

Making the Move to Kindergarten

A Guide for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Families



5 For 5

Five Ways to Prepare Five-Year-Olds (and Fours!) for Kindergarten

A Publication of *Building Bridges to Kindergarten*, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools/Child Care Resources Inc. Partnership for Kindergarten Transition



1 Protect your child's health — Be sure to schedule a physical examination and the necessary immunizations required for kindergarten. Set an early bedtime and serve well-balanced meals to provide the energy your child needs for a busy day at school.

2 Encourage independence (in small steps!) — Teach your child to get dressed, fasten buttons and zip, use the bathroom, wash hands, open containers (ex: milk or juice boxes/ketchup packets), and clear their place at the table. Children who can take care of some of their own needs will feel more comfortable at school. They'll also be ready to use their small muscles for drawing, writing, and cutting in kindergarten.

3 Make time to play — Children learn valuable social skills when they play with one another at home, in the neighborhood, at the park, and in pre-K or child care settings. They learn to communicate,

share space and materials, and solve problems — three skills they'll need in kindergarten.

4 Read — Sharing books with children helps you bond as a family, and also teaches important language and literacy skills. Choose a few books about kindergarten (see book list inside) and encourage your child to share his or her feelings about going to a new school. Show your child that you feel positive about the move to kindergarten, and your child will probably feel confident too.

5 Visit the new school — There is no substitute for the real thing! Plan to visit your child's new school before the big day arrives. Talk about what you see there, and practice some kindergarten routines (ex: carrying a lunch tray, waiting at the bus stop or walking a new way to school). CMS offers a Beginner's Day in early spring at each elementary school for children and families to visit. Don't miss it!



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Getting Ready for Kindergarten ... What FAMILIES Can Do

Visit the library. Get a library card, check out some books, and attend story time.

- Have your child help you write a grocery list. At the store, let your child read the list and find some of the items.

- Measure your child's height on the kitchen doorframe.

- Play ball together.

- Eat meals together at the table so that your child learns to sit for twenty minutes at mealtime.

- Make a sandwich together. Ask your child to cut it into triangles and share it with a friend, brother or sister.

- Lie in the grass and look at the clouds with your child. What shapes did you see? Or go out at night and look at the stars instead.

- Play rhyming games or point out rhyming words in books (hop/stop and red/bed).

- Help your child cut an old cereal box into 6-12 pieces to make a puzzle. Mix up the pieces and let your child have fun putting the puzzle back together again.

- Make cookies with your family and share them with a neighbor.

- Encourage your child to try painting in a new way. Instead of a paintbrush, use a plastic fork, a feather, a stick, or string.

- Help your child learn to say his or her full name, address, and phone number.



- Show your child some of his or her baby pictures and talk about how much he or she has grown!

- Play "The Opposite Game" with your child. When you say "up" your child says "down." Start with easy pairs (big/little and fast/slow) and try harder words too.

- Help your child draw a picture of your home. Count the doors and windows together and have your child write the numbers. Go outside and copy your house or apartment number too.

- Teach your child how to brush his or her teeth. Remind your child to brush two times every day.

- Have a teddy bear picnic (indoors or out). Eat lunch with your child and read a story to the bears.

- Encourage your child to pack his or her own bag when you go places.

- Mix 5 cups of water and 1 cup of dish-washing liquid. Go outside and blow bubbles together.

- Go for a walk and look at the trees. How are they the same? How are they different?

- Take a large paint-brush and a pail of water outside. Let your child "paint" dry surfaces with the water.

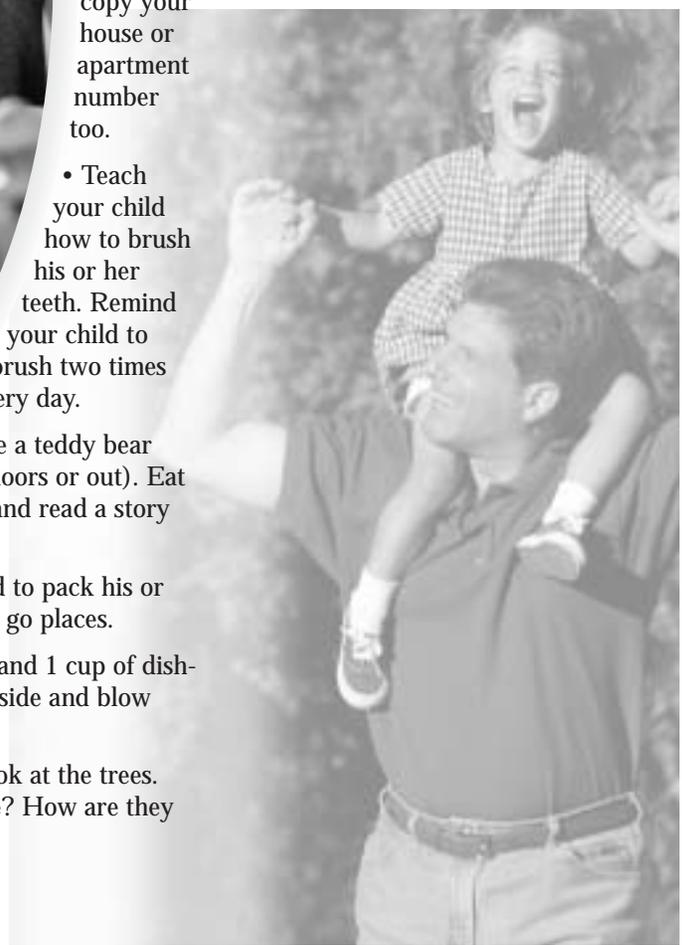
- Set up a sprinkler. Have your child count how many steps it takes to get to the other side.

- Encourage your child to set the table and to count enough plates, cups, and forks for everyone.

- Sort laundry with your child. Talk about different colors, light and dark as you sort. Later try folding the laundry too.

Adapted from Summer Family Learning Activities, Bright Beginnings Team, CMS.

Find more information at www.terrifictransitions.org. Click on Families and Parents, then Calendar of Activities for new monthly activities throughout the year.



When it's time for school

Parents and Families Might Feel ...

- Sadness (My child is growing up too fast!)
- Anxiety (Is my child ready? Will the teacher know my child?)
- Uncertainty (What is my role in this new school?)
- Excitement (My child is learning so much!)



Children Might Feel ...

- Sadness (I miss my old school. Why can't I stay home with you?)
- Anxiety (What will I do at school? Where is the bathroom?)
- Fear (Will I have a friend in my new class?)
- Excitement (I can't wait to go to school with the BIG kids!)

Rest assured — These feelings are normal. Children and their families typically make a smooth transition to school, but it takes time. If you or your child experience overwhelming feelings beyond the first month of school, call for help. Speak with someone at school or schedule a visit to observe your child in class.

Gearing Up!



- Kindergarten schedules generally do not include time for naps. If your child still takes a nap, shorten and gradually phase out naps during the summer before kindergarten to help your child adjust to this new schedule.

- Practice a new bedtime and wake up time before school begins to help prepare your child for the change in routine.
- If you plan to purchase school supplies, be sure to check with your child's school first (many schools provide lists).
- Make sure your child has a book bag large enough to hold all items that will be sent home.
- Help your child find a special place to keep the book bag and other things for school.

Find CMS Info on the Web at www.cms.k12.nc.us

New to CMS? Click on **Discover CMS** for ...

- Fast Facts, history of CMS, and general information
- School calendars
- Bell schedules (opening/closing times)
- Registration forms and instructions
- Telephone directory
- Parent involvement

Click on **Resources**, then **Parent Resources**, for ...

- Kindergarten Handbook
- Immunization requirements
- Tips for helping your child develop reading, writing, and science skills

Click on **Schools** for:

- Information related to your child's school (select an elementary school)

Need internet access?

Use the computers at your public library to access the internet **free of charge** with your library card! Don't have a card yet? Simply visit the library and bring your photo ID (ex: driver's license) along with proof of residence in Mecklenburg County (ex: utility bill). Cards are issued instantly, so you'll be able to get the information you need immediately.

children's books about going to school



Annabelle Swift, Kindergarten. By Amy Schwartz.

Billy and the Big New School. By Catherine and Laurence Anholt.

Clifford's First School Day. By Norman Bridwell.

Curious George Goes to School. By Margaret Rey.

First Day. By Dandi Daley Mackall.

First Day, Hooray. By Nancy Poydar.

Friends at School. By Rochelle Bunnett.

It's Hard to Be Five. By Jamie Lee Curtis.

Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come! By Nancy Carlson.

Miss Kindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten. By Joseph Slate.

My Kindergarten. By Rosemary Wells.

School Bus. By Donald Crews.

The Twelve Days of Kindergarten. By Deborah Lee Rose.

Welcome To Kindergarten. By Anne Rockwell.

When You Go to Kindergarten. By James Howe.

Will I Have a Friend? By Miriam Cohen.

Dear Families:

Please help CMS to introduce your children to their new kindergarten teachers. Fill in any or all of the boxes as you wish and bring this form to your child's kindergarten teacher at the start of the new school year. Thank you.

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

These things please me most about my child:

My child's favorite books and activities:

These are things my child does well:

Allergies (food, medical, insects) and Medical Conditions:

My child learns best when:

I would like to be involved in my child's new program in these ways:

I prefer to be contacted by my child's school in this way:

Please circle and fill in the number or address:

In person (at arrival, dismissal, or meeting)

Cell Phone at:

Home Phone at:

Work Phone at:

E-mail at:

I give permission for this information to be shared with the appropriate staff members at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. This information will be shared only with those staff members who need it to support my child in his/her development and learning. This information will not be shared with anyone else or for any other purpose.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Print Name of Parent/Guardian

Getting Ready for Kindergarten ...

What KIDS Can Do

Draw a picture or write a note and hide it under someone's pillow!

- Practice writing your first and last name. Use chalk, paint, markers, crayons, or pencils.
- Call a relative on the phone and talk to him or her.
- Count to ten. Then try counting backwards from ten to zero.
- Ask your family members for their shoes. Put them in order from smallest to largest.
- Practice taking your shoes off and putting them back on.



- Write on the sidewalk with chalk. Practice your numbers and letters.
- Stand on one foot. Count to five. Now try it on the other foot.
- Draw pictures of your favorite foods.

• Make a rock collection. Tell someone why you chose each one.

• Try walking backwards from the front door to the kitchen. Be careful!

• Count the number of jumping jacks you can do.

• Line up your family from tallest to shortest.

• Sweep your porch, stairs, sidewalk, or other outdoor area.

• Find things in your house that are shaped like squares, triangles, circles, and rectangles.

• Make a pattern with pieces of clothing, ex: sock-shoe-sock-shoe.

• Look at a cereal box. Read it. Find all the letters you know.

• Draw a picture of you and your family. Take it to your new teacher when school begins!



Did You Know?

Many schools have staggered entry for kindergarten, meaning that your child may attend school on some but not all days during the first week of school. Call your child's school for details so that you can make child care arrangements as needed.

Need Before- or After-School Care?

Help is here! Call Child Care Resources Inc.'s **Child Care Search** and talk to a parent counselor for **free referrals** to licensed, regulated, or legally exempt school-age child care programs.
In Mecklenburg (704) 348-2181

After School Enrichment Program

Call **(980) 343-5567** for information on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' After School Enrichment Program. Before school care is available at select locations.

Check out "Big Shot Saturdays"

in August, September, and October. **Free immunizations** are available (sponsored by The Junior League of Charlotte and The Mecklenburg County Health Department). For more information, visit the website at www.jlcharlotte.org.

Don't Miss These Special Events ...

- Open House (Winter, offered at all CMS schools)
- School Information Fair (January, at a central location in Charlotte)
- Beginner's Day (Spring, offered at all CMS elementary schools)
- Countdown to Kindergarten (August, offered at Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, Regional Branches)
- Back-to-School/Curriculum Night (September/October at your child's school)
- PTA Welcome Meetings (September/October at your child's school ... be sure to join!)



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