



Transitioning to KINDERGARTEN



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



Summer Packet for Families

Fun, simple activities to build the skills
your child needs for a confident and
successful start to kindergarten.

Strong
Hands.
Confident
Kids.



FINE MOTOR
SKILLS



VISUAL-MOTOR
SKILLS



PREWRITING &
HANDWRITING



CLASSROOM
READINESS



FUN & EASY
ACTIVITIES



Helping your child build the skills for success—one small step at a time.

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Getting Ready for Kindergarten
An Occupational Therapy–Informed Summer Activity Guide for Families
By Irene Hannam, MS OTR/L

Welcome to Kindergarten Readiness

Starting kindergarten is an exciting transition. Children enter school with different experiences, interests, strengths, and developmental needs. Some children may already enjoy drawing and writing their names, while others may still be learning how to use scissors, open containers, manage crayons, or remain with a tabletop activity.

That is okay.

Kindergarten readiness is not determined by whether a child can complete a stack of worksheets or write every letter before school begins. Children benefit from a broad foundation that helps them participate in classroom routines, explore learning materials, care for their belongings, communicate their needs, and approach new activities with confidence.

Before handwriting becomes efficient, children develop many underlying skills, including:

- Postural stability and shoulder control
- Hand strength and finger coordination
- Using both hands together
- Coordinating what the eyes see with how the hands move
- Copying lines and simple shapes
- Using crayons, scissors, glue, and other classroom tools
- Following directions and completing simple routines
- Persisting when an activity feels challenging
- Managing clothing, lunch materials, and personal belongings

This guide provides fun, practical activities families can use during the summer. Most activities require only five to ten minutes and can be included in everyday routines and play.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is to help your child gain experience, confidence, independence, and enjoyment.

A Note About Development

Children develop at different rates. The skills in this guide are general readiness indicators, not requirements that every child must master before the first day of kindergarten.

Some children may need more time, practice, modeling, or support. A child's willingness to try, participate, explore, and learn is just as important as completing a task perfectly.

Consider talking with your child's preschool teacher, pediatrician, or occupational therapist when your child consistently:

- Avoids coloring, drawing, puzzles, building, or crafts
- Becomes unusually frustrated during fine motor activities
- Experiences pain or significant fatigue when using the hands
- Has difficulty using both hands together
- Cannot safely manage child scissors with assistance
- Has difficulty opening common lunch or school containers
- Struggles to copy basic lines or simple shapes
- Uses so much or so little pressure that drawing is difficult
- Has difficulty participating in short, age-appropriate routines
- Loses skills that were previously demonstrated

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for an individualized developmental, medical, or occupational therapy evaluation.

How to Use This Guide

You do not need to complete every activity.

Choose one or two activities at a time and repeat favorites throughout the summer. Repetition helps children develop strength, coordination, confidence, and efficiency.

A simple summer routine might include:

- Two or three hand-development activities each week
- One drawing or prewriting activity
- One cutting or craft activity
- Daily opportunities for movement and outdoor play
- Practice with one classroom-independence skill

Keep activities brief and playful. Stop or adapt the activity when your child becomes tired, frustrated, or uncomfortable.

Understanding Hand Development

The hand-development section includes several skill areas, such as grip strength, pinch strength, thumb opposition, hand separation, and in-hand manipulation.

Parents do not need to determine which specific hand skill their child needs or attempt to diagnose a weakness. These categories simply explain how different parts of the hand work together.

Choose a variety of activities from different sections. Many activities build several skills at the same time.

Safety Information

Provide direct adult supervision during activities involving:

- Scissors
- Water
- Playgrounds
- Small objects
- Beads
- Buttons
- Pompoms
- Play coins
- Craft materials
- Yarn
- Straws
- Food
- Sensory materials

Small objects may present a choking hazard. Select materials that are appropriate for your child's developmental level and habits.

Avoid placing strings, cords, or yarn around the neck. Keep pencils, craft sticks, and other pointed objects away from the face.

Check for food, skin, or sensory-material allergies before beginning an activity.

Kindergarten Readiness Skill Areas

1. Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills allow children to use the small muscles of the hands and fingers for drawing, building, fastening clothing, opening containers, and manipulating classroom materials.

Skills Many Children Are Developing

A child entering kindergarten may be learning to:

- Hold and control crayons, markers, chalk, and pencils
- Use the opposite hand to stabilize paper or materials
- Pick up and place small objects
- Build with interlocking blocks
- Turn puzzle pieces and book pages
- Open and close simple containers
- Complete a tabletop activity for several minutes

A child does not need a perfect pencil grasp. Look for a grasp that allows the child to control the tool comfortably without pain, excessive pressure, or rapid fatigue.

2. Hand Strength and Endurance

Children need enough strength and endurance to use crayons, scissors, glue sticks, fasteners, and classroom materials.

Strength develops best through active play rather than long periods of pencil work.

Skills Many Children Are Developing

Children may be learning to:

- Squeeze, pinch, pull, and manipulate materials
- Color or draw for a short period without excessive fatigue
- Open common containers
- Use scissors for brief tasks
- Carry and manage lightweight belongings

3. Visual-Motor Skills

Visual-motor skills help children coordinate what they see with how they move their hands.

Skills Many Children Are Developing

Children may be learning to:

- Copy vertical and horizontal lines
- Copy a circle and cross
- Attempt a square and diagonal lines
- Trace simple paths
- Complete beginner mazes
- Draw recognizable pictures
- Build simple designs from a model

4. Visual-Perceptual Skills

Visual perception helps children notice, compare, remember, and understand visual information.

Skills Many Children Are Developing

Children may be learning to:

- Match colors, shapes, pictures, and objects
- Recognize what is the same and different
- Complete simple puzzles

- Find hidden objects
- Sort materials by color, size, shape, or category
- Understand positional words such as under, beside, and between

5. Prewriting and Early Handwriting

Prewriting strokes are the lines and shapes children combine when they draw and form letters and numbers.

Common Prewriting Forms

- Vertical/horizontal line
- Circle
- Cross
- Diagonal lines
- Square
- X
- Triangle

Not every child will have mastered every shape before kindergarten.

Skills Many Children Are Developing

Children may be learning to:

- Imitate and copy lines and shapes
- Draw pictures
- Make controlled marks
- Recognize their name
- Build or copy their name
- Attempt to write their first name

6. Scissor and Classroom-Tool Skills

Children use hand strength, bilateral coordination, visual-motor control, and motor planning when using scissors, glue, markers, and other classroom tools.

Skills Many Children Are Developing

Children may be learning to:

- Open and close scissors
- Snip paper
- Cut across a strip
- Follow a thick straight line
- Open and close a glue stick
- Apply glue to a target area
- Replace marker caps
- Manage crayons, pencils, folders, and containers

7. Classroom Independence

Kindergarten also requires children to manage everyday routines.

Skills Many Children Are Developing

Children may be learning to:

- Follow two-step directions
- Clean up materials
- Manage a backpack
- Open lunch containers
- Put on and remove a jacket
- Manage clothing during bathroom routines
- Ask for help
- Recognize personal belongings

Hand Development Summer Activities

1. Palmar Arches

What It Is: The palmar arches are the natural curves within the palm that allow the hand to cup, adjust, and hold objects securely.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

Well-developed hand arches support:

- Holding crayons, pencils, and markers
- Using scissors
- Manipulating classroom tools
- Adjusting the hand to objects of different shapes and sizes
- Developing controlled finger movements

Summer Activity Options

- **Water-Play Squeeze Station**
 - Fill a tub or bucket with sponges, squeeze toys, spray bottles, cups, and turkey basters.
 - Have your child squeeze, spray, scoop, and transfer water between containers.
 - **Try this:** Draw chalk pictures outside and use a spray bottle to "erase" them.
- **Playdough Ice Cream Shop**
Have your child:
 - Roll playdough into ice cream scoops
 - Cup the hand around each scoop
 - Squeeze dough into pretend cones
 - Pinch small toppings
 - Cut dough with child-safe scissors
- **Treasure-in-the-Palm Game**
 - Place two or three large beads, pompoms, or play coins in your child's palm.
 - Ask your child to gently hold the treasures in the palm while using the fingertips to pick up another object.
- **Bubble Scoop**
 - Place floating toys or plastic balls in water. Have your child scoop them using cupped hands and transfer them to another container.
- **Sandcastle Bakery**
 - Use damp sand to create pretend cupcakes, cookies, or ice cream scoops.
 - Encourage your child to cup, pack, squeeze, and shape the sand.
- **Dough Press**
 - Have your child press large marbles, stones, or balls into playdough using the palm. Remove them and repeat.
 - Use objects that are too large to swallow.

2. Hand Separation

What It Is: Hand separation is the ability to use the thumb, index finger, and middle finger for skilled movement while the ring finger and pinky provide stability.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

This separation helps children:

- Develop a controlled pencil grasp
- Use scissors efficiently
- Manipulate small classroom objects
- Color and draw with greater precision
- Adjust objects within the hand

Summer Activity Options

- **Spray-Bottle Garden Helper**
 - Have your child use a spray bottle to water plants, mist outdoor chalk drawings, or spray toy animals during water play.
- **Coin-Drop Lemonade Stand**
 - Pretend to operate a lemonade stand.
 - Place several large play coins, poker chips, or cardboard coins in your child's palm. Have your child move one item at a time to the fingertips and place it into a bank or container.
- **Pom-Pom Hide-and-Place**
 - Place one or two pompoms under the ring finger and pinky.
 - Ask your child to keep them gently tucked in the palm while using the thumb and index finger to place stickers, beads, or game pieces.
- **Finger Puppet Show**
 - Place finger puppets on the thumb, index finger, and middle finger.
 - Encourage those fingers to move while the ring finger and pinky remain curled.
- **Crayon Treasure Hold**
 - Invite your child to gently hold a small pompom with the ring finger and pinky while coloring with a short crayon.
 - Do not force the position or continue if it interferes with comfortable coloring.
- **Clothespin Delivery Game**
 - Have your child use clothespins to move paper tickets, pretend food, or lightweight cards between containers.

3. Thumb Opposition and Open Web Space

What It Is: Thumb opposition is the ability to move the thumb across the palm to touch the fingertips. An open web space is the rounded space between the thumb and index finger.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

Thumb opposition supports:

Pencil and crayon control

- Buttoning and fastening
- Opening containers
- Manipulating scissors
- Picking up and positioning small objects

Summer Activity Options

- **Bubble-Wrap Pop Party**

Have your child pop bubbles using:

 - Thumb and index finger
 - Thumb and middle finger
 - Thumb and ring finger
 - Thumb and pinky

Dispose of torn plastic immediately.
- **Finger-to-Thumb Tap Game**
 - Ask your child to touch the thumb to each fingertip while saying:
 - "Pointer, middle, ring, pinky."
 - Try it slowly and then to the rhythm of a song.
- **Sponge-Squeeze Relay**
 - Place two buckets several feet apart.
 - Have your child soak a sponge, carry it to the second bucket, and squeeze out the water.
- **Playdough Pinch Creatures**
 - Create a playdough caterpillar, crab, sun, or sea creature.

- Use the thumb and each finger to pinch legs, rays, spikes, or decorations.
- **Craft-Stick Pick-Up**
 - Place wide craft sticks flat on a table. Have your child pick them up one at a time using the thumb and a different finger.
- **A-OK Search**
 - Have your child make an "A-OK" circle with the thumb and index finger and look through it like a tiny telescope.
 - Repeat with the thumb and middle finger.

4. Pincer Grasp

What It Is: A pincer grasp uses the tips of the thumb and index finger to pick up and manipulate small objects.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

A refined pincer grasp supports:

Pencil and crayon use

- Managing buttons and zippers
- Turning pages
- Peeling stickers
- Manipulating small classroom materials

Summer Activity Options

- **Beach Treasure Pick-Up**
 - Hide shells, large beads, pompoms, or small toys in a container of sand.
 - Have your child find and pick them up using the fingertips.
- **Sticker Sunshine Art**
 - Draw a large sun, flower, watermelon, fish, or beach ball.
 - Have your child peel and place small stickers to decorate the picture.
- **Nature Collage**
 - Collect small leaves, flower petals, pieces of grass, or other safe natural materials.
 - Have your child pick them up and glue them onto paper.
- **Bead Drop**
 - Place large beads into a narrow container, muffin tin, or ice-cube tray one at a time.
- **Snack Helper**
 - During snack preparation, have your child place cereal pieces, berries, crackers, or other appropriate foods into sections of a plate.
 - Follow food-safety precautions and supervise eating.
- **Peel-and-Stick Road**
 - Draw a road, spiral, letter, or shape. Have your child place small stickers along the path.
- **Paper-Scrap Pickup**
 - Tear or cut paper into small pieces. Have your child pick up each piece using the fingertips and glue it onto a picture.

5. Grip Strength

What It Is: Grip strength is the overall strength used to hold, squeeze, carry, and control objects with the whole hand.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

Grip strength contributes to:

- Writing and coloring endurance
- Cutting
- Carrying classroom materials
- Opening containers
- Playground participation
- Managing belongings

Summer Activity Options

- **Car-Wash Fun**
 - Have your child squeeze sponges and spray bottles while washing bicycles, outdoor toys, toy cars, or plastic animals.
- **Playground Hang Time**
 - Encourage brief periods of hanging, climbing, crawling, or moving across safe playground equipment.
 - Provide close adult supervision and assistance as needed.
- **Playdough Power Hands**

Have your child:

- Squeeze a large ball of playdough
- Flatten it with the palm
- Pull it apart
- Roll thick snakes
- Push cookie cutters into it
- Hide and find large objects
- **Wet-Sponge Transfer**
 - Place a bucket of water beside an empty bucket.
 - Have your child soak a sponge, carry it, and squeeze the water into the empty bucket.
- **Grocery Helper**
 - Have your child carry lightweight, unbreakable groceries or pantry items using both hands.
- **Laundry-Basket Push**
 - Place lightweight toys or towels in a laundry basket and have your child push it across the floor.
- **Animal Rescue**
 - Hide plastic animals in playdough, kinetic sand, or crumpled paper.
 - Have your child pull, dig, and squeeze to rescue them.
- **Newspaper Ball Toss**
 - Have your child crumple sheets of scrap paper into balls and toss them into a basket.

6. Pinch Strength

What It Is: Pinch strength is the strength used between the thumb and one or more fingers.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

Pinch strength supports:

- Holding pencils and crayons
- Using scissors
- Manipulating glue sticks
- Opening packages
- Managing fasteners
- Picking up small objects

Summer Activity Options

- **Clothespin Sun Rays**
 - Clip clothespins around a paper plate to create the rays of a sun.
 - Add numbers, letters, shapes, or colors to make it a matching activity.
- **Tweezer Ice Cream Sorting**
 - Use child-safe tweezers or tongs to move pompom ice cream scoops into cups, cones, or an egg carton.
- **Cardboard Laundry Line**
 - Clip doll clothes, paper socks, pictures, or washcloths along the edge of a box, basket, or sturdy piece of cardboard.
 - This is safer than using a hanging string.
- **Chip-Clip Helper**

- Have your child open and close large food clips or bag clips and attach them to the edge of a container.
- **Playdough Porcupine**
 - Make a playdough animal and press wide craft sticks, short straws, or chenille-stem pieces into it.
- **Hole-Punch Summer Picture**
 - Draw dots around a paper sun, fish, flower, or watermelon.
 - Have your child punch a hole at each dot.
- **Sponge-Piece Pickup**
 - Cut clean sponges into large cubes. Have your child pick them up with tongs and sort them by color or size.
- **Clothespin Color Match**
 - Place colored dots around a paper plate.
 - Add matching colors to clothespins and have your child clip each one to the correct location.

7. Bilateral Coordination

What It Is: Bilateral coordination is the ability to use both sides of the body together in a controlled way.

One hand may perform the main action while the other stabilizes or assists.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

Children use bilateral coordination when:

- Cutting
- Holding paper while writing
- Opening lunch containers
- Using glue
- Dressing
- Building
- Catching a ball
- Managing a backpack

Summer Activity Options

- **Tear-and-Glue Summer Collage**
 - Have your child tear paper with both hands and glue the pieces to create a beach, garden, sunshine, fish, or picnic scene.
- **Yarn-Wrapped Popsicle**
 - Use a wide craft stick or cardboard popsicle shape.
 - Have your child hold it with one hand while wrapping yarn around it with the other.
 - Supervise yarn carefully (keep it away from the neck).
- **Cut-and-Crete**
 - Have your child cut across strips of colored paper and glue the pieces into a summer picture.
 - Progress from snipping to cutting straight lines and gentle curves.
- **Bubble Catch**
 - Blow bubbles and encourage your child to clap them between both hands.
- **Beach-Ball Tap**
 - Have your child hold, toss, catch, or tap a lightweight beach ball using both hands.
- **Rolling-Pin Bakery**
 - Use both hands on a rolling pin to flatten playdough.
 - Cut the dough into pretend cookies, fruit, or summer treats.
- **Container Practice**
 - Practice holding a container with one hand while opening the lid with the other.
 - Use lunch boxes, snack containers, water bottles, jars, and zip-top bags.
- **Paper-Tube Binoculars**
 - Hold two cardboard tubes together while an adult helps secure them.
 - Decorate them with stickers, crayons, or paper.
- **Lacing Cards**

- Have your child stabilize a lacing card with one hand while threading a lace with the other.
- **Ball Skills**
 - Practice rolling, catching, bouncing, and throwing a large ball with both hands.

8. In-Hand Manipulation

What It Is: In-hand manipulation is the ability to move or adjust an object within one hand without placing it down or using the other hand.

Why It Matters for Kindergarten

This skill helps children:

- Adjust a pencil
- Manage play coins and game pieces
- Position small objects
- Turn objects over
- Handle fasteners
- Work efficiently with classroom materials

Summer Activity Options

- **Coin-Flip Challenge**
 - Have your child turn a large play coin, poker chip, or cardboard coin from one side to the other using the fingers of one hand.
- **Pencil Walk**
 - Ask your child to walk the fingers from the eraser end of a short pencil toward the tip and back again.
 - Keep the pencil away from the face.
- **Coin-Bank Transfer**
 - Place two or three large play coins in your child's palm.
 - Ask the child to move one item at a time to the fingertips and place it into a bank.
- **Button Drop**
 - Place several large buttons in your child's palm.
 - Have the child move one button at a time to the fingertips and drop it into a container.
- **Flip-the-Block Game**
 - Have your child pick up a small block or game piece and turn it over within one hand before placing it down.
- **Crayon Turnaround**
 - Give your child a short crayon with the drawing end pointing toward the palm.
 - Ask the child to turn it around within one hand so it is ready to use.
- **Treasure Collector**
 - Have your child pick up one object at a time while storing the previously collected objects in the palm.
 - Then release the objects one at a time.
- **Dice Rotation**
 - Place a large die in your child's hand.
 - Ask the child to turn it to find a specific number without placing it on the table.
- **Small-Toy Delivery**
 - Hold several safe toys in the palm and move them one at a time to the fingertips to place them into a truck, container, or pretend store.

Additional Fine Motor Activity Options:

These activities develop several hand skills at the same time.

Playdough Activities

- Roll small balls using the fingertips.
- Make long snakes using both hands.
- Flatten dough with the palm.
- Pinch the edges of pretend pies.
- Cut dough with child-safe scissors.
- Press stamps or cookie cutters into the dough.
- Hide large beads or toys and find them.
- Build letters, shapes, animals, or pretend food.

Sticker Activities

- Decorate a name.
- Place stickers along a line.
- Fill a large shape.
- Make a sticker pattern.
- Match stickers to colored dots.
- Create a sticker counting page.
- Decorate a homemade card.
- Place stickers on a cardboard tube or paper cup.

Clothespin Activities

- Clip around a paper plate.
- Clip pictures along the edge of a box.
- Match colors or numbers.
- Pick up lightweight objects.
- Make animal legs or sun rays.
- Clip letters around a child's name.
- Transfer cotton balls between containers.

Water-Play Activities

- Squeeze sponges.
- Use spray bottles.
- Transfer water with droppers.
- Pour between containers.
- Wash toys.
- Use turkey basters.
- Rescue floating objects with tongs.
- Paint the sidewalk with water.

Outdoor Activities

- Draw with sidewalk chalk.
- Dig in sand or soil.
- Collect nature items.
- Build with rocks or sticks.
- Wash bicycles or toys.
- Use playground equipment.
- Toss and catch balls.
- Complete a sidewalk obstacle course.
- Paint a fence or sidewalk with water.
- Pick flowers or vegetables with adult guidance.

Visual-Motor Summer Activities:

Visual-motor skills help children coordinate what they see with how they move their hands.

Activity Options

- **Sidewalk Shape Trail**

- Draw vertical lines, horizontal lines, circles, crosses, squares, diagonals, and zigzags with chalk.

Have your child:

- Walk on the lines
- Drive a toy car over them
- Trace them with chalk
- Copy them nearby
- Jump from one shape to another

- **Road Builder**

- Draw wide roads on paper or pavement.

Include:

- Straight roads
- Curved roads
- Zigzag roads
- Circular roads
- Roads that stop at a target

Have your child drive a car along the path and later trace it with a crayon.

- **Copy My Block Design**

- Build a simple design using three to six blocks.
- Ask your child to build one that looks the same.
- Begin with designs placed directly beside the child's blocks.

- **Finish the Picture**

Draw part of a:

- Sun
- Face
- Flower
- House
- Butterfly
- Fish
- Ice cream cone

Have your child complete the drawing.

- **Connect-the-Dots**

- Create simple dot patterns that form a line, shape, letter, or picture.
- Number the dots when appropriate.

- **Beginner Mazes**

- Use wide paths and simple designs.
- Let your child trace the route with a finger or toy car before using a crayon.

- **Draw From a Model**

- Draw a simple picture one step at a time and have your child copy each step.

Examples include:

- Sun
- Flower
- Person
- Boat
- Ice cream cone
- Fish
- House

- **Copy a Craft-Stick Design**
 - Arrange two to six wide craft sticks into a shape or picture.
 - Ask your child to copy the design.
- **Pattern Building**
 - Create a simple pattern using blocks, stickers, beads, or colored objects.
 - Ask your child to continue it.
- **Target Toss and Draw**
 - Draw large shapes or letters with chalk.
 - Call out one, have your child toss a beanbag toward it, and then trace or copy it.

Visual-Perceptual Summer Activities:

Visual-perceptual skills help children notice, compare, remember, and understand visual information.

Activity Options

- **Summer I Spy**
Ask your child to find:
 - Something round
 - Something yellow
 - Two objects that match
 - Something partly hidden
 - Something smaller than a shoe
 - An object with stripes
 - Three objects used outside
- **Same or Different?**
 - Show two objects or pictures.
 - Ask your child to explain what is the same and what is different.
- **Sorting Station**
Sort safe objects by:
 - Color
 - Shape
 - Size
 - Texture
 - Category
 - Use

Change the sorting rule after the first round.
- **Memory Tray**
 - Place three to five familiar objects on a tray.
 - Let your child look, cover the tray, and remove one object.
 - Ask what is missing.
- **Hidden Picture Hunt**
 - Hide familiar objects in a busy picture, sensory bin, room, or outdoor area.
- **Puzzle Practice**
Use puzzles with:
 - Knob pieces
 - Inset pieces
 - Matching pictures
 - Six to twenty-four interlocking pieces

Choose a level that is challenging but manageable.
- **Scavenger Hunt**
 - Give picture or verbal clues for objects around the home or yard.

Use location words such as:

 - Under

- Over
- Beside
- Between
- Inside
- Behind
- **Match the Shadow**
 - Match toy animals or household objects to outlines or shadows drawn on paper.
- **What Changed?**
 - Arrange several objects.
 - Have your child close their eyes while you move or replace one.
 - Ask what changed.
- **Picture Matching**
 - Match photographs, cards, socks, lids, blocks, or toys that are the same.

Prewriting and Early Handwriting Activities:

Prewriting activities help children develop the lines and shapes used to form letters and numbers.

Activity Options

- **Sensory Writing**
 - Practice lines, shapes, or letters in:
 - Sand
 - Shaving cream
 - Whipped cream
 - Finger paint
 - Dry rice
 - Flour
 - Sidewalk chalk
- Check for allergies and supervise carefully.
- **Rainbow Writing**
 - Draw one large line, shape, letter, or name.
 - Have your child trace over it several times using different colors.
- **Wet-Dry-Try Outside**
 - Use a wet sponge or paintbrush to make lines and shapes on a sidewalk, chalkboard, fence, or other safe surface.
- **Vertical-Surface Drawing**
 - Tape paper to a wall, easel, or window.

Have your child draw:

- Roads
- People
- Shapes
- Rainbows
- Summer scenes
- Large letters
- **Shape Detective**
 - Search for circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, and lines in the environment.
 - Draw or build the shapes you find.
- **Copy My Line**
 - Draw one line or shape at a time and ask your child to copy it.

Progress through:

- Vertical line
- Horizontal line
- Circle

- Cross
- Diagonal lines
- Square
- X
- Triangle
- **Draw-and-Tell**
 - Have your child draw a picture and tell you about it.
 - Write the child's words underneath if desired.
- **Name Building**
 - Use magnetic letters, foam letters, letter cards, or bottle-cap letters to build the child's first name.
- **Name-Practice Progression**
 - Practice the child's name by:
 1. Finding the name among two or three names
 2. Building the name with letters
 3. Placing letters in order using a model
 4. Finger tracing large letters
 5. Tracing the name
 6. Copying directly below a model
 7. Copying beside a model
 8. Writing with fewer visual cues

Begin name practice with capital letters when that is the child's current level of instruction. After the child becomes comfortable forming those letters, gradually transition to writing the name with one capital letter followed by lowercase letters.

Model the correct starting point and movement pattern.

Avoid repeated practice of incorrect letter formation.

- **Summer Postcards**
 - Have your child draw a summer picture and attempt to sign their name.
 - An adult may write the child's dictated message.
- **Coloring and Drawing Activities**
 - Coloring and drawing help children develop tool control, pressure awareness, visual attention, creativity, and endurance.
 - The goal is not only to stay inside the lines. Children also benefit from creating original pictures and expressing ideas.

Helpful Progression:

Begin with:

- Short crayons
- Large pictures
- Thick borders
- Simple shapes
- Short coloring periods

Gradually progress to:

- Smaller spaces
- More detailed pictures
- Longer activities
- Original drawing
- Copying simple pictures

Activity Options

- **Design a Beach Towel**
 - Draw a large rectangle and invite your child to add lines, shapes, patterns, pictures
- **Create a New Ice Cream Flavor**
 - Have your child draw and color an imaginary ice cream cone.
 - Ask the child to name the flavor and describe the ingredients.
- **Summer Postcard**
 - Have your child draw and color a favorite summer activity.
 - An adult may write the child's dictated message.
- **Finish My Scribble**
 - Make a simple scribble, line, or shape and ask your child to turn it into a picture.
- **Color One Part at a Time**
 - Choose a picture with several large sections.
 - Ask your child to color one area, take a short break, and return to another.
- **Vertical Coloring**
 - Tape a coloring page or plain paper to a wall or easel.
 - Let your child color or draw while standing.
- **Color-and-Cut Shapes**
 - Have your child color a large simple shape and then cut it out with assistance.
- **Draw a Person**
 - Ask your child to draw a person doing a favorite summer activity.
 - Talk about body parts, clothing, surroundings, and actions without correcting every detail.

Cutting Activities:

Cutting develops hand strength, bilateral coordination, visual-motor control, and motor planning.

Cutting Progression

A child may progress through:

1. Opening and closing tongs
2. Tearing paper
3. Snipping playdough or paper
4. Cutting across a narrow strip
5. Cutting along a thick straight line
6. Cutting a gentle curve
7. Cutting around a large simple shape

Scissor Tips

- Use child-sized scissors.
- Encourage the thumb to point upward.
- Remind the helper hand to hold and turn the paper.
- Begin with sturdy paper or cardstock.
- Use short practice periods.
- Provide direct adult supervision.
- Teach children to walk with scissors closed and handles facing forward.

Activity Options

- **Playdough Snipping**
 - Roll playdough into snakes and have your child cut them into pieces with child-safe scissors.
- **Paper-Grass Cutting**
 - Draw short lines along the edge of green paper.
 - Have your child snip the lines to make grass.
- **Cut Across Strips**
 - Begin with narrow strips of cardstock.

- Have your child cut across each strip with one snip.
- **Straight-Line Cutting**
 - Draw thick straight lines on paper.
 - Encourage the helper hand to hold and turn the paper.
- **Curved-Line Cutting**
 - Progress to wide curves, waves, and large circles.
- **Summer Picture Cutting**
Cut around large pictures of:
 - Suns
 - Fish
 - Beach balls
 - Popsicles
 - Flowers
 - Watermelons
- **Straw Cutting**
 - Cut wide straws into pieces and string them onto yarn or chenille stems.
 - Straw pieces may be choking hazards and require direct supervision.
- **Magazine Collage**
 - Cut or tear pictures from old magazines and glue them onto paper.
- **Paper Fringe**
Cut short lines along the edge of paper to create:
 - Jellyfish tentacles
 - Lion manes
 - Grass
 - Sunshine rays
 - Feathers

Glue and Classroom-Tool Activities:

Children often need practice opening, using, and closing common classroom tools.

Glue-Stick Skills

Teach your child to:

1. Remove the cap
2. Twist the glue up slightly
3. Hold the paper with the helper hand
4. Apply glue to the target area
5. Twist the glue back down
6. Replace the cap

Activity Options

- **Glue-Stick Road Repair**
 - Draw broken roads or paths on paper.

Have your child:

 1. Open the glue stick
 2. Apply glue to the missing sections
 3. Place paper pieces over the gaps
 4. Twist the glue down
 5. Replace the cap
- **Dot-and-Glue Picture**
 - Draw dots inside a large shape.
 - Have your child apply glue to each dot and place a paper square, pompom, or tissue-paper piece on top.
- **Paper Mosaic**
 - Tear or cut colored paper into pieces and glue them inside a large picture.

- **Build-a-Shape**

- Provide paper strips and have your child glue them together to create squares, triangles, houses, or other designs.

- **Marker-Cap Practice**

Practice:

- Removing the cap
- Placing it on the back of the marker
- Replacing the cap until it clicks

- **Tape Practice**

Have your child:

- Pull tape from a dispenser with help
- Place tape over a pretend tear
- Tape paper pieces together
- Build a simple paper structure

Posture, Movement, and Body Control:

The hands work best when the body provides a stable foundation.

Children need movement, strength, balance, and postural control to sit, look, reach, and use classroom tools.

Summer Activity Options

- Animal walks
- Playground climbing
- Crawling through tunnels
- Wheelbarrow walking with adult support
- Carrying lightweight outdoor toys
- Pushing a laundry basket
- Child-friendly yoga poses
- Hopscotch
- Throwing and catching a large ball
- Sidewalk obstacle courses
- Dancing and action songs
- Swimming
- Gardening
- Hiking or nature walks

Helpful Tabletop Positioning

When possible:

- Use a chair and table that fit the child.
- Support the feet on the floor or a stable footrest.
- Position materials within easy reach.
- Encourage the helper hand to stabilize paper.
- Alternate seated activities with movement.
- Avoid expecting long periods of stillness.

Classroom Independence Activities:

Kindergarten readiness includes managing everyday materials and routines.

Lunchbox Practice

Practice opening and closing:

- Lunch boxes
- Snack containers
- Water bottles
- Zip-top bags
- Food packages

Choose containers your child can learn to manage independently.

Backpack Routine

Practice:

1. Opening the backpack
2. Placing a folder inside
3. Closing the zipper
4. Carrying the backpack
5. Returning it to a designated location

Clothing Practice

Practice:

- Pulling pants up and down
- Putting on and removing a jacket
- Using large buttons
- Pulling zippers
- Turning clothing right side out
- Putting on shoes
- Recognizing the front and back of clothing

Bathroom Routines

Practice:

- Communicating the need to use the bathroom
- Managing clothing
- Wiping as independently as developmentally appropriate
- Flushing
- Washing and drying hands

Cleanup Challenge

Give short directions such as:

1. Put the crayons in the box.
2. Place the paper on the table.
3. Push in the chair.

Color-Cut-Glue Routine

Practice completing a simple sequence:

1. Color
2. Cut
3. Glue
4. Clean up

School-Supply Practice

Practice using:

- Glue sticks
- Crayon boxes
- Pencil cases
- Folders
- Markers with caps
- Tape dispensers
- Dry-erase boards

Attention and Following Directions:

Young children are not expected to sit still for long periods.

Attention improves when activities are meaningful, appropriately challenging, and balanced with movement.

Activity Options

Two-Step Missions

Give playful directions such as:

- Find the red block and place it under the chair.
- Draw a circle and put a sticker inside it.
- Get your shoes and place them by the door.

Progress to three steps when two steps become easy.

Color-Cut-Glue Project

Use a simple sequence:

1. Color the picture.
2. Cut it out.
3. Glue it onto the page.

Cleanup Challenge

Play a short song and see how many materials can be returned to their places before it ends.

First-Then Language

Use clear language:

- First put away the blocks; then we will go outside.
- First draw the road; then drive the car on it.
- First open the container; then choose your snack.

Copy My Movement

Complete two or three movements and ask your child to copy them.

Examples:

- Clap, stomp
- Jump, touch toes
- Reach up, turn around, sit down

Optional Handwriting App:

Writing Wizard is an optional digital tool that can be used to practice tracing letters, numbers, shapes, and customized words.

Families may be able to adjust:

- Letter size
- Difficulty
- Tracing features
- Practice writing first name
- Handwriting style

When using an app:

- Keep practice brief.
- Set to HWT font
- Watch the child's starting point and movement direction.
- Use a stylus when appropriate.
- Follow digital practice with a hands-on activity.
- Do not allow the app to replace drawing, manipulating objects, outdoor play, or real writing experiences.

An app may improve motivation, but children still need opportunities to use physical tools and materials.

Optional Weekend Activities:

Weekends may be used for rest, family activities, or repeating favorites.

Ideas include:

- Visit a playground.
- Draw with sidewalk chalk.
- Swim or play in a sprinkler.
- Help wash a bicycle or outdoor toy.
- Complete a puzzle.
- Bake or prepare a simple snack.
- Visit the library.
- Take a nature walk.
- Play catch.
- Practice opening lunch containers.
- Draw a picture about the week.

Parent Observation Checklist:

This checklist is not a test. Use it to notice skills your child demonstrates during everyday activities.

Mark:

- Usually
- Sometimes
- Not yet
- Not observed

During Summer Play, I Have Seen My Child:

Hand Use

- Use one hand to work while the other hand helps
- Pick up small objects using the fingertips
- Open and close simple containers
- Use crayons or markers comfortably
- Participate in a short fine motor activity
- Manipulate playdough or similar materials
- Use both hands together during play

Visual-Motor Skills

- Copy a vertical line
- Copy a horizontal line
- Copy a circle
- Copy a cross
- Attempt a square
- Follow a simple path
- Complete a simple puzzle
- Build from a model
- Draw a recognizable picture

Classroom Tools

- Use child-safe scissors with supervision
- Snip paper
- Cut across a strip
- Use a glue stick
- Replace marker caps
- Manage crayons and materials
- Clean up supplies

Independence

- Open some lunch containers
- Manage a backpack zipper
- Put on or remove a jacket
- Follow a two-step direction
- Participate in cleanup
- Recognize personal belongings
- Ask for help when needed

Early Writing

- Recognize their first name
- Build their name using letters
- Trace or copy parts of their name
- Attempt to write their first name
- Show interest in drawing or writing

A response of "not yet" does not mean your child has failed. It simply identifies a skill that may benefit from more opportunities, modeling, or support.

A Simple Weekly Summer Plan

Families do not need to practice every day.

Monday: Hand Strength

Choose:

- Playdough
- Sponge play
- Spray bottles
- Clothespins
- Outdoor climbing

Tuesday: Visual-Motor Skills

Choose:

- Puzzles
- Block copying
- Mazes
- Drawing
- Road paths

Wednesday: Cutting and Crafting

Choose:

- Tearing
- Cutting
- Gluing
- Sticker art
- Yarn wrapping

Thursday: Classroom Independence

Practice:

- Lunch containers
- Clothing
- Backpack skills
- Bathroom routines
- Cleanup

Friday: Prewriting Fun

Choose:

- Chalk
- Sensory writing
- Drawing
- Shape copying
- Name practice

Weekend: Whole-Body Movement

Choose:

- Playground play
- Swimming
- Ball games
- Gardening
- Obstacle courses
- Nature walks

5-Week Kindergarten Readiness Sample Calendar

Complete one short activity each weekday. Most activities take 5–10 minutes.

Week 1: Strong Hands

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Playdough Shop Roll, squeeze, pinch, and cut playdough.	Sticker Sun Color a sun and add sticker rays.	Sponge Squeeze Move water between two buckets with a sponge.	Road Builder Drive a toy car along drawn paths, then trace them.	Lunch Practice Open and close lunch containers and a water bottle.

Week 2: Two Hands Working Together

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Beach Collage Tear and glue paper to create a beach scene.	Clothespin Sun Clip clothespins around a paper circle or plate.	Copy My Blocks Copy simple three- to five-block designs.	Cut the Grass Snip lines along green paper to make grass.	Two-Step Missions Complete five playful two-step directions.

Week 3: Eyes and Hands Working Together

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chalk Shape Trail Walk, trace, and copy chalk lines and shapes.	Ice Cream Sort Move pompom scoops with tongs and sort by color.	What Is Missing? Look at objects, hide one, and name it.	Draw With Me Copy a simple picture one step at a time.	Backpack Practice Pack a folder and pencil case, then zip the bag.

Week 4: Control and Coordination

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lemonade Coins Move play coins from the palm to a container.	Maze Day Trace a maze with a finger, car, and crayon.	Road Repair Glue paper strips over gaps in a drawn road.	Ball Challenge Roll, catch, toss, and tap a large ball.	Build My Name Put name letters in order and copy the name.

Week 5: Kindergarten Practice

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Color, Cut, Glue Complete a simple summer picture from start to finish.	Summer Hunt Find objects by color, shape, size, and location.	Finish the Scribble Turn three scribbles into creative pictures.	School-Morning Practice Dress, pack, zip, and carry the backpack.	Kindergarten Course Complete one hand, drawing, cutting, container, and movement task.

Parent Notes

- **Repeat** favorite activities as often as desired.
- Activities may be moved to different days.
- Keep practice playful and brief.
- Provide direct supervision with scissors, water, playground equipment, and small objects.
- Stop if your child experiences pain, significant fatigue, or frustration.

Materials to Keep at Home:

You do not need expensive therapy materials.

Consider keeping:

- Crayons
- Washable markers
- Short pencils or golf pencils
- Plain paper
- Construction paper
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue sticks
- Stickers
- Playdough
- Sidewalk chalk
- Interlocking blocks
- Simple puzzles
- Clothespins
- Child-safe tongs or tweezers
- Sponges
- Spray bottles
- Cardboard tubes
- Wide craft sticks
- Chenille stems
- Yarn
- Paper plates
- Reusable food containers
- Large beads
- Pompoms
- Play coins or cardboard coins
- Muffin tins or ice-cube trays
- Tape

Store small items out of reach when they are not being used.

Tips for Parents:

- Keep activities brief, playful, and successful.
- Follow your child's interests.
- Offer help without taking over.
- Demonstrate a task and then allow your child to try.
- Praise effort, persistence, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Avoid comparing your child with siblings or classmates.
- Alternate seated activities with movement.
- Stop when your child reports pain or shows significant fatigue.
- Remember that kindergarten teachers expect to teach.
- Focus on participation and confidence rather than perfection.

Instead of saying, "That is wrong," try:

- "Let's look at it together."
- "Show me how you started."
- "What could you try next?"
- "I noticed you kept working."
- "That was difficult, but you tried a new way."
- "Your helper hand kept the paper steady."

The Most Important Preparation:

Children do not need to enter kindergarten knowing everything they will learn during kindergarten.

They benefit from opportunities to:

- Play
- Move
- Create
- Communicate
- Listen to stories
- Ask questions
- Solve simple problems
- Care for their belongings
- Practice independence
- Develop confidence
- Experience learning as something enjoyable

A few minutes of purposeful play can build meaningful skills.

Choose activities your family enjoys, celebrate small improvements, and help your child approach kindergarten with curiosity and confidence.

About Write Expectations

Write Expectations provides occupational therapy-informed resources to help parents, teachers, and school professionals support handwriting, fine motor, visual-motor, and classroom participation skills.

For additional articles, activities, and resources, visit: **www.writeexpectations.com**.

Important Information

This resource is intended for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for an individualized occupational therapy, developmental, educational, or medical evaluation.

Children develop at different rates. Activities should be selected based on the child's developmental level, interests, and safety needs. Provide adult supervision and stop any activity that causes pain, significant fatigue, distress, or frustration.

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Thank you for helping children build confidence, independence, and the skills needed for school success.

Irene Hannam, MS OTR/L
Write Expectations