



# SUCCESS STARTS NOW.

CONCEPTS YOUR CHILD WILL EXPLORE FOR KINDERGARTEN





# APPROACHES TO PLAY AND LEARNING

How young children learn depends on what approach they take. Approaches to play and learning are guided by a child’s curiosity, initiative, creativity, or imagination. Relatively speaking, children’s cognitive and behavioral regulation will strengthen over time, with guidance. Regardless of the content area, the approach to play and learning should go hand and hand with self-regulation skills so that children are able to play and learn in ways that are best.

## CONCEPTS I’LL EXPLORE FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Seeks out new information & asks “Why” and “How” questions
  - Shows curiosity by saying things like, “I wonder... what will happen next?”
  - Tries different ways of doing things to see what happens
  - Independently seeks new challenges with familiar materials & activities
  - Sequences activities in dramatic play (i.e., gather pots, pans, spoons, and vegetables to make soup)
- Uses realistic and open-ended materials in cooperative play
  - Ability to focus attention on tasks and activities
  - Plays simple memory and matching games
  - Remembers actions that go with stories and songs
  - Persists in preferred tasks that may be challenging
  - Figures out more than one solution to a problem
  - Follows classrooms rules and routines more independently

## STRENGTHENING APPROACHES TO PLAY AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

- **Play memory games & matching puzzles**
  - **Simon Says** – If you say, “Simon Says” before a command, children should do it. If you give a command without saying “Simon Says,” they shouldn’t move. Start with simple one-step directions (i.e., “Simon Says, jump!”). Model the movements as you play.
  - **I Spy** – Give a clue about an object (i.e., “I spy something that is blue”) and challenge children to find and move to the object with a variety of challenging movements (i.e., hop/jump to the blue bucket). If child is finding it difficult to locate an object, provide hints and clues to support them.
- **Breathing: Dragon’s Breath** – Take a deep breath in while raising arms over head. Release air out while simultaneously bending knees, bending forward at the waist, and flinging arms down and then behind.
  - **What’s Wrong with This?** – Encourage children to carefully examine one part of the room. Then ask them to close their eyes. When they do, move or change one item in the room and have them try to figure out what changed!
  - **Sequence pictures from a book or walk** – after an outside walk or reading a favorite book – Ask what did we see when we were walking or reading the book? Ask open-ended questions and provide hints to help identify the correct sequence. Which item came first? What was next?



**Brown Bear, Brown Bear** by Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle



**Book Concept:** Remembers rhyme, what comes next, sequence

**Brief Description:** The plot consists of the narrator asking various animals and people what they see. This process creates a rhythmic pattern that is consistent throughout the book. In addition, this story goes through a series of animals in a particular order. The more you read it, the more your tiny readers will remember all of the animals that were in the story!

**Chimpanzees for TEA!** by Jo Empson



**Book Concept:** Working Memory

**Brief Description:** Remembering more than a few things in your brain without a list of pictures or something to help you can be hard! Chimpanzees for TEA! is about a boy who really tries to remember, but it doesn’t exactly work out.

**The Most Magnificent Thing** by Ashley Spire



**Book Concept:** Persistence & Problem Solving

**Brief Description:** This story depicts a little girl and her dog assistant who set out to build “the most magnificent thing.” In this book, we learn about frustration, perfectionism, and the value of trying new things while persevering through challenges.

**Jabari Jumps** by Gaia Cornwall



**Book Concept:** Responds to adult positive feedback to try a new skill

**Brief Description:** This story features a young boy who is scared to jump off the diving board. But, with some encouragement from his dad, Jabari finds the confidence to jump!

# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your child’s development of social and emotional skills is the foundation for feeling a strong sense of self-awareness, positive concept, emotional competency, and interactions with others. In order to foster these very essential skills, children need guidance in developing healthy relationships and build skills needed to express and control their feelings. This all starts in a safe place such as at home and in school.

## CONCEPTS I’LL EXPLORE FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Shares key information with others about self (i.e., gender, who is in family, differences)
  - Develops self-confidence and display joy in accomplishments
  - Shows increasing independence and ask for assistance, as needed
  - Recognizes emotions (in self and others) and develop techniques to manage
  - Uses respectful language to communicate thoughts and emotions
  - Demonstrates independence and seeks/accepts help when needed
- Begins to develop emotional regulation and utilizes self-soothing strategies
  - Shows kindness and compassion for self and others
  - Has positive interactions with peers and adults as displays comfort in safe settings
  - Shows ability to enter play groups and interact with peers
  - Develops and maintains friendships with others by taking turns, cooperating, and listening to others
  - Identifies solutions and problem solves during social dilemmas

## STRENGTHENING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Random Acts of Kindness** – create a list with your child and have them do random acts of kindness (i.e. make a card for the person who works at the grocery store).
  - **Mindful Coloring** – color or doodle with your child while playing calming music.
  - **Make a Feelings Chart** – model a variety of feelings and how they may look. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/11ASDjIRPIPvg891R30iSIb\\_L9ghVhV3e/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11ASDjIRPIPvg891R30iSIb_L9ghVhV3e/view)
  - **Read!** – read different books to children and take a picture walk while asking open-ended questions about how characters might be feeling.
- **Create a Calm Down Kit** – add items such as a fidget toy, breathing card, and a book to help regulate emotions when child is having difficulty.
  - **Create A Calm Down Corner** – identify a safe space for children to reflect, think of their feelings and brainstorm strategies for feeling better.
  - **Emotion Feeling Matching Game** – a game to help recognize and match emotions for identification
  - **Simon Says Game** – helps to build listening skills, self-control, and attention span.
  - **Use Music** – play a variety of genres of music and ask children how they feel when listening to it.



**My Way to Kindness** by Elizabeth Cole



**Book Concept:** Empathy and caring for others

**Brief Description:** This story introduces the concept of kindness and how it looks and feels. Its interactive component gets children engaged through the use of rhymes and adventure. The characters display social mannerisms such as respect for others, sharing, and saying please and thank you. The vibrant illustrations and engagement allow children to examine how to manage emotions and feelings.

**The Rabbit Listened** by Cori Doerrfeld



**Book Concept:** Empathy, kindness, caring for others

**Brief Description:** This book uses animals to help the main character, Taylor, relate to how to manage feelings, such as anger and how to truly listen to others to be able to help them find comfort.

**Be You!** by Peter H. Reynolds



**Book Concept:** Uniqueness and individuality of each child and to find joy in being special

**Brief Description:** In this book, children experience the joys of being the best version of themselves. In addition, they experience what it looks like to be unique and special.

**In My Heart: A Book of Feelings (Growing Hearts)** by Jo Witek



**Book Concept:** Identification, management, and regulation of feelings

**Brief Description:** Identification of the heart can bring out so many emotions and feelings. This story exhibits expressing and honoring all feelings and how they feel, as well as pro-social ways to manage them.



# COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Children communicate using facial expressions, gestures, eye gazes, body movements, signs, and language to initiate interactions and respond to others. Just as young children must engage in meaningful conversations to build language, they must also engage with books, writing and drawing, and print, to allow them to further explore the connections among letters, sounds, and words.

## CONCEPTS I'LL EXPLORE FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Understands and follows 2-3 step directions related to daily routines
- Asks and respond to questions comfortably and with accurate information
- Retells stories and events in sequence
- Displays understanding of print (pointing or touching each word, following words from left to right)
- Listens and responds to a variety of texts and media
- Begins to display phonological awareness (rhyming words, segmenting words, beginning and end sound)
- Recognizes many upper- and lower-case letters and their corresponding sound
- Writes name using a mix of upper- and lower-case letters
- Adds details to drawings/writings and retells their ideas
- Begins to show fine motor strength, eventually using comfortable and efficient three-finger pencil grip

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- **Start a conversation.** Ask your child about their day and tell them about yours, too.
- **Play games such as I Spy, Simon Says, and Mother, May I.** These games encourage your child to use descriptive language and follow simple directions.
- **Go to the library.** Let your child explore their interests and pick their own books.
- **Read aloud to your child.** Snuggle up in a cozy chair to read, or try reading in a silly voice.
- **Sing nursery rhymes.** Playing with rhymes and sounds builds an understanding of language.
- **Play with playdough, small toys, and puzzles.** This will develop the fine motor skills necessary for writing and proper pencil grip.



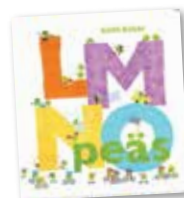
**Rhyming Dust Bunnies** by Jan Thomas



**Book Concept:** Rhyming

**Brief Description:** Bug! Rug! Mug! Hug! These dust bunnies love to rhyme. Well, except for Bob. Much to the other bunnies' frustration, Bob can never get the rhythm right. Then, he saves everyone from a big, scary monster wielding \*gasp\* a broom, and they all breathe a sigh of relief. But can Bob save them from the big, scary monster's next attack? Vrrrrroooooommm . . .

**LMNO Peas** by Keith Baker



**Book Concept:** Alphabet Recognition

**Brief Description:** Meet the peas – the alphabet peas! They're acrobats, artists, and astronauts in space. They're builders, bathers, and bikers in a race. And guess what? They're campers, climbers, and circus clowns, too! This adorable rhyming ABC book features little green peas in every occupation. Whether they're gardeners, hikers, or inventors, these delightful little veggies work and play their way through the entire alphabet.

**I Spy Letters** by Jean Marzollo



**Book Concept:** Alphabet Recognition

**Brief Description:** From the original "I Spy" series for letters, preschoolers can search photos to help them learn the alphabet. Simple picture clues and rhyming riddles guide the youngest readers through 14 interactive, fun-filled spreads.

**Lola Loves Stories** by Anna McQuinn



**Book Concept:** Joy of Reading

**Brief Description:** Lola loves to hear Daddy read a new library book each night! This is an activity that spurs her imagination and results in inventive play the next day.

# HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Health and physical development in children are essential because they: help young children make sense of things around them, build on small and large muscle strength (fine and gross motor skills) and help children learn to independently take care of their needs. By incorporating activities that include the above aspects of health and physical development, you will foster an environment that promotes learning through senses, exploring, and practicing healthy habits.

## CONCEPTS I'LL EXPLORE FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Develops ability to use senses to perceive and guide movements
- Shows increasing awareness of body and spaces around them
- Moves large muscles to increase coordination, develops strength and balance
- Understands the importance of physical fitness
- Explores spaces around them through large muscle movements and activities
- Develops control with small objects
- Draws simple shapes and eventually figures with more detail
- Develops strength and control using tools that increases precision and hand-eye coordination
- Increases demonstration/ability to take care of personal needs (hand washing, teeth brushing)
- Uses self-calming strategies
- Shows increasing awareness of safety practices and things that may be unsafe
- Develops healthy eating, resting, and sleeping habits

## STRENGTHENING HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Provide opportunities to explore.** Offer a variety of materials and activities for sensory experiences and ask open-ended questions that are related to senses (naming attributes of an item or food).
- **Provide equipment and a safe environment** for new skills to be developed and mastered.
- **Have a routine that includes simple exercises** and talk about the importance of physical fitness.
- **Provide activities for small muscle movements** – play dough, peeling stickers, pinching, and picking up small objects are all great ways to build small muscles.
- **Have a variety of writing tools available** for drawing (pencils, markers, chalk, crayons).
- **Have Conversations about safety.** Converse with your child about safety rules and find time to role-play scenarios.



**My Five Senses** by Aliko



**Book Concept:** Using Senses

**Brief Description:** We smell, look, taste, touch, and see all that is going on around us. Read "My Five Senses" to experience a child's perspective of exploring the world.

**Stomp, Wiggle, Clap, and Tap** by Rachelle Burk



**Book Concept:** Gross Motor

**Brief Description:** Let's learn how to move through dancing. From spinning, to bending, to stretching, moving in fun ways can be joyful, as well as beneficial!

**Press Here** by Herve Tullet



**Book Concept:** Fine Motor

**Brief Description:** See what happens when you "press here" and shift the colorful dots from left to right. Follow the directions and flip to the page to see where the little dots will move to next...

**Germs Are Not for Sharing** by Elizabeth Verdick



**Book Concept:** Physical Health and Self-Care

**Brief Description:** Let's keep those yucky little germs at a minimum. This book talks about many situations in which germs are spread and how to keep ourselves healthy from them.



# COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Children develop cognitive abilities through their earliest experiences with their natural, physical, and social environments. Nurture your child’s natural curiosity and help them explore, describe, predict, and share their thinking about the world around them.

## CONCEPTS I’LL EXPLORE FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Sorting objects by color, shape, and size
- Naming, describing, and comparing shapes
- Counting forward to 20 by memory
- Counting backwards from 5
- Counting 10-20 objects in a line or group
- Recognizing and continuing basic patterns
- Learning about ways that people interact
- Building relationship skills through dramatic play
- Drawing with a purpose to tell a story
- Using scissors and simple instruments

## STRENGTHENING COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- **Take time to count every day!** Make it a routine to count – whether it’s the books on the shelf, trees in the park or the planes in the sky.
- **Play number games.** Dice games and dominos can help your child learn to recognize and count groups of objects.
- **Talk about sizes and shapes.** Ask questions to help your child start to think beyond colors and numbers. Is this plate a circle? What shape is this book? Do you think the swings are taller than the slide?
- **Play with patterns;** help your child create repeating patterns using items around the house (i.e., line up fruit: apple, banana, apple, banana).
- **Sing Songs!** Listen to music and explore and express ideas through movement and dance.
- **Get creative** by gathering paper, crayons and scissors and have fun creating art that tells a story.



**1-2-3 ZooBorns!** by Andrew Bleiman & Chris Eastland



**Book Concept:** Counting and exploring the natural world  
**Brief Description:** It’s time to count along with a crew of adorable zoo babies. Featuring irresistible animal photos, bouncy text, and a fact-filled glossary, this just might be the cutest counting book ever to hit the shelves!

**Actual Size** by Steve Jenkins



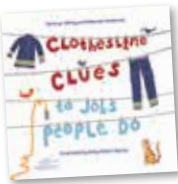
**Book Concept:** Comparing objects of different sizes.  
**Brief Description:** How big is a crocodile? What about a tiger, or the world’s largest spider? Can you imagine a tongue that is two feet long or an eye that’s bigger than your head? Sometimes facts and figures don’t tell the whole story. Sometimes you need to see things for yourself—at their actual size.

**I Got the Rhythm** by Connie Schofield-Morrison



**Book Concept:** Exploring and expressing ideas through movement and dance.  
**Brief Description:** On a simple trip to the park, the joy of music overtakes a mother and daughter. The little girl hears a rhythm coming from the world around her – from butterflies to street performers to ice cream sellers, everything is musical! She sniffs, snaps, and shakes her way into the heart of the beat, finally busting out in an impromptu dance, which all the kids join in on!

**Clothesline Clues to Jobs People Do** by Kathryn Heling



**Book Concept:** How people interact in the community.  
**Brief Description:** Who wears what to work? The clues in each lively verse can be spotted hanging from the clotheslines. A mail carrier’s uniform, the artist’s brushes, and the chef’s apron all hang from the clothesline. Then turn the page to learn which professionals wear and use the special gear in the jobs they do.



---

[vbgrowsmart.com](http://vbgrowsmart.com) | <https://www.facebook.com/vbgrowsmart>

Virginia Beach Economic Development | 4525 Main Street, Suite 700 | Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Phone 757.385.0144 | Follow us on 