

Kindergarten

The World in His Hands

Kindergarten age kids are on the brink of formal learning. This is a time of preparing. They will take interest in soaking up lots of general and specific information about animals, plants, places in the world, and a variety of other topics.

Five-year-olds are ready to begin some **written work**-- such as learning to write letters and numbers. If they lack coordination and seem to struggle with writing, start with the easiest letters: the capital letters that are made with only straight lines.

They may enjoy working through work pages in which they circle some items or make large X's on them. They often enjoy doing **cutting and pasting**. And they will continue with many of the **hands-on learning activities and toys** they have used as preschoolers: puzzles, building toys, miniature cars/people/animals, art and craft projects.

Because kindergarteners are becoming more proficient at **playing games**, you can try some that are more challenging, such as dominoes, board games, card games such as Crazy Eights, and others.

Some more suggestions for teaching kindergarteners:

Starting a Simple Routine

If you have not yet started any regular learning routines, now is the time to start . . . Getting used to having certain learning activities happening on a day-to-day basis will help prepare 5 and 6-year-olds for the self-discipline required for studying. There will be a smoother transition to first grade work for both you and your child if he/she has a **regular** (but brief) **schedule** during kindergarten.

Consider **using a notebook** with pages similar to Gentle Shepherd's *Preschool Beginning Notebook Pages*. There are many pages you can make yourself: simple adding or take away problems, more letter pages and pages for blending letter sounds to make words, a telephone number page (sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,") and a home address page. Going through **a learning notebook** is an easy way to start doing a regular daily "school" activity.

Reading aloud to a kindergarten child is also a high priority. They are ready to **listen to a variety of literature**, including some longer stories such as chapter books and children's history biographies. They will also enjoy hearing children's poetry and traditional rhymes, and learning about science and geography through picture books.

Beginning to Read

After your child learns several letter sounds and has learned how they can blend together to make words, you can have him/her **read some words and short sentences**. A highly recommended set of first readers is *Bob Books Set 1*. This is a gentle intro to reading-- these fun little books can be read and re-read until the child reads them fairly easily.

You can also practice with **phrase flash cards** (these can easily be made yourself). Use short phrases or sentences with words the child can sound out. For example, "in a box," "on a desk," "Sam has a big hat."

After a child has started reading by sounding out words, it is a good idea to introduce the idea of "**sight words**," and have him/her read sentences or stories that include one or two common words that cannot be learned phonetically-- such as "the," "one," "two."

Also, you can continue to introduce **more phonetic letter groupings**, such as *sh, ch, wh, oi, ou*, etc. And you can talk about silent letters, such as *gh* in "light," *k* in "knob," and others.

Number Recognition and Math

To learn to **recognize numerals**, play memory match games using two sets of numbers 1-10, or number lotto games, or games like *Uno*.

Kindergarteners who have learned to recognize numerals can do simple **adding and subtracting problems**. Because often they don't easily write numbers, they will enjoy using number tiles (numbers on plastic tiles, or homemade tiles with printed numbers glued onto thick craft foam, or cardboard) to give answers.

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