



---

# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS IN FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

---

Full-day kindergarten (kindergarten) is designed to give your child a stronger start in school and in life – by providing an engaging learning program during the school day that is based on a child's natural desire for play. All children enter school capable, competent and ready to learn. Kindergarten will help them grow physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.

The kindergarten program is organized into four broad areas or “frames.” They reflect the way in which learning naturally occurs during children's exploration, play and inquiry.

- » **Belonging and Contributing**
- » **Self-Regulation and Well-Being**
- » **Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours**
- » **Problem Solving and Innovating**

## About literacy and math

Before starting school, children have already had a wide range of experiences with words, letters, numbers and pictures, and have used language and mathematical thinking at home and in their community.

Learning happens when people are actively engaged in thinking and working together. This is the foundation of the kindergarten program. Children learn different ways to think about things, to consider different perspectives and to think critically about information. This is more than only identifying letters and numbers. Children may show their understanding by:

- writing, painting or drawing
- exploring things and asking questions or making comments about what they observe
- drawing pictures and/or printing some numbers, letters, and/or words
- creating with materials such as blocks, sand or recycled items



[ontario.ca/kindergarten](http://ontario.ca/kindergarten)

- engaging in story telling during dramatic play and other types of pretend play
- using technology like tablets to record and communicate their thinking and learning.

These experiences develop math and literacy skills in such a way that children develop a love of learning that can instill a habit of learning throughout their life. Children ask and answer questions, create and test theories, listen to and tell stories and solve problems to show their understanding of math and literacy. In kindergarten, math and literacy are not limited to a specific time of day. Instead, they are incorporated throughout the day and made visible, or explicit, to children in any context, and observed by the educators at any time, both in and out of the classroom.

## Supporting Your Child's Learning

Families learn with children every day. Here are some ways families engage in learning:

- Communication between you and your child began from the moment you first looked at them. Eye contact, facial expressions, touching and sharing sounds are the beginning of a lifetime of interactions with others. A child's first smile is celebrated as the beginning of expressing emotions.
- Children begin to communicate at birth using sounds and then gestures. Adults listen, observe and respond to what children say and do which helps children shape and express thoughts and develop language and vocabulary. Conversations and interactions with your child, such as responding to their questions, thoughts, opinions and ideas support their development in literacy and math.
- Making math talk part of everyday experiences and conversations contributes to your child's learning and helps build a positive attitude towards math. Everyday routines such as measuring, sorting and organizing, finding

shapes or patterns and counting can help your child learn and think about math and become more comfortable with it.

## Did You Know?

- Literacy learning begins even before children are born (when we talk and sing to our babies) and continues into adulthood. It is a gradual ongoing process of learning to use and understand language. Learning in mathematics happens in much the same way.
- Some of the first words a child uses show mathematical thinking. A young child who asks for "more" is developing an understanding of quantity and addition.

## How you can support your child's growth and development outside the classroom

### ...at home

- Write notes to each other. Include words, numbers, drawings and symbols.
- Discuss stories that you read from books and retell from family experiences and memories.
- Watch TV and online programs together and make connections to things your family does and knows about. Talk about the messages you hear on television and how language is used to persuade you, e.g. through advertising.
- Make the connection between household tasks (i.e., sorting laundry, matching socks, setting the table and following a recipe) and the math used to complete the task. For example, when you follow a recipe, things are measured – measuring is part of math. Or when setting the table, things were counted out and matched to the number of people having a meal. Math helped to figure that out.
- Sing songs, recite rhymes and play word and number games together to build skills and have fun with math and language.

---

If you and your child are more comfortable in a language other than English, please use it! Language(s) are an important part of our identity and they need to be maintained. Reading and talking to your child in the language of your home helps them learn how language works and is used (e.g. to question, comment, describe, make theories) and this understanding is applied to other languages.

---

### ...in the community

- Explain to your child why you are reading something (recipes, instruction manuals, signs on streets and labels on packages in stores) or writing something down (shopping lists, notes to others, instructions) and when you are using math (counting, estimating, measuring, paying for something) to figure something out. This will help your child see that literacy and math are ways to help understand the world around them and are essential to completing tasks and solving problems in everyday life.
- Read things together. Look for signs your child recognizes, like the name of stores and restaurants.
- When you go places together, such as the supermarket, the park, a forest, etc., talk with your child about what they see, smell, hear, feel or notice.

### ...in conversations with your child

- Ask questions that help your child give more than a “yes” or “no” answer:
  - “Tell me about the book you read today.”
  - “Did you draw or paint today? Tell me about your picture.”
  - When reading a story, ask questions like, “What does it remind you of? What do you think will happen?”
- Explore words together. For instance, a child may use the word “big” to mean many different things, i.e., tall, wide, heavy, full, a person older than they are. Use words that more accurately describe things, feelings and ideas so your child builds a richer vocabulary.
- Have regular conversations that involve both you and your child. Start with a prompt like, “Tell me about your day” or “What was the funniest thing that happened today?” This will help your child talk with you about their ideas and experiences.

### For Further Information

Find out more about what your child will learn and do in kindergarten, the educators working in the classroom and how to prepare your child at [www.ontario.ca/kindergarten](http://www.ontario.ca/kindergarten).

- Reading and Writing with Your Child – <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/parentGuideLitEn.pdf>
- Doing Mathematics with Your Child – <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/parentGuideNumEn.pdf>
- Inspiring Your Child to Learn and Love Mathematics – [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement-math/en/index.htm](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement-math/en/index.htm)