many different places in order to feel comfortable in new settings. Visit the library, local parks, museums, or the playground.
- 6 Help your child feel safe and comfortable with other adults.
Find opportunities for your child to be cared for by a trusted adult, without parents or guardians present. Building that trust will provide a safe and comfortable environment for your child.

Physical Development & Self Care

It is important to help your child practice their motor skills, and learn healthy habits and how to do things for themselves before they start school.

Fine Motor Skills

Things children can do with their hands and fingers.



I Can Do It Myself!



Gross Motor Skills

Things children can do with their arms, legs and bodies. These skills help children move with control and coordination.



Help your child learn to:

- Open/close zippers and buttons on clothing and backpacks
- Use the toilet; Wipe without an adult helping
- Wash hands
- Put on shoes or boots (non-tie shoes preferred until they can tie independently)
- Open snack/lunch/drinks
- Clean up when they are done

Children should also practice using:



Language & Reading Development

Language and reading development involves more than teaching children to say their ABC's. It includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The best way to help children develop literacy skills is to READ and/or TELL stories in your home language every day.

Language and Reading Skills of Children Entering Kindergarten

Children should develop an awareness of the alphabet in their home language.

- Sing the ABC song
- Tell your child the names and sounds of each letter
- Make an alphabet chart for your home
- Repeat nursery rhymes

Children should be exposed to writing in their home language.

- Let your child see you writing notes, grocery lists, or letters
- Have your child draw a picture, tell you about it and write down what they say

Children should be able to identify the letters in their first name.

- Write your child's name (only first letter is capitalized) and tell them the names of the letters
- Help your child trace their first name

Talk with your children about your day and listen to what they say about theirs.

- Play high/low: Your child tells you one good thing (high) about their day and one not so good (low) part
- Share your high/low as well

Read stories and help children retell them.

- After you finish a book, have your child tell you what happened in it
- Ask them questions as you are reading
- Talk about the book when you are done reading together
- Read your child's favorite stories over and over again. Children love repetition. They learn something new each time they hear the book and talk about it.



Children should also see their parents reading, whether for enjoyment or another purpose. Share "reading" time together!



Math Development

Pre-kindergarten math skills to focus on:

- Counting and sorting objects by color, size, shape or category
- Recognizing patterns
- Naming shapes and identify colors
- Counting aloud
- Play board games and games with dice

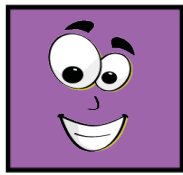
Math skills for children entering kindergarten:

- Identify numbers 0-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 in print and counts on from any given number
- Identify 9 basic colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple, Black, White, and Brown
- Identify the 6 basic shapes, Circle, Square, Triangle, Rectangle, Oval, and Diamond/Rhombus
- Sort objects by size, shape, color or category

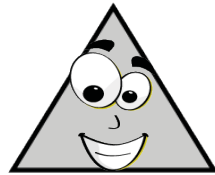
When children practice math skills, they use their critical thinking skills and learn how to solve problems.



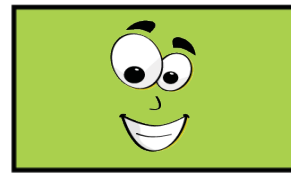
CIRCLE



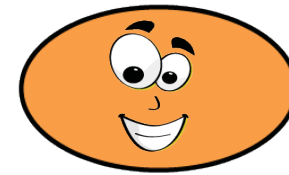
SQUARE



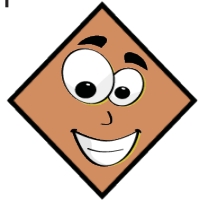
TRIANGLE



RECTANGLE



OVAL



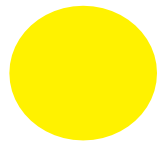
DIAMOND



RED



ORANGE



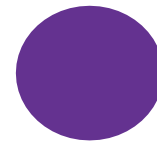
YELLOW



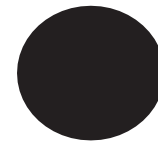
GREEN



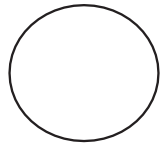
BLUE



PURPLE



BLACK



WHITE



Approaches to Learning

Some things you can do to help your child be ready to learn...

Help your child be confident when trying something new.

- Plan family trips to new places such as parks, libraries, markets and museums
- Give your child objects and let them decide how to use the objects
- Give your child objects that can be used in more than one way

Encourage your child to keep working on a task until it is finished or time to be done.

- Your child will develop perseverance
- Children who don't give up tend to be more successful students
- Do activities such as puzzles and encourage your child to keep trying when things get challenging with or without an adults help

Let your child make mistakes! It's okay for children to fail sometimes. Making a mistake can be an important learning experience. It teaches children to think of new ways of doing things.

Help your child talk about their successes and their challenges. Encourage your child to tell you about what they do best and what things are harder to do. Talk about what you are good at and what is harder for you to do as well.

Technology can be a great tool for learning, but does not replace necessary interactions with each other. Children need to learn to think and stay busy with their own thoughts. Managing boredom without toys or technology is an important life skill. Help your child learn emotion management when waiting by staying calm and distracting themselves with their imaginations.



Resources

90% of Brain Growth Happens Before Kindergarten

Learning begins the moment your child is born. From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than at any other time in life. Early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and life. The quality of a child's experiences (positive or negative) helps shape how their brain develops. The connections needed for many important, higher-level abilities like motivation, self-regulation, problem solving and communication are formed in the early years. It's much harder for these essential brain connections to be formed later in life. They're built through positive interactions with their parents and caregivers and by using their senses to interact with the world. A young child's daily experiences determine which brain connections develop and which will last for a lifetime.

A child's relationships with the adults in their life are the most important influences on their brain development. Loving relationships with responsive, dependable adults are essential to a child's healthy development. These relationships begin at home, with parents and family, but also include child care providers, teachers and other members of the community.

- Reference: firstthingsfirst.org



#FIRST THINGS FIRST



firstthingsfirst.org

Additional Resources for families:



cannonfallsschools.com



helpmegrowmn.org



zerotothree.org



cehdvision2020.umn.edu