

Fall Edition

# Pathways to Kindergarten

## STEPS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

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*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*  
(Chinese proverb)



# SEPTEMBER

## Steps towards learning at home!

*"The greatest poem ever known is one all poets have outgrown:  
The poetry, innate, untold, of being only four years old."* –Christopher Morley

### There's no place like home!

Think of your home as your child's classroom. Every room has wonderful opportunities for learning. All you need to do is combine familiar materials with play and learning will occur!

**Kitchen:** Sort pots and pans into different sizes. Fill them with water to find out which holds more. Add a wooden spoon to make music.

**Living Room:** Talk about the history of your family from the family pictures or use the furniture to learn prepositions by putting things under, over, on top or, beside.

**Bedroom:** Bedtime is a way to talk about what happened yesterday, today and what will happen tomorrow. Help your child become independent by allowing him to pick out his own clothes and get dressed by himself.



### "I'm Ready for School" Book

*Ask your child to draw a self-portrait. Ask "How do you look now. How do you think you'll look different on your first day of kindergarten?"*

Save the pages of "I'm Ready for School" each month. In August you can put them together into a book that marks the fun you and your child had together preparing for kindergarten.

Be sure to date each page. Write the question at the top and the way your child answers the question or tells you about the picture at the bottom. It will make a great story!

**The Mailbox:** Talk about the shape and size of different envelopes that come in the mail. Practice cutting out coupons and putting them in piles according to the type.

### BOOKS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

*Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come*, Nancy Carlson

*The Listening Walk*, Paul Showers

*The Napping House*, Audrey Woods

*Love You Forever*, Robert Munsch

*Thunder Cake*, Patricia Polacco

*Mother Goose Numbers on the Loose*,  
Leo and Diane Dillon



# ACTIVITY STEPPING STONES

## START

 Make a noisemaker by putting rice inside a small plastic container. Seal it and shake, shake, shake. Or, make a drum by covering the outside of an oatmeal container with a decorated piece of paper. Pound on the lid to make a fun sound.

 Play "WHAT IF." "What if we forgot to set the alarm and we had slept until noon today. What would have happened?" Or "What if the sky was pink and the sun was blue?" "What if you found a dollar when we were taking a walk today?"

 As you are helping your child get dressed or undressed, ask him or her to tap different body parts. "Tap your nose. Tap your leg. Tap your head." You can start out slowly, then get faster to make the game even more fun.

 Take some paper and crayons outside to do a tree rubbing. Lay the paper against a tree trunk and rub the flat side of a crayon back and forth across the paper. Watch the shape of the bark appear. Try the same thing with a leaf or a twig.

 Make your own growth chart that marks how tall your child is at the beginning of the year. Post it inside a closet door or somewhere where you can make new markings all year long as you measure your child's growth so she can see how she sprouts up!

 Play a rhyming game with your child while you are getting him or her dressed. Say words that sound alike even if they are nonsense words "Jane-Lane; Jane-Tane; Jane-Skane. Give your child time to think of a rhyme. Next, use your name or other family members' names.

 Count the stairs together as you walk up or down them. Then pause while you count and wait for your child to fill in the number. Make it even harder. Skip a number. Ask your child to notice which number you left out. One, Two, Three...Five.

 Gather scrap paper or old newspapers and give them to your child to practice tearing. Tell your child to tear them into long or short strips. This work will help build the muscles for writing.

 Participate in your public library's story hour.

 "Can you hear me?" Go in a different room from your child and make a noise. Ask your child to guess which room you're in. Move around from room to room as the child guesses. Then, switch and ask your child to make the noise and you guess which room she's in.

 Make a map while you're taking a walk. Draw the street and the houses on the street. Note the stop sign, the trees, where there's an intersection, etc.

 Hide a small object inside a sock. Ask your child to feel through the sock and guess what it might be. Then, have her reach inside and pull it out to find out if she was right.

 Ask your child to help you do some common chores like making the beds or folding the laundry. These things help him to learn what it's like to help out in a family.

 Describe someone in your family and see if your child can guess who it may be. "I am thinking of someone who is tall with dark hair. She lives in our house and likes to read. Who is she?"

 Play music and practice walking on tippy toes. Walk fast, then walk slowly. Next, practice walking on your heels. What other ways can you walk to the music?

 Take a walk outside together. As you get fresh air, ask your child to walk, then hop, then run for the exercise.

## FINISH

### Joke of the Month

*Where do cows go on Saturday nights?*

*To the MOOO-vies!*



 Approaches to Learning

 Motor

 Creativity

 Science

 Language and Literacy

 Social Emotional

 Math

 Social Studies

# OCTOBER

## Steps towards learning all day long!

*"Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children."*

– Walt Disney

### Turn those hum-drum routines into fun learning times!

- While you're helping your child get dressed, you can count the buttons or talk about the order that you put on your clothes (math); practice fastening clothes like zipping, buttoning or shoe tying (motor); or think about the things you're going to do that day (approaches to learning).
- During lunch or dinner, you can serve a new food or ask for help cleaning up (social-emotional); talk about where milk comes from or how vegetables grow (social studies); and talk about the events of the day (language and literacy).
- As your child soaks in the bath, practice pouring and emptying bottles or cups (motor); see which things float or sink (science) and talk about why it's important to be clean (social-emotional and language and literacy).

### "I'm Ready for School" Book

Trace your child's hand. Ask your child to look at his or her hand and to draw the markings and parts of the hand onto the tracing. Ask "What kinds of things can you do with your hands?"

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### BOOKS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

*Elizabeth's School*,  
Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen  
*Goodnight Gorilla*, Peggy Rathmann  
*How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night*, Jane Yolen

*The Colors of Us*, Karen Katz  
*Mouse Count*, Ellen Stoll Walsh  
*Good Night Moon*, Margaret Wise Brown  
*Max's ABC*, Rosemary Wells



# ACTIVITY STEPPING STONES

## START

 Make number cards by writing the numbers 1 thru 5 on separate pieces of paper. Put some Cheerios™ in a bowl. Help your child count out the correct number of Cheerios™ and put them on each numbered paper. As your child learns to count to 5, add more numbers until you reach 10.

 Practice the outside rules that keep you safe. Take a walk together and practice stopping at the corner, waiting for the light to turn green and looking both ways before crossing the street.

 Do a taste test to decide if you like toast better with jelly or butter. Or, decide which kind of jelly you like better on toast - grape jelly or strawberry jelly. Talk about why you like one flavor better than the other.

 Play "I Spy." Give clues about something you see in the room. Ask your child to guess. "I spy something that is red and round." Give more clues until she figures it out. "It has stars on it" Still no guess? "You use it to play catch." Ask your child to give you clues for something you can guess.

 Hold up a round object and ask your child to find something else in the room that is also round. Name the shape first. "This is round like a ball or the sun. Can you find something else in this room that is round?" Do the same with other shapes like squares and rectangles.

## Joke of the Month

**Knock Knock.**  
**Who's there?**  
**Tank!**  
**Tank who?**  
**You're welcome!**



 Practice walking on a pretend balance beam or a tight rope. Put a piece of string or yarn on the floor. Or, go outside and mark a line with a piece of chalk. Show your child how to put his or her arms out to the side and walk toe-heel, toe-heel across the line or string.

 Play listening games like Simon Says, but use the child's or your name. "Mommy says, stand still." Jimmy says, pat your tummy."

 Take a walk around your neighborhood and listen for sounds. How many different ones can you hear? Can you identify what they are?

 Play store. Gather a few food containers from your cupboard and pretend to go shopping with your child. Ask your child how much they cost, pretend to pay at the check-out, decide what to cook with them, etc.

 Put cotton balls into an unbreakable bowl. Give your child a clothespin and ask him or her to pick up the cotton balls, one at a time, with the clothespin and put them into a second bowl.

 Split the stalk of celery with a knife. Fill a small glass with water add a few drops of food coloring. Put the celery stalk in the water and watch what happens! The color should shoot all the way up the stalk!

 Look for letters in your child's name in the newspaper, magazines, or in mail. Give your child a pencil and ask him to circle any letters that look like ones that are in his name.

 Tell your child stories about your childhood. As you prepare him for bed, sit him on your lap and talk about the way you used to get ready for bed or other familiar routines you did as a child.

 Make a sock puppet from an unmatched sock. Put your hand in the sock so your thumb and fingers work like a mouth. Using markers, draw a face. Glue on yarn hair or scraps of felt to make clothing. Use it to tell a story.

 Talk about an evacuation plan and how you'd leave the house if there was a fire. Practice stop, drop, and roll.

 Set up a family facebook page. Talk about the information that will be listed on the page that will identify each of you.

## FINISH

 Approaches to Learning	 Motor
 Creativity	 Science
 Language and Literacy	 Social Emotional
 Math	 Social Studies

# NOVEMBER

## Steps towards eating right!

*“There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.” –Graham Greene*

### Healthy habits build healthy children!

#### Set an example for your children by:

- Serving fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- Limiting the number of treats you serve.
- Involving your child in meal-planning.
- Shopping for food with your child.
- Eating together as a family.
- Eating reasonably sized portions.
- Starting the day with breakfast.
- Limiting sugary drinks.
- Starting a garden.



### “I’m Ready for School” Book

*Ask your child to draw a picture of his or her favorite foods. Ask “What foods keep you healthy?”*

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### BOOKS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

*Chrysanthemum*, Kevin Henkes  
*Eating the Alphabet*, Lois Ehlert  
*Gregory, The Terrible Eater*, Mitchell Sharmat  
*Bread, Bread, Bread*, Ann Morrow

*Jamberry*, Bruce Degen  
*Good Enough To Eat*, Lizzy Rockwell  
*Aunt Flossie’s Hats*, Elizabeth F. Howard

# ACTIVITY STEPPING STONES

## START

 Talk about a commercial you see during a TV show you are watching together. Does the commercial seem real? Could it really happen? Talk about the product being advertised. Would your family really need it?

 Practice jumping over hurdles. Space 3 small boxes or non-breakable objects a few feet apart on the floor. Ask your child to jump over the first, then the second and then the third box.

 Talk about where foods like milk or juice come from. Explain how they don't start from the store. Milk comes from cows and juice comes from fruit. Help your child look up more information on the internet.

 Fill up the bathtub or sink with water and gather small objects to find out if they will sink or float. Look for a paper clip, pencil, bar of soap, stone, spoon, penny, cotton ball, and piece of paper. Ask your child to guess whether they will sink or float. Then ask her to drop each one into the water to find out.

 Make sewing cards by punching holes around an old greeting card. Tie the end of yarn to the first hole and tape the other end of the yarn to make a "needle point." Show the child how to sew in and out of the holes.

 Before you turn the page of a picture book, guess what might happen next. Or before you start to read, look at the pictures and guess what the words might say. Then, read on and find out if you were right!

## Joke of the Month

*What did the hammer say to the piece of wood?*

*We nailed that one!*



 Make a collage by gluing scraps of tissue paper, wrapping paper, newspaper and old greeting cards onto a larger piece of paper. What does it look like?

 Make a name sign together for your child. Talk about the letters in his or her name. Ask your child to trace over the letters or to color them to make designs or characters. Decide where you should hang it.

 Gather 6-8 small objects. Show them to your child before you put them in a bag – comb, pencil, small block, paper clip, spoon, etc. Ask your child to put his hand into the bag and touch one of the objects. BUT, before he takes it out, guess what it is by feeling the shape.

 Make a pattern on a blank paper. A red dot, a blue dot, a red dot, a blue dot. Give your child markers or crayons asking to draw the same thing under yours. Then ask what comes next in the pattern.

 Describe a situation and ask how your child how he would feel. "How would you feel if you dropped a dish and it broke?" "How do you feel when you're wearing your favorite shirt?"

 Dance to the music! Turn on your favorite tunes and dance to the way the music makes you feel. Listen to the different beats, sounds and instruments.

 Work on an experiment together to find out if talking to plants helps them grow. Measure the height of two plants. Talk to one each day and not the other. Measure them every few days to find out if the one you talked to grows more than the other.

 Talk about what things are allowed and never allowed in your house. Make a chart that describes these rules. Ask your child to help illustrate the chart. Include things like "Walk in the house." "Use a quiet voice."

 Lay out 5 pennies in a row. Ask your child to lay out the same number of pennies under yours. Do the same thing with different numbers of pennies.

 Make a daily schedule for your child to follow and post it. Include the time to wake up and go to bed, the time for meals and when to leave for school. Use pictures and words to show each part of the day. Then, look at it each day as you go about your routines.

## FINISH

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# FALL ACTIVITIES

## Recipes

### MARSHMALLOW SPIDERS

Melt a cup of chocolate chips and 1 teaspoon of butter in a glass bowl in the microwave until the chocolate is melted. Line a cookie sheet with waxed paper and spray with non-stick cooking spray. Stick 4 chow mein noodles in each side of a large marshmallow (8 altogether) to make the legs of a spider. Dip the marshmallow top into the chocolate mixture, then lay on the wax paper, chocolate side up to cool. Makes about 24.



### APPLE TURKEYS

Thread a large marshmallow on a toothpick and put into the side of an apple to make a turkey's head. Thread small marshmallows onto a toothpick, then stick the toothpick into the backside of the apple to make a tail feather. Repeat, making as many tail feathers as desired. (Gum drops make colorful, but not as healthy, feathers).



## Arts & Crafts

### LEAF COLLAGES

Gather different colors of fallen, dried out leaves and put them in a brown paper lunch bag or a plastic sandwich bag. Show your child how to use his/her hands to crumple the leaves. Put glue onto a plain piece of paper and shake the broken leaf pieces onto the glue to make a leafy design. Allow it to dry and then hang for a beautiful autumn decoration.



### ROASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS

Save the pumpkin seeds you collect after you've hollowed out your pumpkin for Halloween. Wash them really well and allow them to dry overnight. Mix 1 teaspoon of Worcestershire, 1 tablespoon of cooking oil and 1 teaspoon of salt together. Drizzle over the pumpkin seeds and stir well, coating all of the pumpkin seeds. Place them on a cookie sheet in an even layer and bake in the oven at 250 degrees for about one hour or until they are browned, stirring occasionally.



### CARAMEL APPLES

Wash 4 apples and remove the stems. Stick a popsicle stick into each of the stems' openings. Put the apples into the freezer for about 5-10 minutes to chill. (This step is really important). Spray waxed paper with non-stick cooking spray and lay on the table. Unwrap a 10-ounce bag of caramels and put them and 2 tablespoons of milk into a microwaveable glass bowl. Microwave for about 2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute, until the caramels are melted. Let stand for 1 minute while you remove the apples from the freezer. Dip the apple into the caramel mixture, allowing the excess to drip off. Roll in sprinkles if desired. Put onto the wax paper to cool. Then, put in the freezer for about 20 minutes to finish cooling.



### SPIDER WEB PAINTING

Mix water into white school glue to thin it into the consistency of paint. Lay down a dark sheet of paper (black) on a disposable pie pan or tray with sides. Pour a little bit of the glue mixture onto the dark paper. Put 1-2 marbles into the tray and encourage your child to move the tray back and forth, watching the marbles roll to make a painted spider web. Remove the painted web and hang to dry.



### TISSUE GHOSTS

Spread out a plain white facial tissue on the table. Ask your child to lay a few cotton balls in the center of the tissue. Then bring the corners of the tissue together and tie a string or twist-tie around the cotton balls to make a head. You've got a ghost. Use a marker or crayon to make eyes on the head.



## Reading with your child... BOOKS FOR THE FALL SEASON

*The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree*

Gail Gibbons

*Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf*

Lois Ehlert

*Pumpkin, Pumpkin*

Jeanne Titherington

*Apples and Pumpkins*

Anne Rockwell

*Ruby's Falling Leaves*

Rosemary Wells

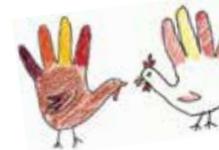
*10 Fat Turkeys*

Tony Johnston



### HAND TURKEYS

Help your child to turn his hand sideways so the thumb is pointing up and the fingers are pointing to the side. Trace around the hand, starting at the wrist and drawing in and out of each of the fingers. Ask him to remove his hand and close off both sides of the wrist to make the turkey's body. The thumb is the head and the fingers are the tail feathers. Ask your child to decorate it.



### LEAF STAINED GLASS

Gather autumn leaves of different colors and types. Lay them flat in between 2 pieces of wax paper. Use a cool iron to press the 2 pieces together. Cut into a shape, punch hole in the shape and thread yarn through the top and hang in a window.

