

# Stepping Into Kindergarten

A School Readiness Guide  
for Families

Fairfax County



Office for Children

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## Stepping Into Kindergarten!

If your child will be 5 years old by September 30, they will soon be starting kindergarten.

This guide will give you some ideas about what you can do during the year before your child enters kindergarten to assure they are ready to “Step into Kindergarten.”

The guide also includes steps you can take during this year so your child is properly registered for kindergarten.

Finally, it has information about school and community resources to help build your child’s kindergarten readiness skills.



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# You Are an Important Part of the Picture

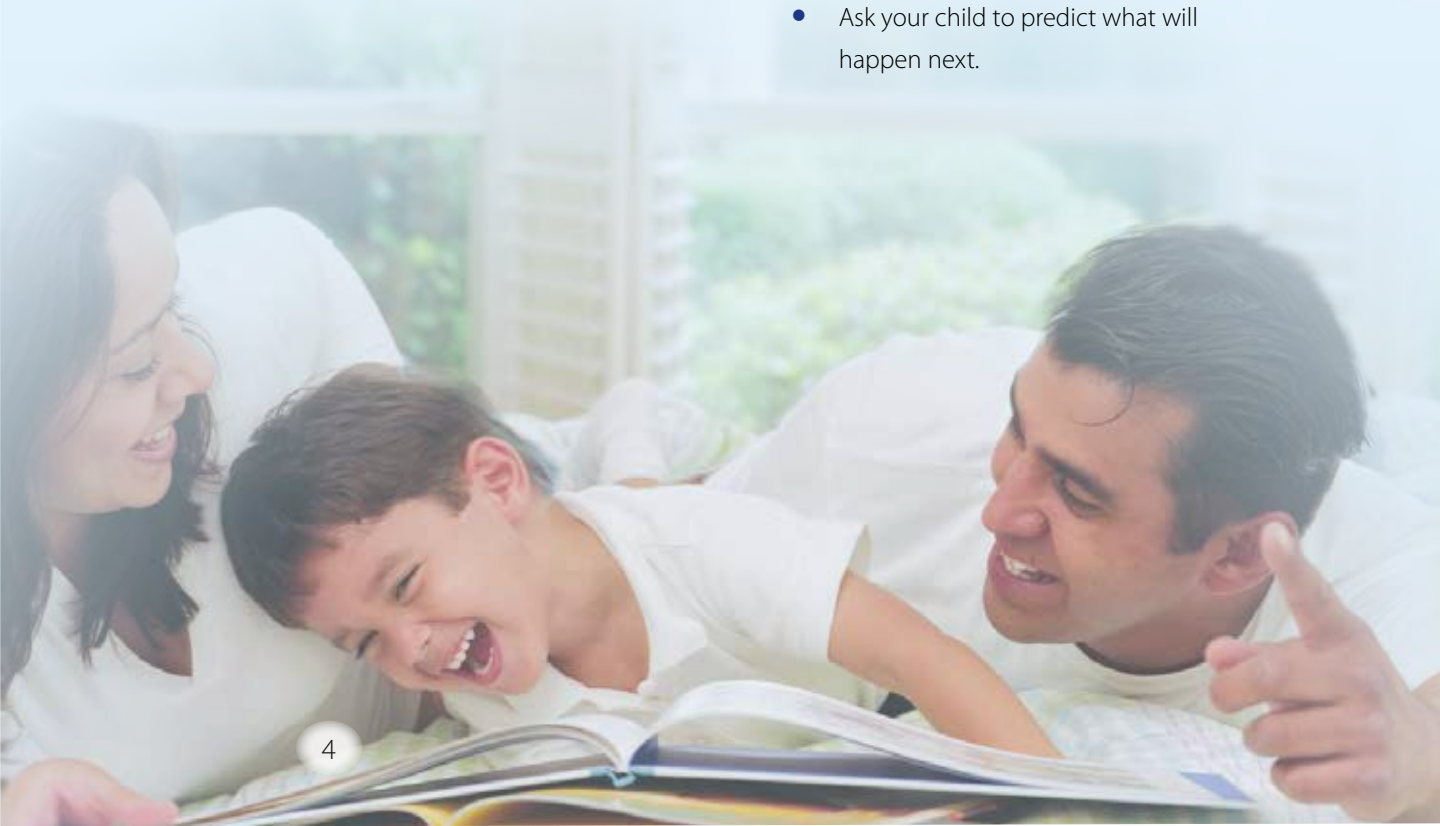
## Good Communication Begins at Home

In kindergarten, your child will be talking with others throughout the day. Your child will need to:

- Communicate their needs and wants.
- Describe different people, places, objects and events.
- Share something that happened during the day or the day before.
- Engage in cooperative play.

When you and your child talk in your home language, you are building communication skills.

- Talk with your child about what you are doing and what they are doing.
- Ask questions about what happened during a game or on a visit with a friend.
- Ask about what happened first, next and last.
- Ask your child to include details that describe objects and actions.
- Ask your child to follow simple directions.
- Ask your child to predict what will happen next.





## Routines Help Prepare Your Child to be Ready for Kindergarten

Having routines at home will help prepare your child to follow routines in kindergarten.

- Set a regular morning schedule (wake up, dress, eat, go to preschool or plan the day).
- Make sure breakfast is part of the morning routine.
- Have meals and snack times at about the same time.
- Schedule physical activities.
- Schedule when screen time will be allowed.
- Plan transitions from one activity to another.
- Set out supplies for the next day.
- Plan time for reading every day.
- Set a regular bedtime routine.



## Getting Along With Others

Getting along with others is a skill that makes the transition to kindergarten easier for children.

Children who can get along with others know how to:

- Spend time with other children and adults.
- Play cooperatively and take turns.
- Share toys.
- Solve problems with words.
- Respect people and property.
- Ask for help.
- Make friends.
- Talk about their feelings.
- Use words like please, thank you, excuse me, I'm sorry, I need help, I can try it.
- Follow simple directions.
- Separate from you and other family members.





# Building Healthy Bodies and Minds



## Sleep

Set a regular bedtime routine to ensure your child is getting enough sleep. Most young children need 10 to 13 hours of sleep. Your child will not have naptime in kindergarten.

## Exercise

Make regular physical activity a part of your family routine. Play games that encourage activities like running, climbing, throwing, jumping, kicking a ball, balancing on one foot, swinging on a swing.

## Good Nutrition

Have your child help you make healthy snacks and meals. Encourage your child to choose a new food to try each week. In kindergarten, your child can bring their own lunch from home or make their own food choices in the cafeteria.

## Screen Time

Talk about what they are seeing on the screens (computers, iPads, TV). Set a limit on screen time, especially before bed time.

## Emotional Development and Self-Regulation

Discuss and be consistent with rules and consequences. Help your child understand making mistakes is part of learning. Encourage them to keep trying even when it is hard. Encourage your child to find multiple solutions to a problem. Help them to plan, focus and remember.

# A Seasonal Calendar of School Readiness Experiences

If you have concerns about your child's development, call Fairfax County Public Early Childhood Identification and Services, 571-423-4121. They will provide information about interventions, workshops, screening and evaluations. These "Child Find" services are provided for children ages 20 months through five years.

## Some great books for fall:

*"A is for Autumn"*  
by Robert Maass

*"Leaf Man"*  
by Lois Ehlert

*"It's Fall!"*  
by Linda Glaser

*"Sixteen Runaway  
Pumpkins"*  
by Dianne Ochiltree

*"Dappled Apples"*  
by Jan Carr

*"Turkey Trouble"*  
by Wendi Silvano

## Throughout the Year

- Sing songs and tell and retell stories.
- Read books. Discuss what is happening.
- Look for the letters in your child's name.
- Help your child notice words that rhyme or start with the same sound.
- Work on puzzles.
- Play simple board games.
- Use markers, crayons and pencils to draw pictures.
- Practice using scissors.
- Play sorting and counting games.
- Count and use numbers.
- Encourage your child to use color, shape and size words when describing objects.
- Play physically active games.
- Play games where your child must stand or sit quietly.
- Visit the library regularly. Help your child choose books.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.

## Fall (September - November)

- Take family walks together to look for signs of fall.
- Search for squirrels burying nuts, geese flying overhead and leaves changing colors. Talk about the changes in the weather.
- Teach your child to put on and take off their coat and practice buttoning and/or zipping.



## Winter (December - February)

### Registration for Kindergarten

- Use the Fairfax County Public Schools Boundary Information System at <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary> to determine where your child will attend kindergarten.
- Visit that elementary school.
- Begin to gather the documents you need to register your child for kindergarten. These include proof of residency, birth certificate, and health and immunization records. Registration procedures and forms are available at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) or you can pick up a registration packet at any Fairfax County elementary school.
- Contact your local elementary school to find the dates for any kindergarten registration and kindergarten orientation events.
- Plan to attend a kindergarten readiness workshop in your community.
- Contact your early childhood education programs to see if a "Transition to Kindergarten" event is planned for families.
- If you will need before and after school care, contact Fairfax County School Age Child Care ([FairfaxCounty.gov](http://FairfaxCounty.gov) Search: SACC) or use the Office for Children's "Child Care Search" tool.

### Some great books for winter:

*"How to Build a Snow Bear"*  
by Eric Pinder

*"Over and Under the Snow"*  
by Kate Messner

*"The Snow Dancer"*  
by Addie K. Boswell

*"Snowballs"*  
by Lois Ehlert

*"The Snowy Day"*  
by Ezra Jack Keats

### Activities With Your Child

- Bundle up and spend some family time outdoors.
- Talk about the changes your child sees in the environment. Look for trees that have lost their leaves and ones that are still green. Look for berries and pine cones.
- Find time every day to share a book together. Share books with stories about winter. Talk with your child about favorite stories you have read.





## Spring (March - May)

### Registration for Kindergarten

- Arrange an appointment with your pediatrician or health clinic.
- Complete all registration paperwork and turn it in to your local elementary school.
- Attend kindergarten orientation programs that are scheduled at your neighborhood elementary school.
- Sign an exchange of information form to allow your early childhood program to share information with the elementary school your child will attend.
- "Like" or "Follow" the Facebook page of the school your child will be attending. Follow the school on Twitter.
- Register to receive Fairfax County Public Schools: News You Choose to get regular updates from the school. To subscribe, visit the FCPS Subscriber Preferences Page and provide an email address. Select TOPIC. Select ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. Select a school.

### Some great books for spring:

*"It's Spring!"*  
by Linda Glaser

*"UnderGROUND"*  
by Denise Fleming

*"In the Garden with Dr. Carver"*  
by Susan Grigsby

*"So Many Circles, So Many Squares"* by Tana Hoban

*"Rosie's Walk"*  
by Pat Hutchins

*"Planting a Rainbow"*  
by Lois Ehlert

### More Activities With Your Child

- Start talking with your child about kindergarten.
- Ask the librarian to recommend books about starting kindergarten.
- See if you can schedule a visit to the school with your child and visit a kindergarten room.
- Visit the school playground.
- See if someone will let your child see the inside of a bus.
- Visit places in your community like the fire or police station, the post office, or the farmers market.
- Make a grocery list with your child. Have them find those items at the store.



## Summer (June - August)

### Transition to Kindergarten

- Write a letter to the school introducing your child.
- Visit the school's website often and watch for information about "Back to School" events.
- Visit your child's elementary school throughout the summer.
- Plan play times with other children who will attend the same school.
- Choose the place at home where you will keep your child's kindergarten supplies, such as their backpack and library books.

### More Activities With Your Child

- Your child should know their full name and what it looks like in print. If they go by a nickname or other name, they need to also know their birth name.
- Have your child practice eating independently (open juice boxes etc.).
- Buy clothes that are easy to put on and take off.
- Review safety rules such as walk on the sidewalk and don't cross the street without a grown-up.

Some great books  
for summer:

*"Beetle Bop"*  
by Denise Fleming

*"The Kissing Hand"*  
by Audrey Penn

*"One, Two Grandma  
Loves You"*  
by Shelly Becker

*"Yoko Writes her Name"*  
by Rosemary Wells

*"Actual Size"*  
by Steve Jenkins

*"How Do Dinosaurs  
Go to School?"*  
by Jane Yolen

*"School Bus"*  
by Donald Crews

*"Countdown to  
Kindergarten"*  
by Alison McGhee



# Transitioning to Kindergarten

Every kindergarten class is different, but all kindergarten classes allow children to take part in whole group, small group and individual learning experiences throughout the day. To the right is a sample kindergarten schedule.

Children will have an easier transition to kindergarten if they are:

- Problem solvers.
- Comfortable in new environments.
- Decision makers.
- Curious.
- Risk takers.
- Good communicators.

| <i>Time<br/>(in minutes)</i> | <i>Part of Day</i>                      |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <i>10-15</i>                 | <i>Arrival/Breakfast/Networking</i>     |
| <i>20</i>                    | <i>Morning Meeting</i>                  |
| <i>25-30</i>                 | <i>Reading Workshop</i>                 |
| <i>45-50</i>                 | <i>Word Study and Literacy Stations</i> |
| <i>40-45</i>                 | <i>Writing Workshop</i>                 |
| <i>15</i>                    | <i>Recess</i>                           |
| <i>30</i>                    | <i>Lunch</i>                            |
| <i>10</i>                    | <i>Reflection/Processing Time</i>       |
| <i>55</i>                    | <i>Math Workshop</i>                    |
| <i>60</i>                    | <i>Specials</i>                         |
| <i>15</i>                    | <i>Recess</i>                           |
| <i>40</i>                    | <i>Science/Social Studies/Health</i>    |
| <i>25</i>                    | <i>Choice Time</i>                      |
| <i>10</i>                    | <i>Closing Circle/Dismissal</i>         |





# Connecting with Community Resources

## Fairfax County Public Libraries

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library)

Each library branch has a special section of children's books designed to build your child's imagination and early literacy skills. Up to 50 books can be borrowed for three weeks at a time. Books are available in several languages. Special activities and story times are offered throughout the year for preschool and school-age children. The monthly "Ready to Read" newsletter available on the library website provides great ideas for books to read to your child.

## Fairfax County Park Authority

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks)

Enjoyable classes for preschoolers are available in "Parktakes" magazine, found online or at your public library.

Fairfax County has numerous parks of varying sizes. Two parks that may be of special interest to families of young children are:

**Clemyjontri** is a two-acre playground divided into four outdoor "rooms." It is accessible to all children, including those with physical disabilities. It has a carousel and picnic pavilion.

6317 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101  
703-388-2807.

**Frying Pan Farm Park** includes a replica of a 1920's farm, a carousel, hayrides, country store and Visitor's Center. Children can see a variety of farm animals and old farm equipment. Picnic tables and a playground are available.

2709 West Ox Road, Herndon, VA 20171  
703-437-9101.

## Fairfax County Health Clinics

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/clinics](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/clinics)

### Immunizations

Documentation of immunization is required for children entering kindergarten. The Fairfax County Health Department offers required school immunizations for free at clinic locations.

Visit our website for a list of locations and required school immunizations.

### Dental

Some locations may offer dental services for children - an appointment is needed.

# Helpful Resources for Families

## Publications



### **Helping Your Child Love to Learn**

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OFC](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OFC)  
Search: "Helping Your Child Love to Learn"

Learn about early childhood development from birth to age 5. Discover activities families and educators can introduce to encourage growth in science, math, literacy, language, creative arts, social and emotional development, and health and physical development. Available in multiple languages.

### **Fairfax County Public Schools Parent Advocacy handbook: Getting Ready for Kindergarten**

[www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu)  
Search: "Getting Ready for Kindergarten"

As your child's first teacher, you help them get ready for kindergarten. Available in multiple languages.

## Web Pages

### **Fairfax County Public Schools Kindergarten Registration**

[www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration](http://www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration)

The kindergarten registration page has information to help parents to complete the 5-step process for student enrollment. FCPS webpages are available in multiple languages.

### **Fairfax County Public Schools Kindergarten**

[www.fcps.edu/academics/elementary-school-academics-k-6/kindergarten](http://www.fcps.edu/academics/elementary-school-academics-k-6/kindergarten)

This web page has information about the FCPS Kindergarten experience. For questions, call 703-204-6734 or send an e-mail to [RegistrationQuestions@fcps.edu](mailto:RegistrationQuestions@fcps.edu).

### **Helping Children Learn Newsletter (English and Spanish)**

[www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu)  
Search: "Helping Children Learn Newsletter"

The Helping Children Learn newsletter has ideas for families to help children be successful in school.

The Daily Learning Planner has a new idea every day that families can use to help children prepare for school.

## Videos

### A Closer Look at School Readiness

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjPK53Gfo9Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjPK53Gfo9Y)

A successful transition occurs when families, elementary school staff, and early childhood educators come together to support each individual child.



### Fairfax County Public Schools Welcomes You to Kindergarten

<https://youtu.be/YxFAwy3Uj2g>

This video provides an overview of the FCPS Kindergarten program.



## Apps



### Vroom

[www.vroom.org](http://www.vroom.org)

Vroom's brain building tips are a fun way for families and early educators to help children learn and develop the skills they will need in school and beyond. This free app is available on iOS and Android devices (computers, tablets, smartphones). The app is available in English and Spanish.



### CDC Milestone Tracker Mobile App

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Search: Milestone Tracker

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Milestone Tracker helps you track your child's progress. It includes suggestions to support children's development from 2 months to 5 years of age. This free app is available on iOS and Android devices and is available in English and Spanish.



# It's Time to Register for Kindergarten!

是註冊就讀幼稚園的時候了！  
如果您的孩子將於 9 月 30 日  
年滿 5 週歲，請聯絡您附近的  
小學，以了解相關入學資訊並  
取得註冊資料袋。

유치원에 등록하실 때입니다!  
귀하의 자녀가 9월 30일  
이전에 만 5세가 된다면 지금  
주변의 초등학교에 연락하여  
학교 정보 및 등록 서류에 대해  
알아보십시오.

Đã đến lúc để đăng ký cho lớp  
mẫu giáo!

Khi con em quý vị được 5 tuổi vào  
ngày 30 tháng 9, thì đây là thời  
điểm thích hợp để quý vị liên  
lạc với trường tiểu học gần  
khu vực của quý vị để biết  
thêm thông tin và hồ sơ  
ghi danh.

If your child will  
be 5 years old by  
September 30, now  
is the time to contact  
your neighborhood  
elementary school for  
information and the  
registration packet.

Ha llegado el momento de inscribirse  
para Kindergarten! Si su hijo va a tener  
5 años el 30 de setiembre próximo,  
ahora es el momento de ponerse en  
contacto con la escuela primaria de su  
vecindario para obtener información y  
el paquete de inscripción.

”زمان ثبت نام برای مهد کودک است!“  
اگر فرزند شما تا 30 سپتامبر، 5 ساله می شود، اکنون  
زمان آن است که با دبستان محل خود تماس بگیرید  
تا اطلاعات مورد نیاز و بسته ثبت نام را دریافت کنید.

”یہ کنڈرگارٹن میں اندراج کرانے کا وقت ہے!“  
اگر 30 ستمبر تک یا اس سے قبل آپ کے بچے  
کی عمر 5 سال ہو رہی ہے، تو وقت آگیا ہے کہ  
آپ اپنے علاقے کے اسکول سے رابطہ کریں اور  
معلومات اور داخلے کی تفصیلات طلب کریں

”لقد حان الوقت للتسجيل في رياض الأطفال“  
إذا كان طفلك سيبلغ عمر 5 سنوات بحلول  
30 سبتمبر، فقد حان الآن وقت الاتصال  
بالمدرسة الابتدائية القريبة للحصول على  
المزيد من المعلومات وحرمة  
التسجيل الخاصة بها.



**Find out how:**  
<http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary>







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English