



Get ready for Kindergarten!!

There are so many ways to make activities fun while still working on the skills needed to get ready for kindergarten. These skills help prepare your child for the following school year to fostering independence in; using class tools, movement, following classroom routines and self-care tasks. These foundational skills will give your child the confidence to participate successfully. Here are some easy ways you can practice skills over the next few months:

Develop shoulder strength and stability (foundation for fine motor skills):



Crab walks



Wheel barrow walks



Bear walks

- Work on vertical easel – magnets on fridge, tape paper to wall or vertical easel, purchase window writer markers (available at Wal-Mart) and let your child draw on the windows or mirrors.
- Draw, color or read book lying on tummy propped up on elbows

Develop Fine motor skills: coordination and muscle strength in the hands

- Play with Lego and other connector toys.
- Do crafts- braiding, beading, weaving, rainbow loom, small pegs and pegboards such as life brite are all great for developing fine motor skills
- Playing with play dough is a fun way to strengthen the muscles of the hand that will be used for writing – use a variety of tools (rolling pin, knife, scissors, cookie cutters etc.).
- Use spray bottles, squirters, and sponges to play at bathtime

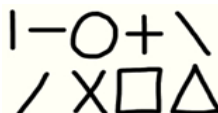
Develop the ability to use classroom tools like Markers and Scissors

- Practice holding the marker or crayon by pinching the pencil between the index finger and thumb.
- Try and get your child to use small finger movements when colouring instead of their whole arm
- Purchase a good pair of child-safe scissors and let your child practice snipping paper, straws or playdough. Have them hold the scissors with their thumb pointing up.
- Give him/her old magazines or newspapers to cut up, or allow him/her to make a collage of the things s/he likes by cutting them from magazines and gluing them to a piece of paper.



Develop the ability to do Pre-writing skills

- Help your child practice drawing shapes
- Write letters and draw shapes in shaving cream in the bathtub, salt or sugar in a cake pan or in finger paint to make practicing more fun and multisensory.
- Have your child practice tracing CAPITAL letters in their name. These letters are easier to learn than lower case. Have the child start letters at the top of the line.





Develop the ability to do self-care skills independently

- Encourage your child to put on their coat and zip it up independently (they might need help to engage the zipper at the bottom initially).
- Encourage your child to remove and put on their shoes independently
- Practice doing zippers and buttons on dolls and toys.
- Have your child practice opening Tupperware containers or small packages – you can provide a pair of scissors to help open package

Just PLAY! After a long year of being scheduled kids should be encouraged to engage in unstructured play. This is a child-led activity that fosters improvisation and creativity. Allowing them to explore gives them freedom and control, while building confidence and resilience. Games that involve cards, dice or other small pieces work on dexterity. Playing with a friend incorporates important social skills like turn taking, empathy, and cooperation.

Nicole MacLean BSc OT (c)
Occupational Therapist
njmaclean@cbe.ab.ca