

Spring Edition



# Pathways to Kindergarten

STEPS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS



United Way  
of South Hampton Roads



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



# MARCH

## Steps towards becoming independent!

*"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you."*

—B.B. King

Children who enter kindergarten will feel confident when they have basic skills that help them to be independent. They adjust to new schedules and expectations when they can do things for themselves. Kindergarten children should know how to:

- Use the bathroom and wash their hands.
- Put on most of their clothing items by themselves (zipper, snaps, buttons).
- Take off a coat and hang it on a hook.
- Tell you their first and last name and their age.
- Blow their noses and cover their mouths when they cough.
- Pour juice or milk into a cup.
- Eat neatly.
- Put a straw into a juice box.
- Follow basic instructions.

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

Ask your child to draw what he or she can do without help. Ask, "What do you like to do with others?"



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!



### BOOKS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

*My Name is Yoon*, Helen Recorvits  
*Leo the Late Bloomer*, Robert Kraus  
*Lilly's Purple Purse*, Kevin Henkes  
*Amazing Grace*, Mary Hoffman

*Llama Llama Misses Mama*, Anna Dewdney  
*Corduroy*, Don Freeman  
*Lyle Lyle Crocodile*, Bernard Waber

# ACTIVITY STEPPING STONES

## START



Make paper cup telephones by poking a small hole in the bottom of two paper cups. Put a long piece (6 feet) of string or yarn through one hole and knot it. Put the other end through the 2nd paper cup and knot. Give one cup to your child to talk through while you hold the other cup to your ear.

Read one of your child's favorite books one time. Then, read it a second time but leave out words on each page. See if your child notices which words you've left out.

Line up non-breakable glasses of different sizes. Talk about which one is tall, taller, tallest. Then, talk about which one is small, smaller, smallest. Ask your child to line them up from smallest to tallest.

## ACTIVITIES

Go on a treasure hunt. Hide a favorite object under the sofa or under the bed when your child isn't looking. Give clues to help him find it. Make the clues more detailed each time to make it easier to discover. "It's somewhere in your room. It's hiding under something. It's under something big. It's under something big that you sleep on."

Think of people and jobs that keep us safe such as firefighters and police officers. Name them and talk about what they do to keep us safe. Look for pictures of them on the internet. Notice the clothes or uniforms they wear.

### Joke of the Month

*Why did the banana go to the doctor?*

*Because it wasn't peeling well!*



Talk about the different names in your family. Talk about your last name and your child's last name. Are they the same or different? What other names do your grandparents or aunts and uncles have?

Set up a recycling center in your house. Help your child collect cans, bottles or newspapers. Then, investigate if there is a recycling center where they may be taken for a rebate.

Hop like a bunny. Hop on two feet. Next, try to hop on one foot. Count how many hops it takes to get across the room. Tell your child to hop 5 times. Next, hop 3 times.

Gather three or four pictures of your child at different ages. Talk about each one, then ask your child to put them in order by age. Do the same with pictures of you or other family members.

Give your child jars or containers to practice screwing and unscrewing or opening and shutting. This practice helps build the muscles he or she will need for writing.

Make a wind-sock. Use an old piece of fabric or tissue paper and attach it to a cardboard tube. Take it outside on a windy day and watch it blow in the wind. Talk about the wind and why it makes the windsock move. Research this on the internet.

Use your body to make numbers and shapes. Can you turn your body into a number one, what about a number four? Can you roll your body into a ball to make a zero?

Show your child how to practice his or her name on your computer or lap-top. Mark the letters on the keyboard with a dot (use tape or something that will come off later on). Print out the practice words.

Try a new game on your smart phone or computer. Read the instructions together and talk about how to play it.

Stand in the middle of the kitchen. Ask your child how many steps she thinks it will take to get to the other side. Then, ask her to walk it and count together. Ask her how many of your steps it takes to get to the other side and whether it will take more or less than her steps. Walk it together to find out.

An empty egg carton can be used for counting. With a pen or marker, put a number in the bottom of each egg cup. Ask your child to put in the correct number of pennies, cheerios, or macaroni noodles.

## FINISH

Approaches to Learning

Motor

Creativity

Science

Language and Literacy

Social Emotional

Math

Social Studies

# APRIL

# Steps towards learning about the world through science!

*"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents."*

—Emilie Buchwald

You and your child can be scientists together. Curiosity and interest in learning come from these easy activities:

- Help children to be curious about what they see or do. "I wonder how many pennies there are in this pile?" or "I wonder which coins are different?"
- Do simple experiments like finding out how long it will take for ice to melt or measuring much rain fell the night before.
- Point out things in your surroundings when you are driving or taking a walk. "Look at that new building that's going up." "The grass is getting green; spring is on its way."
- Talk about the way things work. Talk about making toast, for example, "When you put the bread in the slot and push the button on the right, the coils will heat up to toast the bread. When it's ready it will pop up. We can set the toaster for how dark we like it, a lot or a little, with this button."

## 'I'm Ready for School' Book

Ask your child to draw something that grows like a flower or tree. Ask, "what do plants need to grow?"

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!

## BOOKS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

*The Kissing Hand*, Audrey Penn

*What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* Steve Jenkins

*It Looked Like Spilt Milk*, Charles G. Shaw

*Inside Mouse, Outside Mouse*, Lindsay Barrett George

*Swimmy*, Leo Lionni

*My Five Senses*, Aliki

*Caps for Sale*, Esphyr Slobodkina

*Bats in the Library*, Brian Lies



# ACTIVITY STEPPING STONES

## START



Talk about the people in your family - the ones that live with you and ones that don't. Talk about relatives that might live in a different state. Draw them on a tree to show your child how you are all related to each other.

Play puddle jumping. After a rain, put on boots, old shoes that are okay to get wet or go bare foot. Together, jump in and out of puddles. See how much of a splash you can make. Can you jump over the puddle? Try the same thing with imaginary puddles inside by making pretend paper puddles.

Create napkin tie dye art. Put a few drops of different food coloring in small containers of water. Fold a paper napkin or coffee filter a few times. Then, dip the ends in the different colors of water. Unfold and let dry.



Make an "I Can Do It" book. Give your child some paper and ask him to draw a picture of a game he likes to play. Ask him about his picture when he's finished and write down what he says at the top or bottom. Give him more paper and ask for drawings that show him eating, reading, and doing other favorite things. Put the pictures together into a book that shows just how many things your child can do!



Take a "senses" walk outside together. Ask your child, "What do you hear? What can you see? What can you touch?"



Practice patterns. Lay out a blue sock, another blue sock, then a white one in a row on the floor. Give your child a pile of socks with the same colors and ask him or her to make a pattern just like the one you made. Make different patterns to copy.



Play a rhyme walk through the house. Look at objects and together think of words that rhyme. They can be nonsense words or real words. Sofa-lofa; chair-bear; book-took, cup-hup.

## Joke of the Month

**Why is a pea  
small and  
green?**

**Because if  
it was large  
and red it  
would be a tomato!**



Plant a seed and watch it grow. Talk about the things that are needed to help it grow - sunlight, water and soil.



Help your child sign up for a library card. Talk about how the card works to let you borrow a book. Choose a day each week as "library day" to visit and find a new book to borrow.



Pick out a favorite toy to accompany you and your child on outings. Take pictures of the toy, for example, at the store, school, doctor's office. When you return home, write a story about the toy and your child.



Help your child count out crackers or pretzels by telling her to put one on each corner of a napkin and one in the middle. Then, count them together. It makes 5. Add one or take one away and count again.



Help your child send an email to a friend or a family member. Decide what information she'd like to share and then show the steps it takes to send a letter through email.



Give your child a long piece of yarn or string. Ask her to hold on tight and not let go while you try to pull it out from her fingers. Switch. You hold the string while she tries to pull it from your fingers.



Give your child an empty paper towel roll. Think of all the ways it can be used and try them out. Can it be a telescope, a baton, a rolling pin? What else?



Help your child learn to use your smart phone or digital camera to take pictures. Show her how to take pictures from far away or close up. Download them to your computer and decide which ones to keep or delete.



Make a calendar to keep track of the number of sunny and rainy days. Add them up at the end of the month to discover whether there were more dry or wet days. Look up, online, what the average monthly rainfall is in your area. Do you think you were above or below the average?

## FINISH

Approaches to Learning

Motor

Creativity

Science

Language and Literacy

Social Emotional

Math

Social Studies

# MAY

## Steps towards staying safe!

*"I believe that every person is born with talent."*

—Maya Angelou

Help young children learn how to protect themselves. Help them learn some basic skills to keep them safe:

- Help your child to say, "I know..."
  - my first and last name,
  - the first and last names of the important adults in my life,
  - my address and phone number".
- Talk to your child about checking with trusted adults before accepting treats, toys or rides from a stranger.
- Help your child understand the "buddy system" by always playing outside with another friend.
- Name the safe adults your child can talk to if he or she is upset or afraid about something.
  - Show your child how to use the phone in an emergency and which adults to call.

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

Ask your child to draw a person who makes them feel safe. Ask, "What makes you feel safe?"



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!



### BOOKS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

*Amanda Pig, Schoolgirl, Jean Van Leeuwen  
We're Making Breakfast for Mother, Shirley Neitzel  
I Can Be Safe, Pat Thomas  
No David, David Shannon*

*Sam and Gram and the First Day of School, Dianne Blomberg, Ph.D.  
The Flower Garden, Eve Bunting  
I Stink, Kate and Jim McMullan*

# ACTIVITY STEPPING STONES

## START



Explain that the opposite word means something that is different from the word you're mentioning. Give examples - the opposite of "off" is "on" or "up" is "down." Give your child other words. Together, name the opposites. In-out, boy-girl, happy-sad, yes-no, front-back, top-bottom, over-under.

Play a game with simple rules. Discuss the rules before you play and make sure you follow them. Talk about who will go first.

Play a new song or kind of music and dance, dance, dance. Wave a scarf, cloth napkin, or washcloth in the air in time to the music. For extra fun, turn off the music and say, "Freeze!" Then, turn it back on and dance again.

Make thumbprints together. Press your child's thumb into a stamp pad or brush a very thin amount of paint onto his thumb, then press it onto the paper to make a print. Let it dry and look at the lines and markings in the print. Do the same with yours and note the differences since no two thumbprints are the same. Decorate them into animal shapes.

Talk about your address and how it identifies where you live. Go outside and look at the way it is marked on your home. Practice saying your address. If you have an email address, talk about different addresses and the different kinds of mail that come to you.

Do a sun experiment. On a sunny day, take a dark piece of paper outside. Put a leaf or rock on top of it and let it sit. Go back several hours later, pick up the leaf or rock and find out if the sun made a picture or a print.

Have a taste test. Gather different types of foods with different flavors. As you and your child taste them together, describe them. Make a chart, chocolate - sweet; lemon - sour; pretzel - salty.

As the weather gets warmer, take your artwork outside. Use big pieces of sidewalk chalk to draw on the sidewalk or driveway.

Learn to play a new game your smartphone or iPad. Play together while you are waiting, for example, dinner to cook or at the doctor's office.

Go on a color walk by matching the color of your child's shirt or pants. "Today, you're wearing a blue shirt. Let's find other things in the house (or outside) that are blue." Make a list of all the things you find. Try a different color.

Take a tour of the public library. Discover a new section of the library. Then find the children's book section. Pick out a new book and read together on a comfy chair.

Give your child one cracker and tell him that you need enough to feed two people. How will he do that? Then, give him two crackers and ask if he could feed four people with that.

## Joke of the Month

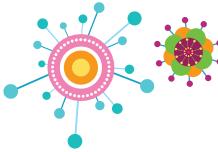
*What did one tomato say to the other?  
You go on ahead and I'll ketchup!*



## FINISH

Approaches to Learning	Motor
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# SPRING ACTIVITIES



## Recipes

### MINI BIRD NESTS

5 oz. crunchy chow mein noodles  
1 cup chocolate chips or butterscotch chips  
1 tsp. vegetable shortening  
candy eggs or jelly beans



Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil or waxed paper. Melt the chocolate or butterscotch chips and shortening together in the microwave, stirring until melted. Allow to cool slightly, but do not let it set up. Stir in the chow mein noodles until evenly coated. Drop the coated noodles onto the baking sheet with a large spoon. Form into a circle and use your fingers to sculpt the noodles into a round shape. Form an indentation in the middle to make the nest. Place the eggs or jelly beans in the nest while chocolate is still wet. Refrigerate to harden.

### PEAR BUNNY SALAD

Arrange lettuce leaves on a plate. Place a pear half cut side down on the plate. Add two raisins on the narrow side for the eyes. Add almonds upright for the ears. Put a dollop of cottage cheese on the wide end for a big cotton tail.

### RAINBOW PUDDING

Separate vanilla pudding into 3 or 4 small bowls. Give your child different colors of food coloring and have them put 1-2 drops into each bowl; stir the pudding until it changes color. Next, spoon a layer of each color into clear unbreakable cups to make a rainbow snack.



### CRACKER CATERPILLAR

Spread 5-6 crackers with peanut butter, jelly or cream cheese. Lay one cracker on top of the other, overlapping just a bit. Add raisins for eyes and pretzel sticks for the legs.

### BUTTERFLY BITES

celery stalks  
hummus (you can substitute low-fat cream cheese or natural nut butter)  
6 mini-loop pretzels  
raisins



Cut celery stalks in half (so the pieces are all about 3 to 4 inches long). Cut a small sliver off each side of each part of the celery to serve as the antennae. Spread 1 Tbsp. hummus (or cream cheese, or nut butter) on the celery. Place a pair of mini pretzels (wings) together with the round ends up, into the hummus. Cut each raisin in half and place 2 pieces on one end of each piece of celery to represent the eyes. Take the small pieces of celery and insert them above the eyes to act as the antennae.

### Arts & Crafts

#### PAPER CHAIN CATERPILLAR



Cut strips of paper that are about 1 inch wide and 8-10 inches long. Glue the ends of one together into a loop. This will be the head. Next thread one strip through the head and glue the ends together to make the first part of the body. Continue until you've made the caterpillar's body as long as you'd like. Decorate the head with eyes, moth and antenna.

#### RAINBOW COLORS

Mixing colors to make a rainbow. Fill three non-breakable glasses with water. Put a few drops of red coloring in glass, blue in the next and yellow in the third glass. Next, lay out three more empty non-breakable glasses. Let your child experiment with mixing colors by using a spoon to pour a little water from the red, blue or yellow glasses into the empty ones to see what colors can be made.



## Reading with your child...

### BOOKS FOR THE SPRING SEASON

*Planting a Rainbow*  
Lois Ehlert

*The Cloud Book*  
Tomie DePaola

*Thunder Cake*  
Patricia Polacco

*Peter Spier's Rain*  
Peter Spier

*Raindrop, Plop*  
Wendy Cheyette Lewison



### PAPER TOWEL ROLL RAIN STICK

Using markers or crayons, decorate the outside of a paper towel roll. Cover one end of the roll with waxed or heavy paper and wrap masking tape around it to secure it tightly. Fill the tube with rice about half way. Cover the other end of the tube with waxed or heavy paper and secure it tightly with masking tape. Turning it upside down slowly will sound like rain or shake gently!

### PINWHEEL

Cut a piece of construction or heavy paper into a 9 inch square. Cut a straight line from each of the corners towards the center of the paper stopping about one inch from the center. Fold each of the corners into the center but don't crease the folds. Poke through all four of the points with a pin. Attach to a pencil.

