

# HOW TO USE THIS CALENDAR

Learning begins at birth! It is important that families feel supported and know how they can encourage children throughout early childhood. This calendar was developed in order to give you some information and guidance on how you can help children in learning and be prepared to succeed in kindergarten.

This calendar contains a variety of information related to preparing children for success in kindergarten, what children will be learning in kindergarten and fun things you can do together from birth to develop and support children's skills!

- Daily activities can be adapted to your child's age, interest or skill level.
- This calendar is designed to be used in any year. The empty boxes can be left blank, used to check off activities completed, or to write in dates.
- Each month highlights a local resource your family may want to use or visit.
- **Developmental Milestones** and ideas for **Learning on the Go** can be found at the back of the calendar.

Children learn many different skills in the following areas that will help them be ready to succeed in kindergarten. Each day of the week focuses on a different area.

## Sunday: Language Development

Activities will help your child practice these skills:

- Answering questions about a story you've read together.
- Taking two or more turns in a conversation.
- Using words learned from stories, experiences and conversation.
- Being understood by most people.
- Using I, he, she, him, her, his and hers correctly.

## Monday: Literacy Development

Activities will help your child practice these skills:

- Playing with sounds in words (rhyming, beginning sounds).
- Identifying 18 upper case and 15 lower case letters and the sounds they make.
- Recognizing their own written name.
- Looking at a book front to back and turning pages one at a time.
- Writing their first name beginning with a capital and finishing with lowercase.

## Tuesday: Mathematical Development

Activities will help your child practice these skills:

- Verbally counting to 20.
- Physically counting out 10 objects correctly.
- Identifying numbers 1–20.
- Identifying basic shapes (square, circle, triangle, etc.).
- Creating a two-part pattern (green, white, green, white).
- Sorting objects by something they have in common (color, size, shape, etc.)

## Wednesday: Physical Development

Activities will help your child practice these skills:

- Jumping with two feet.
- Maintaining personal space.
- Using a tripod grasp (thumb and two fingers) to write or draw a letter, numeral or shape.
- Using kids' scissors.

## Thursday: Social Development

Activities will help your child practice these skills:

- Trusting other adults and children.
- Playing with, not just next to, other children.
- Learning and participating in a group.

## Friday: Emotional Development

Activities will help your child practice these skills:

- Separating from primary caregiver for an extended period of time.
- Taking care of their own needs (i.e. wiping after toileting, washing hands).
- Controlling the expression of their feelings.

## Saturday: Approaches to Learning

Activities will help your child practice these skills:

- Showing curiosity and motivation to learn new things.
- Spending 10–15 minutes working on interesting tasks.
- Focusing and concentrating on an activity for 10–15 minutes.
- Remembering and connecting experiences with environment (grocery store, library).
- Following two-step directions and remembering simple routines.
- Sticking with and solving simple problems.



# PLAY IS LEARNING




Play is the work of children. It brings enjoyment, releases energy, and gives children a way to express themselves. Play also encourages creativity, imagination, self-confidence and problem-solving. Don't ever stop playing together!

- **INFANTS:** explore and play by putting things in their mouths and banging them on the ground. Beware of choking hazards. Items that can pass through a toilet paper tube can be a choking hazard for infants.
- **TODDLERS:** copy actions and behaviors of others. They are learning empathy and cooperation through play.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** have longer attention spans and the ability to concentrate. Offer enough time for children to become engaged in their favorite play activities.

## JANUARY

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** Play and Learn Groups provide activities for families to play and explore alongside their children ages four years old and younger. Groups are offered in a variety of locations across the Ingham service area. Visit [www.inghamgreatstart.org](http://www.inghamgreatstart.org) for the current Play and Learn Group schedule.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Sing the alphabet song.	<b>A</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an "A" together. Look for "A's" or objects that begin with the /a/ sound as in <i>apple</i> .	The shape of the day is a <b>triangle</b> . See how many <b>triangles</b> you can find. 	Dance, dance, dance! Turn on some music and dance with your child!	Be extra kind to someone today.	Encourage your child to serve themselves during mealtime.	Build a snowman!
Talk with your child about your child's favorite soup.	<b>B</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a "B" together. Look for "B's" or objects that begin with the /b/ sound as in <i>ball</i> .	The color of the day is <b>blue</b> . See how many <b>blue</b> things you can find today!	Go outside and make snow angels together.	Visit the children's section of your local library. Pick out books or stay and read a while. Visit your library's website at <a href="http://www.cadl.org">www.cadl.org</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a> .	Draw a happy face and talk about what things make you happy.	Cut snowflakes out of paper and decorate them together.
Learn a new word together and practice using it.	Read a familiar book together. Then let your child "read" the story back to you.	Today is all about the number <b>1</b> . See how many " <b>1</b> 's" you can find as you go about your day.	Go outside and shovel together.	Schedule a play date with a cousin, neighbor or friend.	Encourage your child to clean up after themselves after mealtime.	At home, act out the story of <i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> with stuffed animals.
Sing your favorite song to your child. Ask your child what their favorite song is.	<b>C</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a "C" together. Look for "C's" or objects that begin with the /c/ sound as in <i>cat</i> .	Count how many vegetables you eat today. What colors are they?	Draw shapes in shaving cream. Recognizing shapes is the beginning of recognizing letters and numbers.	Sit down and eat a meal together. Tell your child about your day and ask about theirs.	Practice washing hands, brushing teeth and combing hair while chanting "Hickory, Dickory, Dock."	Talk to your child about when they were younger. What kinds of things did they do and say?
Sing "Hickory, Dickory, Dock." Make up some hand motions to the song/rhyme.	Reading before bed is a time-honored tradition. What times can you find to read with your child? Try bath time, mealtime, potty time, and doctor's appointments.	Count your child's fingers and toes.	Use familiar household objects to create an obstacle course. For example, couch cushions, pillows, laundry basket...	Play a game together like Peek-a-Boo, I Spy or Hokey Pokey.	Help your child think of something they can do for someone else.	Talk about different materials: paper, cloth, wood, metal, etc. Can you find things made of each?

**SONG/RHYME:**  
**Hickory Dickory Dock**

Hickory Dickory Dock  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
The clock struck one.  
The mouse ran down.  
Hickory Dickory Dock.




# MUSIC IS FOR EVERYONE

Music really is for everyone! Your child will love to hear your voice no matter how well you sing.

- **INFANTS:** enjoy songs, fingerplays and dancing. These activities are soothing and fun, and create a feeling of safety and stress relief.
- **TODDLERS:** respond to music by moving and being active. By moving, toddlers strengthen their large muscles and learn coordination.
- **PRECHOOLERS:** build literacy skills through music. Songs, rhymes and rhythms help young children recognize individual sounds and learn to keep a steady rhythm, important pre-reading skills.

# FEBRUARY

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** The City of East Lansing sponsors live musical performances for families as part of the FREE Children's Concert Series. Look for the current Children's Concert Series schedule at [www.cityofeastlansing.com/137/Childrens-Concert-Series](http://www.cityofeastlansing.com/137/Childrens-Concert-Series).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Make a recipe together. Talk about how the food smells, looks, and how it will taste.	<b>D</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a " <b>D</b> " together. Look for " <b>D's</b> " or objects that begin with the /d/ sound as in <i>dog</i> .	A <b>square</b> is the shape of the day. Count how many squares you can find today. 	Jump high, jump low, leap like a frog.	Visit the children's section of your local library.	Help your child make a phone call to someone special to tell them 2 things they love about them.	Go on a nature walk this week! What does winter look like in your neighborhood?
Create a list of special people and talk about what makes them special.	Talk about the parts of a book: title, author, illustrator and which direction we read.	The color of the day is <b>red</b> . See how many <b>red</b> things you can find.	Choose one of your special people and write them a letter together.	Deliver the letter you wrote to your special person.	Practice good hygiene: blowing nose, coughing and sneezing into arm, washing hands and throwing away a Kleenex.	Complete a puzzle together.
Talk about all of your favorite things.	<b>E</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an " <b>E</b> " together. Look for " <b>E's</b> " or objects that begin with the /e/ sound as in <i>elephant</i> .	Today is all about the number <b>2</b> . See how many " <b>2's</b> " you can find.	Practice jumping on one foot, then the other. Count your jumps. Clap your hands with each jump.	Join a Play and Learn Group. To find a location near you, visit <a href="http://www.inghamgreatstart.org">www.inghamgreatstart.org</a> .	Wash hands and talk through the proper steps. Make up a song about washing hands.	Make a weather book out of paper. Draw pictures of different kinds of weather and talk about them.
Talk through your child's day. Tell them what they will be doing, i.e. eating, taking a nap, going to the store. This builds their everyday vocabulary. Ask them what they think will be the most fun.	Look through a picture book and tell the story without using the words. Wordless picture books are fun and promote language!	Mix up all of your silverware and let your child sort in a variety of ways. Sorting is great early math skills practice.	Act out the song, "Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes."	Schedule a play date with cousin, neighbor or friend.	Dress in the color <b>red</b> today.	Play a listening/following direction game like "Simon Says" with your child.
At the grocery produce section, name all of the colors you can see.	Make signs with descriptive words like "hot", "soft", etc. Tape them around the house.	Count the socks in your house in singles and in pairs. Talk about things that come in pairs.	Cut out hearts. Place on floor. Jump with two feet from heart to heart.	Sit down and eat a meal together. Talk about your favorite winter activity.	Read a story with your child. Have them tell/draw/write what they loved about the book.	Make a list of your family's safety rules. Talk about why you need to have rules.

## SONG/RHYME: Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes

*(Sung to the tune of London Bridge is Falling Down. Throughout, touch corresponding part of own body.)*  
 Head and shoulders knees and toes, knees and toes.  
 Head and shoulders knees and toes, eyes, ears, mouth, and nose.  
 Head and shoulders, knees and toes.



# READING WITH YOUR CHILD

Literacy learning begins at birth! Reading out loud to children is one of the most important activities for building understanding and skills needed for later reading success.

- **INFANTS:** learn to talk by hearing spoken words. Board books are a good choice for babies—they are small, sturdy and have pages that are easy to turn. Babies also love to see faces, so look for books with photographs of people of all ages.
- **TODDLERS:** Keep toddlers engaged with books that have rhymes, movement, rhythm and singing. Toddlers learn through repetition and may request the same book or game over and over again.
- **PRECHOOLERS:** are ready to listen to longer stories, but don't forget to make them fun and interactive. Books with lots of different kinds of words will build vocabulary and understanding of new concepts.

## MARCH

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** The Early Childhood Literacy Coalition celebrates literacy with two weeks of free activities and an early literacy celebration every March. Find the full schedule on Capital Area District Libraries' website at [www.cadl.org](http://www.cadl.org). Look up the ECLC facebook page at [www.facebook.com/EarlyChildhoodLiteracyCoalition](http://www.facebook.com/EarlyChildhoodLiteracyCoalition).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Talk about patterns. Which animals have stripes? Which ones have spots?	<b>F</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an "F" together. Look for "F's" or objects that begin with the /f/ sound as in <i>fish</i> .	A <b>rectangle</b> is the shape of the day. Count how many <b>rectangles</b> you can find. 	Play some music and dance.	Schedule a play date with a cousin, neighbor or friend.	Practice putting on and taking off outdoor clothing.	Show your child how to measure using measuring cups. Let them practice with water and dry beans.
Let your child help prepare a meal or snack. Talk about what you and your child are doing.	Talk about syllables as the sounds in words. Clap out some words together. One clap for each syllable or word chunk.	The color of the day is <b>purple</b> . See how many <b>purple</b> things you can find today.	Kids love to help! Give your child a small cloth so they can dust along with you.	Visit the library.	Draw a sad face. Tell about a time you felt sad.	Collect 3 <b>purple</b> items in your house. Talk about shades of colors. Which one is lighter/darker?
Start each day at the window and talk about the weather.	<b>G</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a "G" together. Look for "G's" or objects that begin with the /g/ sound as in <i>goat</i> .	Today is all about the number <b>3</b> . See how many "3's" you can find as you go about your day.	Make a fort and read in it together.	Sit down and eat a meal together.	Clean up as many toys as you can in 30 seconds.	Gather mystery objects and put them in a bag. Have your child feel the item in the bag and guess what it is.
Say and act out the finger play, "Two Little Black Birds."	Just for fun, read with a flashlight. Make shadow puppets or tell each other stories.	Dress in the color <b>purple</b> today.	Go on a <b>rectangle</b> hunt in the house, moving like different animals from room to room.	Practice using "Please" and "Thank you" with others.	Talk about how you feel when the snow melts.	Texture fun: give your child scraps of paper, fabrics, and cardboard. Talk about the different textures.
At the grocery store, talk about which things are cold.	Make a book of your own. Staple paper together. Child draws pictures and parents write the words.	Count all the doors and windows in your home. Are there more doors or windows?	Make something out of a cardboard box and tape.	Bundle up and visit a local park/playground.	Help clear the table and wash the dishes.	Talk about sweet, salty, bitter, spicy, and sour. Taste something and discuss what they liked best.

### FINGERPLAY: Two Little Blackbirds

Two little blackbirds sitting on a hill  
 One named Jack (show left hand) and the other named Jill (show right hand)  
 Fly away Jack! (fly left hand behind back)  
 Fly away Jill! (fly right hand behind back)  
 Come back, Jack! (fly left hand back from behind back)  
 Come back, Jill! (fly right hand back from behind back)

# SCIENCE EVERY DAY




Science is everywhere—from animals, plants and the natural world, to health and nutrition, to tools and machines, and more! Children are naturally curious about their world and science encourages their love of exploration.

- **INFANTS:** learn about the world and properties of objects by using all of their senses. When they drop a toy and you pick it up, they are learning about cause and effect.
- **TODDLERS:** are trying to find out how the world works. As they use their five senses they are making sense of their world. Encourage your toddler to try things out. What will happen if you put a stick in a mud puddle? As your child looks closely at things in nature, give names to objects found.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** use trial and error, an important part of the scientific process. Adults can encourage curiosity by asking questions and allowing children to investigate many different possibilities.

How do you think that works?  
 Why do you think giraffes have long necks?  
 What tool would help us do this job?  
 What will happen to this ice cube when we put it in hot water?

# APRIL

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** The MSU Science Festival is an amazing, multi-day series of events that highlight the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM). For this year's complete schedule visit [www.sciencefestival.msu.edu](http://www.sciencefestival.msu.edu).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Sing and act out "Little Bo Peep."	Sing the alphabet song.	Today is all about the number <b>4</b> . Think of <b>4</b> things that are heavy. Think of <b>4</b> things at the beach.	Choose 3 new foods and have a family taste test.	Ask your child if you can join their play. This models how to join others at play.	Paint a picture while listening to music. Talk about how you felt.	Cut a picture into pieces to make a puzzle, then put it back together.
Make up a song about part of your child's daily routine.	<b>H</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an " <b>H</b> " together. Look for " <b>H</b> 's" or objects that begin with the /h/ sound as in <i>horse</i> .	The color of the day is <b>green</b> ! See how many <b>green</b> things you can find.	Set up an obstacle course for your child to go over, under, in, out, around and through.	Read a book about friendship and talk about how to be a good friend.	Find a calming place in your house. Encourage your child to visit this place when they need to calm themselves.	Show your child what time of day it is at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Talk about which routines happen at which times.
Ask your child to predict what will happen in a book by looking at the cover.	"Paint" lines, circles or letters on the sidewalk/driveway with water.	Do jumping jacks together and count aloud as you go. See how high you can count together!	Roll up a sock to make a ball. Pull out the laundry basket and throw the sock ball into it. Step farther back each time.	Ask your child if you can use their toy when they are finished playing with it. Help them follow through after your child is done.	Give your child a basket to fill with things your child likes. Talk about the items they have collected.	Talk about choices with your child. Make sure to give choices as often as you can.
Repeat the sounds that your baby makes back to your baby.	Have your child find and circle all the letters on a cereal box or other food packaging.	A <b>circle</b> is the shape of the day. Count how many <b>circles</b> you can find today! 	Play the freeze game. Play music on your phone and dance together. When the music stops, you both freeze.	Go to the mall and play with other children in the play area.	Make different faces in the mirror together. Talk about emotions.	When your child asks you a question, show them how you find the answer in a book or on a website.
Play restaurant with your child. Pretend play builds vocabulary!	<b>I</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an " <b>I</b> " together. Look for " <b>I</b> 's" or objects that begin with the /i/ sound as in <i>igloo</i> .	Cook together! Encourage your child to use measuring cups to measure and add ingredients.	Make a batch of playdough together (1 cup flour + ½ cup salt + about ½ cup water) and use your hands to make different things.	Draw a picture or make a card for a neighbor and deliver it.	Look for happy faces in books, then sad faces. Talk about feelings.	Get out some recycled materials (cardboard, plastic containers, etc.) and tape. Make something together today!

**RHYME:**  
**Little Bo Peep**

Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,  
 And can't tell where to find them.  
 Leave them alone and they'll come home,  
 Wagging their tails behind them.

# SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL



Your child may be just learning how to get along in a group setting. They are learning your expectations, how to interact with other children and developing an understanding of rules. They are also beginning to develop the ability to control their impulses. With support from you, children practice and learn these skills.

- **INFANTS:** Supporting social emotional development means meeting their needs. Babbling to them when they talk to you, responding to their cries, and letting them explore their world while you're nearby.
- **TODDLERS:** As toddlers experience their feelings, provide names for those feelings. Follow your child's lead in play. Support them as they reach out to play with others. Try to provide multiples of materials, so each toddler has their own.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** Support your preschooler's interest in playing with other children. Ask questions such as "how would that make you feel?" to help develop empathy and perspective taking. Let them know you notice when they do something helpful.

## MAY

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** Research shows that children who attend high-quality preschool programs are more likely to:

- Read proficiently by 3rd grade
- Attend college
- Graduate from high school
- Earn higher incomes

Many three and four year old children are eligible for tuition-free preschool. To learn more about options and complete an application (the first step in the process of getting connected to a program), go to [www.inghampreschool.org](http://www.inghampreschool.org) or call 1-855-644-7735.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Use a sock for a puppet to act out the "Eentsy Weentsy Spider."	Attend your local library's storytime. Check out a book. <a href="http://www.cadl.org/events">www.cadl.org/events</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a> .	A <b>diamond</b> is the shape of the day. Count how many <b>diamonds</b> you can find today. 	Using your kitchen tongs, practice moving things from one bowl to another.	Make a puzzle by cutting up the front of a cereal box. Put it back together with your child taking turns to put in each piece.	Mount a small mirror at your child's eyelevel. Make faces in the mirror.	Make a plan for tomorrow with your child. Write it down. Follow through.
Expand your child's language. When your child says "My shoes," you can say "Those are your shiny, red shoes."	<b>J</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a " <b>J</b> " together. Look for " <b>J</b> 's" or objects that begin with the /j/ sound as in <i>jar</i> .	Go on a walk and collect natural objects (stones, pinecones, etc). Graph what you find.	Do jumping jacks together and count aloud as you go. See how high you can count together!	Practice responding with a "Hello!" when someone greets you.	Read a book about feelings. Go to your library and ask your librarian for book ideas.	Talk about a recent family trip.
When reading a book, ask your child to predict what will happen before you turn the last page.	With your child, find the first letter in your child's name in as many places as possible.	Today is all about the number <b>5</b> . Find <b>5</b> tiny things. Find <b>5</b> big things. Find <b>5</b> medium-sized things.	Put on some music and move together!	Learn to say "please" and "thank you" in Spanish. "Por Favor" y "Gracias." Practice it with people you see.	Read a book about friendship and talk about how to be a good friend.	At the end of the day reflect on something that made you feel happy. Ask your child to reflect about what made them happy.
Using your phone, take photos of nature in surprising places (crack in a sidewalk). Show the photos and ask your child to tell you a story.	Have your child write a grocery list and help find the items when you're at the store.	Put salt, sand or shaving cream on a cookie tin. Draw shapes in the material. Have your child name the shape. Now it's their turn.	Teach your child to wash their hands—tops, bottoms and between fingers—for the duration of the Happy Birthday song.	Today is a <b>pink</b> day. See how many <b>pink</b> things you can find. Talk about which things are <b>pink</b> .	Take pictures of your child's face expressing happiness, sadness, fear, frustration... Post those pictures around their mirror.	Notice when your child solves their own problem. Tell your child and list the ways they solved the problem.
Find a bag and put some familiar items in it. Reach in and describe the object. Have your child guess what it is. Now it's your turn to guess!	<b>K</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a " <b>K</b> " together. Look for " <b>K</b> 's" or objects that begin with the /k/ sound as in <i>kangaroo</i> .	Pick flowers in your neighborhood and press them between the pages of a large book. Count the petals and leaves.	Kick a ball back and forth with your child.	Play in puddles with a friend. See who can make the biggest splash!	Lay on your back outside and watch the clouds in the sky. Talk about what animals they look like.	Have your child help you with the laundry, matching socks and sorting piles.

**SONG:**  
The Eentsy Weentsy Spider

The eentsy weentsy spider climbed up the water spout.  
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.  
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain and the  
Eentsy weentsy spider climbed up the spout again.




# OUTSIDE PLAY

Remember playing outside as a child, the sense of freedom and wonder? Outdoor play supports children’s physical development using large muscles to run and jump. Learning is enhanced as children experience new sights, sounds, smells and textures. Children of all ages need to get outside, spring, summer, fall and winter.

- **INFANTS:** benefit from stroller walks, where they hear outside noises, experience natural light and breezes, and become familiar with the feeling of moving outside. Sitting on the grass provides input of different textures and smells.
- **TODDLERS:** love the new experiences of being outdoors, and will learn new skills. Walking on different surfaces and slopes lets their muscles learn new ways to support their bodies.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** have fun seeing all of the new things outside—birds and squirrels, clouds, sticks and stones. They can use new materials to build or use in different ways. It’s a chance to run, jump and play in ways that are different from being inside.

# JUNE

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** Nature centers are great resources for outdoor playing and learning. Ingham County boasts three centers with numerous trails, events and educational opportunities—Fenner Nature Center, [www.mynaturecenter.org](http://www.mynaturecenter.org) Harris Nature Center, [www.meridian.mi.us](http://www.meridian.mi.us) under Parks and Recreation Woldumar Nature Center, [www.woldumar.org](http://www.woldumar.org).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Read a book about animals and make some animal sounds.	Show your child that there are things to read everywhere. Make a game of finding things with words on them (like soup cans and cereal boxes).	Today is an <b>orange</b> day. See how many orange things you can find. Talk about which things are <b>orange</b> .	Sing “Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes” while doing the motions. Now sing it using other body parts.	Visit your local park. Practice playing with other children.	Model calming techniques (slow breathing, squeezing a pillow, etc.) Use them before you attempt to solve a problem.	Give your child 15 different things from a drawer in your home. See how many ways they can be sorted.
Read and act out “Beehive.”	Together, list as many words as you can that rhyme with the word “bee.”	Today is all about the number <b>6</b> . See how many <b>6’s</b> you can find as you go about your day.	Play “Follow the Leader” and move in different ways: walk, jump, crawl, hop on one foot.	Invite a friend over to play. Make up a new game together.	Help your child think of something they can do for someone else.	Pretend you are going on a camping trip. Gather the items you’ll need and set up camp!
Find sounds of familiar things on your phone such as a train, dog barking or a car horn. Play them for your child, and have your child guess what they are.	<b>L</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an “ <b>L</b> ” together. Look for “ <b>L’s</b> ” or objects that begin with the /l/ sound as in <i>love</i> .	Float or Sink? Find things around your home. Get a bowl of water. Have your child guess if they will float or sink. Test it out. Sort things by what floats and what sinks.	Practice buttons and zippers on clothing or on dolls.	Write a letter to a friend or family member.	Ask your child what makes your child feel happy. Take a picture of your child feeling happy doing what they enjoy. Start a feelings book.	Create a mystery bag for your child. Put an item inside the bag and give verbal clues about its identity. Let your child feel, describe, and guess what it is before looking at it. (repeat)
Read a book by using only the pictures.	Go on a hunt to collect sticks. Use the sticks to form letters.	An oval is the shape of the day. Count how many ovals you can find today! 	Cut out ovals from different types of paper (newspaper, sandpaper, wax paper, etc.). Which is largest? Which is softest?	Visit the library with your child this week. Pick out books or stay and read a while. Check out events: <a href="http://www.cadl.org/events">www.cadl.org/events</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a> .	Talk about how we’re all unique and special. Have your child name some special things about themselves.	Go on a cloud hunt. Spread a blanket on the ground and see what objects you can “find” in the clouds. (animals, shapes, etc.)
Go for a listening walk! Ask your child to listen and describe the sounds they hear.	<b>M</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an “ <b>M</b> ” together. Look for “ <b>M’s</b> ” or objects that begin with the /m/ sound as in <i>mouse</i> .	Create a pattern by clapping and tapping. Have your child follow your pattern. Now follow theirs.	Practice moving like different animals. Crawl like an alligator, slither like a snake, jump like a rabbit, balance on one foot like a resting duck.	Go on a nature scavenger hunt with a friend. Look for different colors and textures and see how many shades of green you can find.	Cut pictures from a magazine representing different emotions. Choose a picture and act out what you would do if you felt that way.	Talk about the different shapes and parts of a car. Can you draw a car together?

## FINGERPLAY: Beehive

(Clasp hands together to make a beehive.)  
Here is the beehive. / Where are the bees?  
Hidden away where nobody sees. (Look closely at beehive.)  
Soon they will all come out of the hive.  
One, two, three, four, five! (Hold out fingers in succession as you count.)  
Bzzzzzzzz! (Separate hands; fly fingers around as if they are bees.)

# NUTRITION AND YOUR GROWING CHILD



Good nutrition gives children the energy and vitamins they need to learn and grow. Learning healthy eating habits as a child is important for a healthy future.

- **INFANTS:** need the nutrients and vitamins found only in breastmilk or infant formula. Your pediatrician may suggest introducing infant cereal and pureed vegetables and fruits after six months of age.
- **TODDLERS:** can be picky eaters, but they learn by watching others. Eat a variety of foods and your child will be more likely to try new foods, too. Offer small servings of fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** can help plan some parts of their meals. Offer two choices—such as broccoli or carrots—and let your child decide. Make meals a family time and talk about healthy food choices.

## JULY

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** Visit a local farmers market to buy fresh produce for your family. Visit Greater Lansing Area Farmers Markets on [www.lansing.org](http://www.lansing.org) for a list of markets near you.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Look at family photos together. Explain vocabulary like “family,” “grandparents,” “uncles,” etc.	<b>N</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an <b>N</b> together. Look for “ <b>N</b> ’s” or objects that begin with the /n/ sound as in <i>nest</i> .	Make a ramp: prop up one end of a board or other large flat item. Experiment with how different items “roll” down the ramp.	Cut different sized triangles out of paper or fabric. Which is largest? Which is softest?	Make an invitation for a friend to come over and play.	Tell your child of a time you felt proud and then have them tell you of a time they felt proud.	Make pretend recipes outdoors. Say, “What should we put in that soup?” and hand your child a rock “potato.”
Expand your child’s talking. When your child babbles/speaks respond with: “Oh what a great idea!” or “What happens next?”	Form letters with rocks and sticks outside.	Today is a <b>yellow</b> day. See how many <b>yellow</b> things you can find. Talk about which things are <b>yellow</b> .	Draw on the sidewalk with chalk. Make roads for toy cars to drive on.	Visit the library with your child this week. Pick out books or stay and read a while. Check out library events: <a href="http://www.cadl.org">www.cadl.org</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a> .	Think of something you can do to help someone today.	Make play-dough at home (1 cup flour + ½ cup salt + about ½ cup of water). Mix together. Scent with spices or add food coloring.
Talk through your baby’s features. Say, “Where are your eyes? Oh, here they are.” Ask older kids to point to parts of their body.	<b>O</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an <b>O</b> together. Look for “ <b>O</b> ’s” or objects that begin with the /o/ sound as in <i>ostrich</i> .	Today is all about the number <b>7</b> . See how many <b>7</b> ’s you can find as you go about your day.	Play ball with your child. Sit on the ground facing each other and roll a ball back and forth.	Go to a local park and practice taking turns on the slide.	Talk about how you feel on a warm sunny day.	Identify places as you drive by them. Call out where you are going and what you are doing with your child.
Go for a walk outside and listen. Identify the sounds you hear.	Make up silly words that rhyme. Make up pretend definitions, too!	A <b>triangle</b> is the shape of the day today. Count how many <b>triangles</b> you can find today! 	Put on some music and dance with your child. Try different types of dances and get your bodies moving!	Sit down and eat a meal together, talk about your favorite summer activity.	Read a book with your child and have them tell you how the story made them feel.	Make a puzzle out of a picture (magazine, cereal box, etc.) and put it back together.
Sing and act out “Five Green and Speckled Frogs.”	Help your child type their name on a keyboard.	Talk about opposites today (big, small; short, tall; etc.) Find examples of opposites wherever you go today!	Be a speckled frog, hop across the room while singing the song.	Invite a friend to play in the water.	Practice brushing teeth together as a family.	Play “I Spy” outside.

**SONG:**  
Five Green and Speckled Frogs

Five green and speckled frogs sat on a hollow log  
Eating some most delicious bugs. Yum, yum!  
One jumped into the pool where it was nice and cool  
Then there were four speckled frogs.  
(Repeat but with four frogs, then three, and so on.)



# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children's large and small muscles are growing and developing daily. Children master physical tasks at different rates but in predictable patterns.

- **INFANTS:** may be lifting their heads around three months, next they will lift their chest, then roll, crawl, sit, stand and eventually learn to walk. Be sure your baby has a safe, clean area where they can experience time on their tummy each day.
- **TODDLERS:** love to move. Give your child opportunities to run, climb, and throw in safe areas. Offer activities to strengthen their hand/grasp, such as using a spoon, tearing paper, and turning door knobs.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** should practice running, jumping with both feet, skipping and galloping. Give your child many opportunities to use crayons, pencils and child sized scissors.



# AUGUST

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** There are many local parks which offer play areas for children of different age groups. Visit Ingham County Parks at [www.pk.ingham.org](http://www.pk.ingham.org). Also look for the Back to School Health Fair sponsored by Ingham County Health Department at [www.hd.ingham.org/ForParents.aspx](http://www.hd.ingham.org/ForParents.aspx).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Have your child give you directions for getting dressed or making a snack. Make a mistake and let them correct you!	<b>P</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>P</b> together. Look for " <b>P's</b> " today or objects that begin with the /p/ sound as in <i>pig</i> .	Today is all about the number <b>8</b> . See how many <b>8's</b> you can find as you go about your day.	Make lines with chalk or string and practice walking while keeping your balance.	Do a puzzle or play a game together. Practice taking turns!	Join a play and learn group. Go to <a href="http://www.inghamgreatstart.org">www.inghamgreatstart.org</a> to find a location near you.	Play with a dishpan of water and plastic cups, spoons and bowls.
Pretend to have a phone conversation with your child. Practice answering the phone and inviting someone over to play.	Write your child's name. Have them trace the letters with their finger and then with a pen.	Collect a bag of items from outside, then sort them by something they have in common.	Practice cutting squares with scissors.	Invite a neighbor, friend or relative over for a playdate.	Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It!" Make up extra verses!	Make cloud dough together (¼ cup of oil + 2 cups flour). Let your child play with this sensory mess outside on the grass!
Say and act out the finger play "Five Plump Peas."	<b>Q</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>Q</b> together. Look for " <b>Q's</b> " today or objects that begin with the /q/ sound as in <i>quilt</i> .	A <b>square</b> is the shape of the day. Count how many <b>squares</b> you can find today!	Stretch together. Stand up tall and reach to the sky, bend to one side, then the other. Repeat. Stretch out your bodies!	Help your child learn their name, address and phone number.	Have your child help with a household task today.	Blow bubbles together. How long before one pops? How high do they float?
With your child, look at the pictures in a book and guess what happens. Then read it to see if you're right!	Visit the library to choose books with your child. Help your child practice asking the librarian for suggestions or a specific item location.	Play Number Dash: write numbers on the sidewalk then call out numbers and dash to those numbers.	Play "Red Light, Green Light."	Visit a place in your community you've never been before.	Ask your child what frustrates them.	Think of 5 things that are orange. Think of 5 things at the store. Think of 5 things that are soft.
Read a book about animals. What's your favorite animal?	<b>R</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an <b>R</b> together. Look for " <b>R's</b> " today or objects that begin with the /r/ sound as in <i>rake</i> .	Today is a <b>brown</b> day. See how many <b>brown</b> things you can find. Talk about which things are <b>brown</b> .	Draw a picture of a tree in each season: spring, summer, fall, winter. Talk about the changing seasons.	Have a family story time today. Let each member of the family pick a favorite book and read together.	Practice making frustrated faces in the mirror during your bedtime routine.	Talk about wind together. Which objects can blow away in the wind? Can you test your predictions with a fan?

## FINGERPLAY: Five Plump Peas

Five plump peas in a pea pod pressed. (Hold one fist up)  
 One grew, two grew, and so did all the rest. (Open fist— one finger at a time)  
 They grew and they grew and they never stopped.  
 (Starting with hands together, move them apart on each "grew")  
 They grew so big that the pea pod popped! (Clap hands on "popped")

# LEARN MATH EVERY DAY

Math is not just about counting and numbers. There are hundreds of ways to include math in your child's everyday activities.

- **INFANTS:** Use every day activities as opportunities to count. Count socks as you put them on your baby, count baby's toes, tell them where you are putting things ("I put the block on top of the tower").
- **TODDLERS:** can start to recognize shapes, sort objects by type and use number words. Recite rhymes and sing songs that include number words with your child.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** can solve daily life math problems, such as how many plates to set for dinner. They can recognize and make patterns, and can count out loud to 10 or higher. Read books that include math concepts.

# SEPTEMBER

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** There is so much for families to do in Ingham County, no calendar could list them all! For fun family events, visit Hulafrog at [www.hulafrog.com](http://www.hulafrog.com). To learn more about resources and events related to the childbearing year and families with young children, visit Willow Tree Family Center at [www.willowtreefamily.com](http://www.willowtreefamily.com).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Wish on stars together at night. Tell each other your wishes.	<b>S</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an <b>S</b> together. Look for " <b>S</b> 's" today or objects that begin with the /s/ sound as in sun.	A <b>rectangle</b> is the shape of the day today. Count how many <b>rectangles</b> you can find today!	Visit the library with your child this week. Pick out books or stay and read a while. Check out events: <a href="http://www.cadl.org/events">www.cadl.org/events</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a> .	Draw a map of your neighborhood together. Talk with your child about where things are.	Draw a mad face and tell about a time you were mad.	Play a following directions game, like Simon Says with your child.
Encourage your child to tell you a story. Write down what they say and then read the story to them at bedtime.	Together with your child think of 10 things that rhyme with "mad."	Today is all about the number <b>9</b> . See how many <b>9</b> 's you can find as you go about your day.	Fold a paper airplane and fly it together.	Visit the children's section of your local library.	Lie down and close your eyes. Can you hear yourself breathing? Can you hear your heart beating? Did you calm down?	Discuss a plant's life cycle: seed, sprout, tree. Draw each stage on an index card. Help your child put them in the correct order.
Sing and act out the song, "The Wheels on the Bus."	<b>T</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>T</b> together. Look for " <b>T</b> 's" today or objects that begin with the /t/ sound as in toy.	Today is a <b>black</b> day. See how many <b>black</b> things you can find today. Talk about which things are <b>black</b> .	Find some objects you can trace around. Let your child trace around them and then try to match up the object with its outline.	Sit down and eat a meal together, talk about your favorite fall activity.	Make an emotions book with folded paper. Draw faces showing different emotions. Label them as you discuss emotions with your child.	Make mud outside. What happens when you add water to dry dirt?
Sing the ABC song in funny voices—robots, dinosaurs, etc.	As you read a story with your child, ask "who," "what," "where," "when" and "why" questions.	Count berries or other snacks as you eat them.	Practice cutting rectangles.	Practice using "please" and "thank you" with others.	Paint or draw with fingers or brushes. Put some music on and encourage your child to paint how the music feels.	Pretend you are a photographer and take pictures.
Talk about the moon and draw a picture of it. What shape is the moon?	Help your child write their name with play dough, salt, shaving cream, marker, etc.	Identify numbers on a phone. Talk about your phone number and try to memorize it. Make up a song about your phone number.	Practice jumping, crawling or hopping around objects outside.	Write a letter or draw a picture for a new friend.	Have your child practice putting on their own coat and backpack.	Predict what will sink or float in the bathtub or sink.

## SONG: Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
Round and round, round and round.  
The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
All through the town.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish...  
The driver on the bus says "move on back"...  
The people on the bus go up and down...  
The babies on the bus go "wah, wah, wah"...  
The parents on the bus say "I love you, I love you, I love you"...



# EVERY DAY ART

## CREATE, EXPLORE, IMAGINE!

Making art builds fine motor skills, boosts self-confidence and allows children to share their feelings in age-appropriate ways. Art improves children’s higher thinking skills and encourages them to use their imagination. Create a space where it is okay to make a mess.

- **INFANTS:** Allow them to explore different textures that are safe to touch and taste, even while eating. Let them tear junk mail!
- **TODDLERS:** Start simple! You don’t need fancy art supplies—use pencils, washable markers, crayons, scraps of paper. Let them experiment with materials. Avoid giving directions or suggesting changes. Remember the process of creating is more important than the product.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** Ask your child to tell you about their creation. Find some space to display their art work. If you haven’t already done so, add in more supplies such as watercolor paint, glue sticks and blunt tip scissors to snip at paper.

# OCTOBER

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum offers Family Days on the first Saturday of every month (excluding major holiday weekends), from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Families with children of all ages can enjoy making art. 547 E Circle Dr., East Lansing, MI 48824, [www.broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://www.broadmuseum.msu.edu).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Check out a CD or hoopla album from the library and learn a new song together.	Read to your child while they take a bath. You get a captive audience and your child gets a fun surprise!	The shape of the day is a <b>circle</b> . Count how many <b>circles</b> you see today! 	Draw pictures together. Focus on the process and the fun of drawing, not on the product.	Visit the library with your child this week. Pick out books or stay and read a while. Check out events: <a href="http://www.cadl.org/events">www.cadl.org/events</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a> .	Practice washing hands, brushing teeth and combing hair.	Make leaf rubbings. Collect leaves, put them under a sheet of paper, and rub a crayon over the paper. Fun textures and shapes!
Have your child give their baby doll a bath. Talk about each step of the process.	<b>U</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>U</b> together. Look for “ <b>U</b> ’s” today or objects that begin with the /u/ sound as in <i>uncle</i> .	Gather 10 rocks. How are they similar? How are they different?	Let your child help you rake leaves. Jump, run, toss leaves and play together!	Help your child make a phone call to a special friend or relative to tell them 2 things about fall.	Pretend to be the child and let your child be the parent. Let them have fun taking care of you!	Take a walk. Collect natural items from the ground. Use your collection to make leaf art. Read <i>Leaf Man</i> by Lois Ehlert.
Camp out! Make a fort with chairs and blankets. Have your child make up a story with you about camping.	Read an informational book about Fall today. Talk about why the leaves change and what kinds of events we enjoy in the fall season.	Today is all about the number <b>10</b> . How many <b>10</b> ’s can you find today? Count things in <b>10</b> ’s if you can!	Have your child put stickers on paper. The stickers can be of anything. Kids love to develop their fine-motor muscles with stickers!	Sit down and eat a meal together. Tell your child about your day and ask about theirs.	Talk to your child about seasonal items you see in the store and how they make you feel. What is real and what is pretend?	Collect and crumple dried leaves outside. What sound do they make? How do they smell or feel? Put leaves under a sheet of paper, and rub a crayon over the paper.
Look at photos of your family. Talk about your family and what makes them special.	Put some shaving cream on a baking sheet or in the bathtub. Practice writing your child’s name, letters, their age, and numbers.	Think of 5 things that are small. Think of 5 things that are purple. Think of 5 animals.	<b>V</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>V</b> together. Look for “ <b>V</b> ’s” today or objects that begin with the /v/ sound as in <i>vest</i> .	Visit a pumpkin patch or Farmer’s Market and talk about what a farmer does.	Draw a scary face and talk about what things are scary.	Carve a pumpkin or prepare squash. Let your child squish the seedy insides with their hands and count the seeds together!
Take a walk outside and talk about the changes you see in the fall.	Make your own greeting cards. Create a stash so you have one ready when an event comes up.	Make a pattern together. Alternate different colors of socks. What comes next in the pattern?	Make a spider web on the floor with masking tape or string. Pretend you are spiders.	Play a game together (Peek-a-Boo, Hide & Seek, I Spy, etc.).	Say “please” and “thank you” often—your child will too.	Experiment to see which toys or things will float or sink in the bath.

**SONG:**  
**Clap Your Hands**

Clap your hands, clap your hands, clap them just like me.  
Touch your ears, touch your ears, touch them just like me.  
Tap your feet, tap your feet, tap them just like me.  
Pat your head, pat your head, pat it just like me.

# WRITING STARTS LONG BEFORE CHILDREN CAN HOLD A PENCIL




Children need opportunities to develop eye-hand coordination, and to understand that ideas can be written and read by others.

- **INFANTS:** At mealtimes allow them to pinch, poke and pick up small pieces of food. Give them crayons to practice scribbling.
- **TODDLERS:** Provide pencils and washable markers so they can practice drawing and coloring. Help them use their fingers to draw in the sand. Let them tear paper, then glue the pieces together. Make playdough so they can roll, tear and cut it.
- **PRECHOOLERS:** can begin to write familiar words such as their name. Poke holes in cardboard and give them a shoe lace to string in and out. Give them stickers to put on paper. Help your child title their art work or dictate a story for you to write. Write a grocery list together on paper and use it while shopping.

## NOVEMBER

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** Library storytimes provide opportunities for writing and some libraries have a writing center. Find details at [www.cadl.org](http://www.cadl.org) or [www.elpl.org](http://www.elpl.org).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Play the "opposite game." Say a word and have your child tell you the opposite.	<b>W</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>W</b> together. Look for " <b>W</b> 's" today or objects that begin with the /w/ sound as in <b>water</b> .	The shape of the day is an <b>oval</b> . Count how many <b>ovals</b> you can find today. 	Choose a number for the day. See how many things you can find that come in that number. See if you can find that number in print.	Count the number of stairs as you help your child walk up or down.	Switch places. Pretend to be the baby while your child takes care of you.	Make placemats for mealtimes. They don't have to be perfect.
Make puppets out of brown paper lunch bags. Together, tell a story with your puppets.	Make up a story together. Take turns adding more to the story. Write it down.	Help your child set the table. Decide where each person will sit.	Sing: "Clap your hands 1, 2, 3. Clap your hands just like me." (Then roll, wave, etc.)	Take a walk or visit a local nature center and look for animals.	Talk about how we're all unique and special. Have your child name some special things about themselves.	Make binoculars out of cardboard tubes taped together. Play "I Spy" or be explorers!
Have your child help you make a list of their favorite books, songs, friends, etc. Save the list to look at again when they're older.	Write a letter to a family member today.	Play with beans or pasta in a deep pan or on a blanket. Drive cars through it, scoop it, pour it with measuring cups.	<b>X</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw an <b>X</b> together. Look for " <b>X</b> 's" today or objects that end with the /x/ sound as in <b>box</b> .	Attend storytime at the library with your child this week. Pick out books or stay and read a while. Check out events: <a href="http://www.cadl.org/events">www.cadl.org/events</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a>	Draw self-portraits with your child. Talk about them together.	Give your child dried pasta and glue and let them make a collage on a piece of paper.
Practice this month's song.	Visit the library with your child this week. Pick out books or stay and read a while. Check out events: <a href="http://www.cadl.org/events">www.cadl.org/events</a> or <a href="http://www.elpl.org">www.elpl.org</a>	Draw a pie on a plate. Then cut it into halves and quarters.	Trace around your hand and then decorate with crayons, markers or paint.	Make a thankful list together. Have each member of your family name something they are thankful for.	Teach your child the correct way to wash their hands. Make up a song to help them keep washing for the right length of time.	Talk about family today. What does it mean to you? Who's in your family? Draw a picture or write a story.
Today's color is <b>gray</b> . See how many <b>gray</b> things you can find today. Talk about the color <b>gray</b> .	While walking or driving, name the signs you see or count how many signs your child recognizes (stop signs, grocery store, restaurants, etc.).	Trace your child's foot and cut it out together. Measure things around the house in "feet." How many "feet" tall is your child?	Practice crawling, jumping or hopping around objects in your home.	Have a family storytime today. Have each member of your family pick a favorite and read them together.	Holidays can be stressful. Practice blowing bubbles to work on breathing to calm yourself.	Playing with playdough can be a calming activity. Make some together, then poke, tear, squeeze and pound it while talking about ways to help yourself feel calmer.

**SONG:**  
**If You're Happy and You Know It**

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.  
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.  
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it,  
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.  
(Also try "nod your head," "stomp your feet," and "do all three.")



# SAVE, SPEND, GIVE

Introducing responsibility and money management early will help your child grow up to be a financially responsible adult.

- **INFANTS:** Start the idea of save, spend and give with a "Save Jar" for gift money or small change. Introduce the idea of how to make decisions about sharing and spending when they are old enough to understand.
- **TODDLERS:** Help your child learn how to take turns, and show patience yourself by staying calm while waiting in traffic or in line at the store. Patience is a key part of saving!
- **PRESCHOOLERS:** Introduce financial basics by helping your child learn to name and sort money. Encourage them to play "Store," and assign a small job while you are shopping together, such as looking for items on a list or handing money to the cashier.

## DECEMBER

**LOCAL RESOURCE:** CACS Head Start offers Money Management classes for families in the community. MSUFCU Financial Education participates with local schools, organizations, clubs, and other community partners to provide educational presentations, events and activities. Visit [www.cacsheadstart.org/Family-Services](http://www.cacsheadstart.org/Family-Services) and [www.msufcu.org/events](http://www.msufcu.org/events).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Pretend to talk on the phone with your child. Talking develops vocabulary which helps kids become ready to read!	<b>Y</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>Y</b> together. Look for " <b>Y's</b> " or objects that begin with the /y/ sound as in <b>yellow</b> .	Write the numbers 1–5 on paper. Next to each number, draw items to look for. (1-ball, 2-socks, 3-blocks, etc.)	Paper tearing: Let your child develop their fine-motor muscles by tearing paper. Glue that paper into a collage, if appropriate.	Talk about your favorite colors. Walk around and look for those colors everywhere today!	Take turns making faces in a mirror. Show excitement and talk about what things are exciting.	Collect objects from around your house. Sort them by size: small, medium, large, tiny, etc. or by color.
Talk about your day. What did you do? How was it? Who did you see? What did you have for lunch?	Play the rhyming game! Say a word and then encourage your child to say a word that rhymes with it.	Make a pattern together. Alternate different colors of objects. What comes next in the pattern?	Play "Follow the Leader."	Play the guessing game. Describe an object and see if you can guess what it is. Then let your child describe something.	Allow your child to make choices, such as what socks to wear. Making choices builds independence and confidence.	Create something out of recycled items such as boxes, paper or plastic bottles.
Talk about what animals do in winter.	<b>Z</b> is the letter of the day. Trace/draw a <b>Z</b> together. Look for " <b>Z's</b> " today or objects that begin with the /z/ sound as in <b>zebra</b> .	Look for patterns in your environment today (in the carpet, on the ceiling, as you walk past buildings, etc.). Talk about them together.	Play music or clap and then stop and "freeze." This is good listening and balance practice!	Let your child dictate a letter for you to write. Show them their words and help them get the letter to someone special.	Have fun playing with your child for 20 minutes. Let them take the lead.	Bake cookies and share with family or friends.
Talk about winter in Michigan and around the world today. Is it cold everywhere?	Look for pictures of bears (or other things) in a book together. Count how many you find.	Practice counting backwards from 10.	Pretend to be snowflakes, then snowballs, then a snowman, and then melt together.	Play "I Spy." Say, "I spy something round and yellow." See if your child can guess what it is.	Compliment your child on doing something well; be specific.	Practice getting dressed and undressed for cold weather.
Talk about friends today. What does it mean to be a good friend?	Visit the library with your child this week. Pick out books or stay and read a while.	The shape of the day is a <b>diamond</b> . Count how many <b>diamonds</b> you can find today!	Go outside and talk about what winter looks like. Is there snow?	Talk about gift-giving today. Make a homemade gift for someone you love.	Draw pictures together, focusing on the process, not the product. Talk about what each of you is drawing.	Draw a snowman together. Talk about accessories for your snowman. What color hat should it have?

**SONG:**  
Twinkle, Twinkle,  
Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star  
How I wonder what you are.  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky,  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star  
How I wonder what you are.

# WHAT CHILDREN ARE LIKE: Birth to Age 5

Adapted from: "TOYS: Tools for Learning." NAEYC Brochure #571

No two children develop and grow at exactly the same pace. Here are a few things you can look for as you watch your child's growth and development. If you have questions or concerns about how your child is growing and developing, you may want to talk to your child's doctor or call the toll-free numbers listed below.



## APPROXIMATE AGE

## WHAT CHILDREN ARE LIKE

### BIRTH TO 3 MONTHS

Begin to smile at people, coo  
Follow moving person or object with eyes  
Prefer faces and bright colors  
Reach, discover hands, kick feet, lift head  
Suck with pleasure  
Cry, but often are soothed when held  
Turn head toward sounds

### 4 TO 6 MONTHS

Prefer parents and older siblings to other people  
Repeat actions that have interesting results  
Listen intently, respond when spoken to  
Laugh, gurgle, imitate sounds  
Explore hands and feet, put objects in mouth  
Sit when propped, roll over, scoot, bounce  
Grasp objects without using thumbs, bat at hanging objects  
Smile often

### 7 TO 12 MONTHS

Remember simple events, form simple concepts  
Identify themselves, body parts, voices of familiar people  
Understand own name, other common words  
Say first meaningful words  
Explore, bang, or shake objects with hands  
Find hidden objects, put objects in and out of containers  
Sit alone  
Creep, pull themselves up, stand, walk  
May seem shy or become upset with strangers

### 1 TO 1½ YEARS

Imitate adult actions  
Speak and understand more words and ideas  
Enjoy stories  
Experiment with objects  
Walk steadily, climb stairs

### 1½ TO 2 YEARS

Assert independence, but strongly prefer familiar people  
Recognize ownership of objects  
Develop friendships, but also play alone  
Are beginning to understand what adults want them to do, but do not yet have the ability to control themselves

### 2 TO 3½ YEARS

Solve problems  
Speak and understand even more  
Show pride in accomplishments, like to help with tasks  
Exhibit more body control, run  
Play more with others  
Begin pretend play

### 3½ TO 5 YEARS

Enjoy learning new skills  
Learn language rapidly  
Are always on the go  
Have some sense of danger  
Gain more control of hands and fingers  
Frustrated easily  
Act more independent, but are still dependent, too

Act out familiar scenes  
Have a longer attention span  
Act silly, boisterous, may use shocking language  
Talk a lot, ask many questions  
Want real adult things, keep art projects  
Test physical skills and courage with caution  
Reveal feelings in dramatic play  
Like to play with friends, do not like to lose  
Share and take turns sometimes



For free help and information for children from birth to age 3 with possible developmental delays or disabilities. Call toll-free 1-800-EarlyOn (1-800-327-5966) or visit [www.1800EarlyOn.org](http://www.1800EarlyOn.org)



Build Up helps parents and their children, ages 3 to 5, who are having difficulty learning and who may be in need of special education supports and/or services. Call toll-free 1-800-320-8384 or visit [www.BuildUpMi.org](http://www.BuildUpMi.org) for more information.

# LEARNING ON THE GO

## AT HOME:

You can turn everyday household chores and activities into fun learning games for your child.

### Doing Laundry

Laundry activities can build math and cooperation skills. Feeling useful also helps children feel good, which encourages them to continue to want to be helpful. Your child can:

- Make piles of light clothes and dark clothes.
- Find matching pairs of socks.
- Find all the shirts to put into a pile for folding.

### At Meals

Mealtime discussions can help your child's development and foster learning. Mealtime interactions help children use language to analyze, sequence and predict while promoting a love of language.

- Ask your child to tell you a story about their day or tell them a story about your day.
- Let your child help make the meal—tear the lettuce for the salad, stir the spaghetti sauce, or help set the table.

### At Bedtime

Help your child wind down at the end of the day and make bedtime less stressful and more calming.

- Create a consistent bedtime schedule that your child can count on.
- For example: Take a bath, brush teeth, read a story, give a kiss, go to sleep.
- Your preschool child can help plan bedtime traditions and use special time for listening to stories, making up stories, or talking about the day.



## TRAVELING:

Use traveling time to enhance your child's natural curiosity and find ways to interact and connect with your child.

### In the Car/Bus

- Talk about your child's day. Ask specific questions: "Did you draw in preschool?" or "Did you eat a cheese sandwich?"
- Talk with your child about where you are going in the future to help them develop thinking and planning skills ("We are going to the market on the way home").

### On a Walk

- Taking your child on a walk is not only good exercise, but allows them to experience nature and learn about the outdoors.
- Make up rhymes or sing marches as you walk. Try walking and singing or chanting fast, then slow.
- Help your child learn to be safe by stopping at corners and driveways and showing them how to look both ways for cars.
- Ask your child questions. What sounds do you hear? What animals do you see? What is the weather like today?

## PUBLIC PLACES:

### At the Grocery Store

Help keep your trips to the grocery store stress free and educational.

- Let your child make food choices. Should we buy apples, oranges, or grapes today?
- Have your child find items on your grocery list.
- Let your child help put away the boxes and canned goods when you get home.

### At the Park/Playground

Discover ways to transform activity into learning.

- How fast can you run toward the big tree?
- Which slide is bigger, the red one or the silver one?
- Have your child count the number of swings or other children.

### At the Library

Libraries are full of learning opportunities and are wonderful places for exploring language and books.

- Visit the library to get your own library card.
- Let your child pick out their own library books.
- Teach your child about proper care and borrowing and returning books.
- Attend storytime and other events at your local library.



**Source:** *Born Learning by Mind in the Making*, a project of the Families and Work Institute. For further information on early learning tips for parents, visit [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

Brain science-based early learning tips: [www.joinvroom.org](http://www.joinvroom.org)

NAEYC for families: [families.naeyc.org](http://families.naeyc.org)

Ingham Intermediate School District's Family Learning Connection: [www.inghamisd.org/flc](http://www.inghamisd.org/flc)