

Kindergarten, Here I come!

Activities and Tips

To Help Danbury Parents and Families Prepare
Their Children for Success in Kindergarten

"You are
your
child's
first and
most
important
teacher"



Welcome to School

Education is important for all our children. Parents are their children's first teacher and an important part of their children's success in school. Our city and schools pledge to do our best to educate your child, but we can't do it alone.

In order for your child to have the best start in school and future success we ask you to commit to the following:

- Help your child have a daily routine, including a regular bedtime and enough sleep.
- Make sure your child has a good breakfast so they have the energy to learn.
- Send your child to school every day, except when he or she is sick.
- Schedule vacations for summer breaks and holidays, not during the school year.
- Participate in school events such as open houses and parent teacher conferences.

We all want the best for children in Danbury, and together we can help our children succeed.

Dean Esposito
Mayor, City of Danbury

Kevin Walston
Superintendent, Danbury Public Schools

Secrets of School Success

Find Inside:

What Does It Mean to Be “Ready for School?”

Tips: Getting Your Child Ready to Succeed in School

Fun and Easy Activities to Do Together at Home

Fun and Easy Activities to Do Together in the Car

Ready to Read! Environmental Print

Activity Pages for You and Your Child

What Does It Mean To Be "Ready for School"?

Every parent wants to know if their child is “ready” for Kindergarten, and if their child has the skills to succeed. The following skills help a child to do his or her best in school.



Children Who Are Most Likely To Succeed In School:

Get Along with Others

- Can ask an adult for help
- Pay attention for 10 to 15 minutes at a time
- Can work and play by themselves or with others
- Will share with others
- Listen to and follow simple directions

Use Numbers

- Count items to 5 and count to 10
- Name colors and shapes
- Identify and sort objects or shapes
- Describe how items are different, such as bigger or smaller

Play and Are Creative

- Play with balls and outdoor toys and equipment (like at a playground)
- Can be creative with his/her body through movements and activities
- Enjoy making things, coloring and building with toys and other materials
- Enjoy playing with other children

Read Books

- Recognize and name some letters of the alphabet
- Know some rhyming words and sounds
- Know how to use a book – where to start and that the words and pictures tell a story
- Listen to and understand stories

Are Physically Active

- Run, jump, hop and gallop
- Throw and catch a large ball
- Start to button buttons, zip zippers and tie shoes independently

Talk and Listen

- Hear and understand the meanings of words, stories and songs
- Use words to express needs, wants and thoughts
- Speak clearly enough to be understood by most people

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

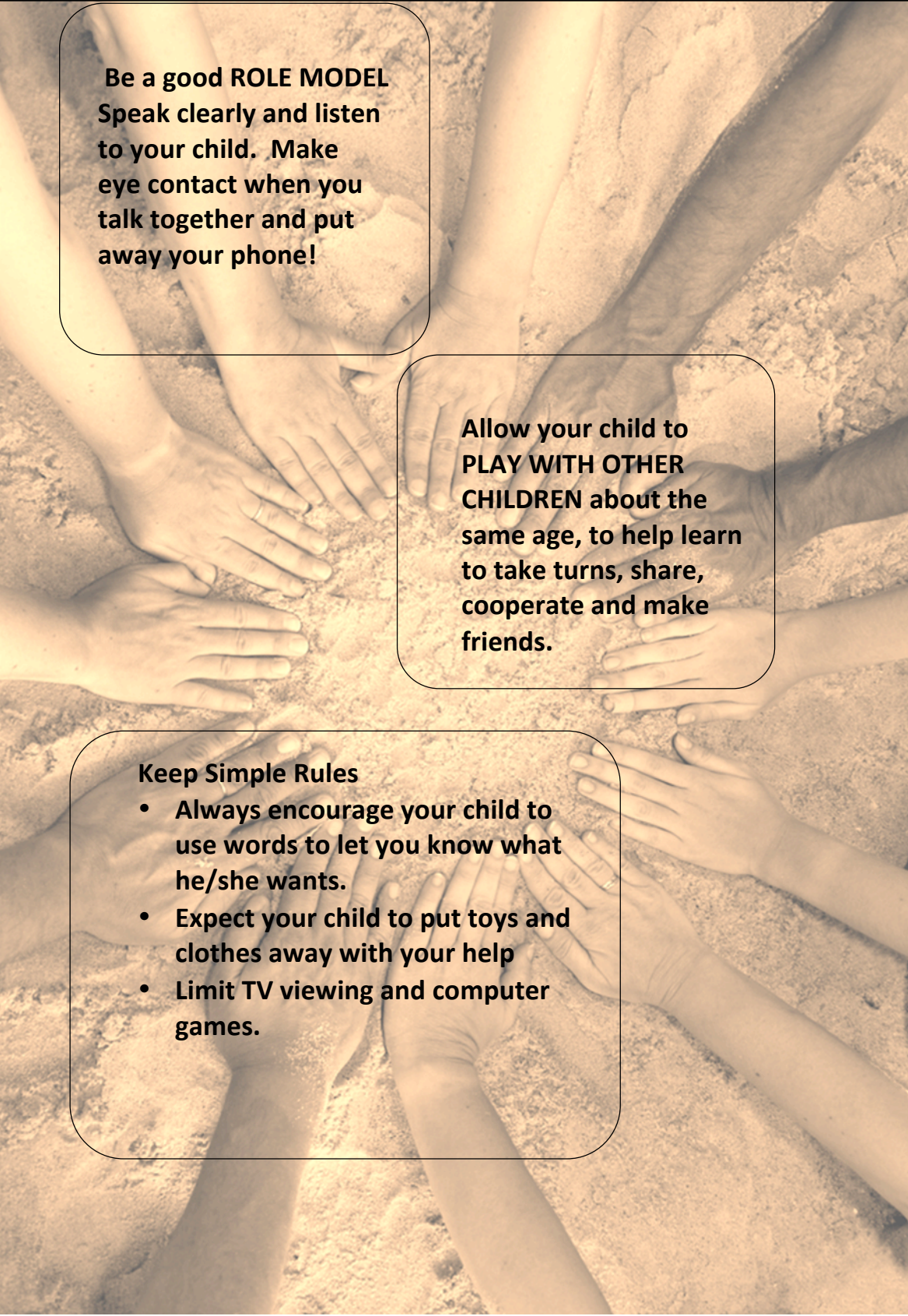
“TIPS” – things YOU can do – to help your child be ready to succeed in Kindergarten

***TALK, LISTEN AND
READ TOGETHER -
every day!***

Keep A Set Routine

- **Have meals and bedtime at about the same time every day.**
- **Be sure your child gets plenty of sleep (at least 10 hours each night!)**
- **Offer a variety of fruits, vegetables, cheese and lean meats for healthy eating.**
- **Encourage your child to do many things on his/her own...dress himself, use the bathroom, and feed herself.**

"TIPS" For Every Day!



Be a good ROLE MODEL
Speak clearly and listen to your child. Make eye contact when you talk together and put away your phone!

Allow your child to PLAY WITH OTHER CHILDREN about the same age, to help learn to take turns, share, cooperate and make friends.

Keep Simple Rules

- Always encourage your child to use words to let you know what he/she wants.
- Expect your child to put toys and clothes away with your help
- Limit TV viewing and computer games.

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Things You Can Do Together AT HOME To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten



TALK



TALK



TALK

Make Up Stories

Children love to hear stories about themselves and the people in their family ("Tell me about the day I was born!"). You can tell "true" stories, or make up stories together.

Look at Photos Together

- Use family photos, magazines, books...whatever you have around the house.
- Look at the pictures with your child and talk about what you see. Be sure to give your child plenty of turns to talk.
- You might ask: "What do you see? What do you like in this picture? What do you think is happening?"
- Encourage your child's creative ideas!

Try These Ideas During Mealtimes, Bedtime, Anytime!

Sing Songs!

- Can't sing?...just say the words!
- Check out the words to the songs below.
- If you know simple songs from your childhood, be sure to teach them to your child!

Alphabet Song

A-B-C-D-E-F-G, H-I-J-K-L-M-N-
O-P, Q-R-S-T U-V-W-X-Y-Z,
Now I know my ABC's, next
time won't you sing with me?

Spring is Here

Spring is here, spring is here,
How do you think I know?
(Name) _____ saw a
(object/animal) _____,
that's how I know it's so.

*Example: "Sally saw a pink
tulip, that's how I know it's so."*

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

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes (You should touch each body part as you sing)

Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes,
And eyes, and ears, and mouth and nose,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes
Knees and toes.

Teddy Bear

(You may sing or say these words with your
child. Your child can do what the song says!)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show your shoe
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, I love you!

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Things You Can Do Together AT HOME To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten

Read Together Every Day!

Experts agree: This is one of the best ways to prepare your child to be successful in school and in life!

- Find a quiet spot where you can sit together. Use a variety of books and stories to capture your child's interest.
- Have your child help to turn the pages. Enjoy talking about the pictures together. Ask: "What do you see?" "What do you think this book will be about?" "What do you think will happen next?" "What did you like about that story?"
- Make sure to be relaxed so that this is an enjoyable experience for you both.



Get A Library Card!

- Families can get a FREE library card from the local library.
- You and your child can find many fun, interesting and appropriate books to borrow and enjoy.
- **Check out suggested authors on the back cover**

Try These Ideas During Mealtimes, Bedtime, Anytime!



Favorite Books!

- It's very likely your child has some favorite books that he/she wants you to read over and over again. This is a good thing!
- Looking at favorite books together helps to build your child's vocabulary. Soon, your child will be able to tell you the story!

Drawing and Writing Teaches Reading!

That's right!

- Children need to understand that marks on a page can send a message. Encourage your child to draw whatever he or she likes, and then talk to you about it!
- Your child needs practice to learn to use a pencil and crayons with control. Keep blank paper, pencils, markers, and crayons available for your child to scribble, draw, and begin to make letters and numbers.
- Be sure your child knows you value what they have done, and hang some of their creations on your refrigerator or wall.




Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Things You Can Do Together AT HOME To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten

Be a Good Listener!

- **“What do you think?”** is one of the best questions you can ask when talking or reading with your child. Then, LISTEN to the answer!
- It doesn't matter if your child's ideas are 'wrong' or silly. What is important is that he/she knows you listen to their ideas and he/she is practicing how to talk about many ideas.
- More good questions are: **“I wonder why?”** and **“What do you think will happen next?”** These questions let your child think of his/her own ideas and tell you all about it!



**TALK AND
READ!**

Be a Model!

One of the best (and easiest!) ways you can support your child's reading and writing skills is by letting them see you reading and writing. Read anything – the newspaper, magazines, email – and write anything – grocery lists, notes, emails – and refer to it in front of your child (“let's see...what time is our show on TV? Or, what else to do we need to get that's on our list?”), so your child sees you using these important life skills.

Try These Ideas During Mealtimes, Bedtime, Anytime!

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

GAMES

“Do what I say!” It’s a great memory game.

- Give your child two things to do, like ‘get a spoon and place it on the chair.’
- Your child needs to do these in the same order that was said.
- You can make up all kinds of directions, and, as your child improves, make it three, four or even five things to do!
- Be sure to show how happy you are when your child succeeds, and give hints when he/she needs help.

GAMES

“Make Believe”

- Encourage your child when he/she is pretending to be someone or something else. This play helps your child to think about the people and events in his/her life.
- What is the best way to help your child? Join in! Have fun pretending.

GAMES

“I see something _____”

- Fill in the blank with a color, shape, or anything you see around the house.
- For example, “I see something green” and have your child guess what you see!
- You could also try “I see something flat with four legs.” Then it’s your child’s turn to ask you! When he/she gets good at this, try objects that need even more describing words.

Things You Can Do Together AT HOME To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten

GAMES

Sort and Make Patterns.

- Using buttons, forks and spoons, or left over bottle tops, see what kind of patterns your child can make. For example, you might lay out fork/spoon, fork/spoon, fork/spoon and see if your child can copy it. Or, you might try, fork/spoon/button, fork/spoon/button.
- Let your child make up a pattern and see if you can copy it! Use words like 'same', 'different', 'equal', 'copy', 'compare' and 'match' while you are talking about the patterns.
- Allow your child to sort the materials, too. Maybe he/she will want to put all the big buttons in one pile and all the small buttons in another. Or, maybe he/she will group the buttons by color!
- Sorting and making patterns are wonderful thinking and mathematics games!

Count Everything!

- Throughout the day, you will find many things to count...steps, windows, fingers, people...everything!
- When you are with your child, encourage him/her to count objects around you and ask "how many?"
- Then you can talk about "Which has more?" "Which has less?" Or compare what you see – "Is that bigger or smaller than the other one?" "Which is longer/shorter/the same?"
- Before you know it, your child will be challenging you with these questions!

GAMES

Try These Ideas During Mealtimes, Bedtime, Anytime!

“The Rhyming Game”

- Play a game with your child to see who can think of the most rhyming words. You or your child can start by choosing a word to rhyme – for example “cat.”
- Then each take turns with a real word or a made up word that sounds the same: mat/rat/tat/sat/bat and keep going as long as you can!



“Silly Song Rhyme”

- Another way to rhyme is to use a familiar song and make up a silly rhyme.
- For example, instead of “Twinkle, twinkle little star”, let’s sing “*Twinkle, twinkle little car*” and make up your own new words...“how I wonder what you are.
Riding on the road so fast, riding, riding, oh so fast! Twinkle, twinkle, little car, how I wonder what you are.”
- Whatever you and your child think of will be lots of fun!

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Things You Can Do Together AT HOME To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten

Folding Clothes

- This is a chore that your young child can help with.
- Have the child match pairs of socks, and sort clothes for each member of the family. Use words like 'sort', 'match', 'fold', 'smooth', 'same' and 'different' as well as counting words (one, two, three) while sorting.



DO CHORES TOGETHER

Set the Table

- Help your child learn to put one of each item (plate, fork, spoon) for each member of the family. This is called "one to one correspondence" and is an important math skill.
- Use words like 'less', 'more', 'same', 'equal' as well as counting as appropriate.

Put Away Groceries

- Have your child help you to sort groceries into groups that go in the refrigerator, cabinet or shelf.
- Your child can name some of the letters that he/she sees, or find the letters of his/her name.

Try These Ideas In the Kitchen!

COOK TOGETHER

Make Sandwiches

- Let your child use a blunt knife to spread things on bread. You cut the sandwich into squares, rectangles or triangles, and have fun with your child naming the shapes.



Make Simple Recipes Together

- Children love to help out in the kitchen.
- Let your child mix, stir and pour as you work together.
- Together you can find and name the letters on the boxes of ingredients.

Prepare Snacks

- When you cut an apple or other item, talk about 'half' or 'quarters'. Ask "Do you want your sandwich cut in half or quarters?"
- Talk about textures 'rough', 'smooth', 'sticky', and flavors 'sweet', 'sour', 'salty'.

COOK TOGETHER

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Things You Can Do Together Outdoors To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten

Go For A Walk

- Walk with your child and talk about the things you notice around you.
- Look for and name shapes, colors, sizes, and objects together.
- Talk about what you saw on your walk yesterday or the day before – did you see anything different?
- Talk about things you see and help your child learn the rules of safety for crossing the street: Look both ways! Hold an adult's hand!



MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!

- Whenever possible, let your child run, jump, hop, slide, climb, throw and catch a ball.
- These activities wake up the brain for learning...AND children often sleep more soundly at night after an active day!

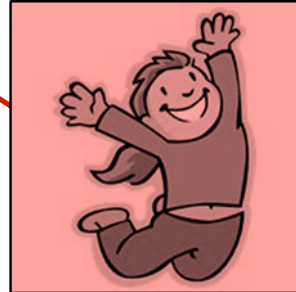
Always remember to appreciate your child's efforts and be sure to laugh together and have fun!

Learning Happens Outdoors, Too!

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Stop And Go

- Stand at one end of the yard or an open area at a park and have your child at the other end.
- When you say "go" have your child run towards you and stop when you say "stop."
- Switch it up by having them "freeze", "slow down", "walk", "jump", "take big/small steps".
- Reverse roles and have your child give you the commands.
- If there are multiple children, make it a game to see who gets to you first.



Make Collections

- Bring a paper or plastic bag and let your child collect – leaves, small stones, flowers, or any other items that are safe!
- Talk about their "finds", describing the objects as "small", "round", "hard" and using new vocabulary like "petals", "stem" or "ridges".
- Once you get home, your child may want to keep his/her collection in the bag or in a box so you can look at it again and remember how it was collected.



Things You Can Do Together IN THE CAR To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten



Turn off the car radio and sing songs together!

- Check out the words to these songs on page 7. Can't sing? That's okay – just say the words together!
 - ✓ Wheels on the Car (or Bus)
 - ✓ The Alphabet Song
 - ✓ Spring is here!

"I see something _____"

- Fill in the blank with a color or a shape.
- For example, "I see something green" and have your child guess what you see! Then it's your child's turn.
- When he/she gets good at this, you can try both a shape and a color... "I see something round and red."

Count how many stop signs or lights you see on your way to the store or other familiar place.

- See if your child can remember how many you saw yesterday. What else can you count...trees? Tall buildings?
- Ask your child what he/she wants to count.

Try These Ideas In The Car!

Make up rhymes!

- Ask your child to say a word that rhymes with any word you say. “Cat – mat- hat- tat”
- Each of you takes a turn; made up words are okay!
- Then it’s your child’s turn to say a word for you to rhyme. See how many rhymes you both can think of!



Play “Silly Song Rhyme”

- Another way to rhyme is to use a familiar song and make up a silly rhyme.
- For example, instead of “Twinkle, twinkle little star”, let’s sing “*Twinkle, twinkle little car*” and make up your own new words”...how I wonder what you are. *Riding on the road so fast, riding, riding, oh so fast!* Twinkle, twinkle, little car, how I wonder what you are.”
- Whatever your child thinks of will be lots of fun!

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Things You Can Do Together IN THE CAR To Help Your Child Be Ready For Kindergarten

Who are YOU?

- Challenge your child to answer these questions: What is your whole name? How old are you? Where do you live? What is your telephone number?
- If your child does not know all these things yet, take time to teach the answers and practice saying them together.



Who is in our family? Take turns describing someone in your family that the child knows very well. "This person is 3 years old, has brown hair, and likes to eat cheerios...who is it?"

*Always remember to
appreciate your child's
efforts and
be sure to laugh together
and have fun!*

Try These Ideas In The Car!



Can You Remember?

- Say a word - any word you choose - and ask your child to repeat it.
- Then say two words and ask your child to say them both, in the same order you said them. When your child is good at this, try three, four or even five words!
- Let your child have a turn saying words for you to remember.

What letters do you see?

- Draw your child's attention to letters on stores or signs, especially letters in their own name. "Look, there's an 'M', just like your name, Mike!"
- Read signs like "Stop" "Wrong way" as you are driving along. Soon, your child will be reading the signs to you! (See the environmental print ideas on the next page.)

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

Environmental Print Alphabet

Activity: Letters of the alphabet, as used in real life situations, can look different from what your child may have learned. Help your child identify letters of the alphabet by locating these items/locations, or others, in your community.

Aa



Bb



Cc



Dd



Ee



Ff



Gg



Hh



Ii



Jj



Kk



Ll



Mm



Nn



Oo



Pp



Qq



Rr



Ss



Tt



Uu



Vv



Ww



Xx



Yy

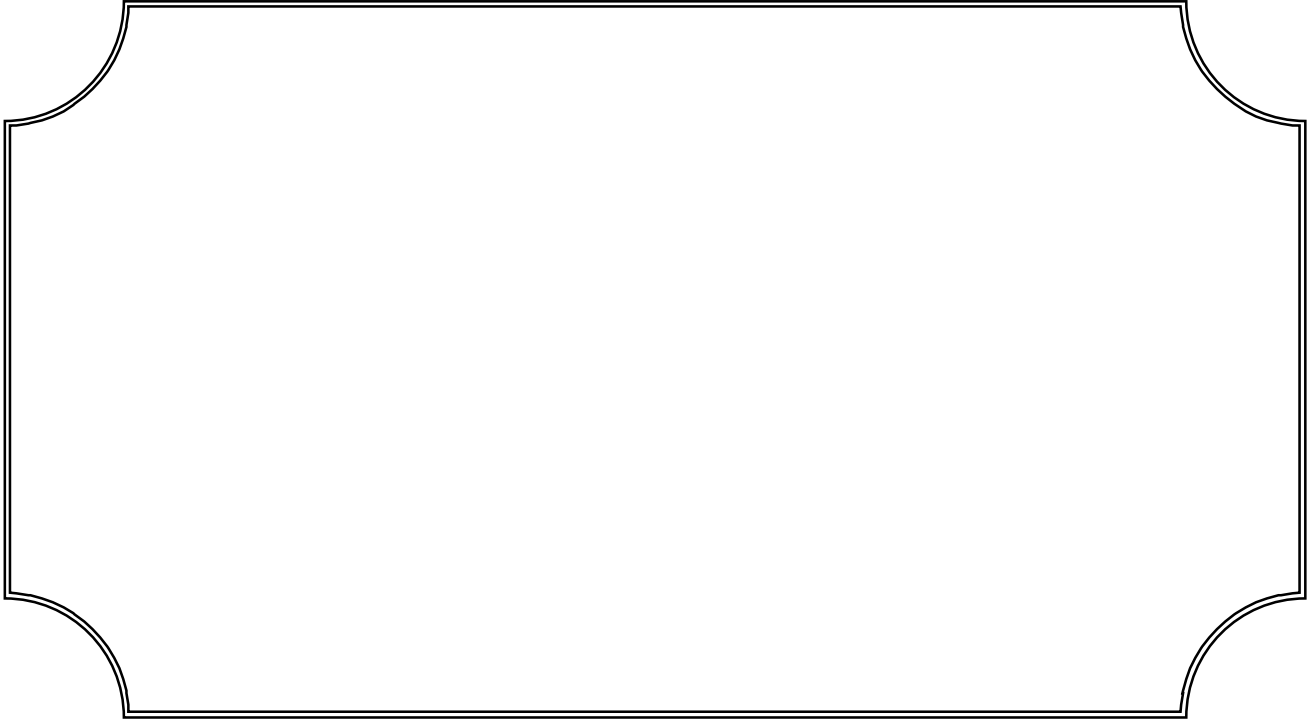


Zz



Children's FUN TO DO Pages

Here is a picture of me and my family.



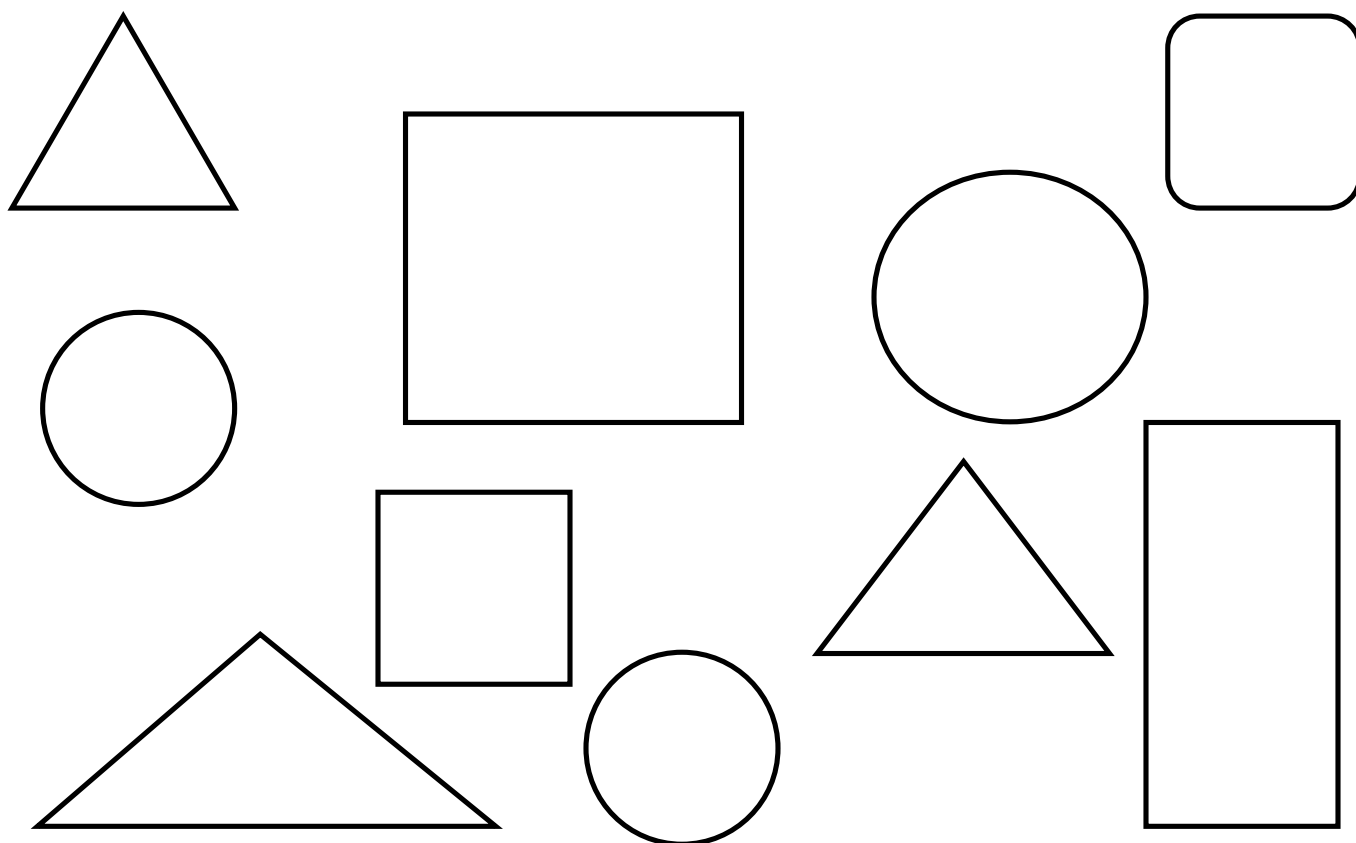
I can write my name in the space below.

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for writing the child's name.

Say the alphabet in order. Touch each letter as you say it.
Circle the letters in your name!

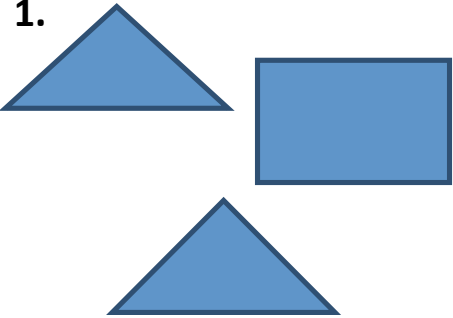
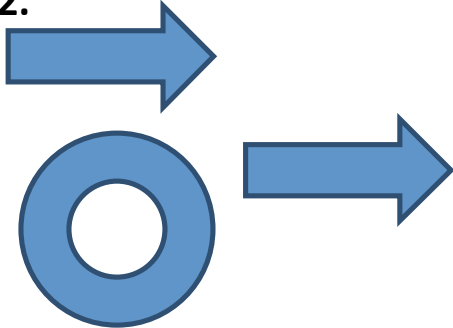
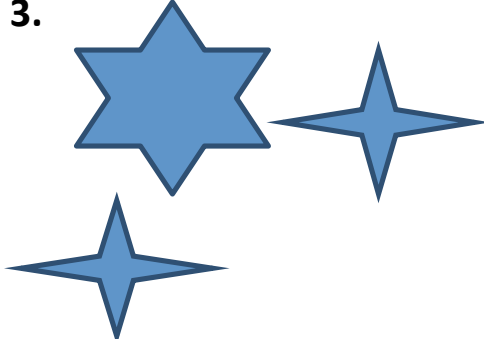
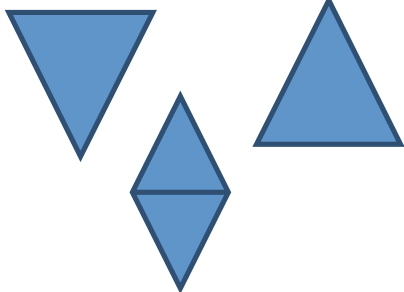
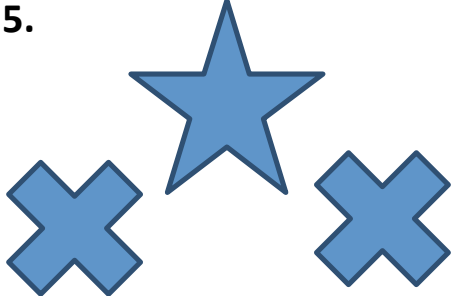
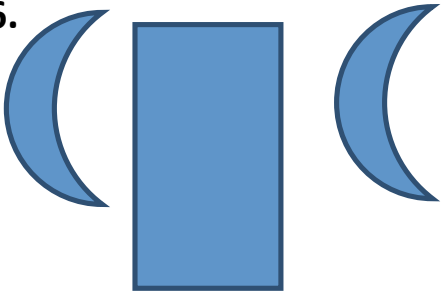
Aa Bb Cc Dd
Ee Ff Gg Hh
Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq
Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv
Ww Xx Yy Zz

Color each circle **red**. Color each square **blue**.
Color the triangles your favorite color!



In the space below, what can you make out of shapes you draw?

Put an X on the two shapes that are the SAME in each box

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | 2.  | 3.  |
| 4.  | 5.  | 6.  |

Point to the numbers and say each one. How old are YOU?
Can you point to the numbers in your telephone number?

0 1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10