

# Counting the Days 'til Kindergarten

September 2022 – August 2023

12 months of learning activities for the year *before* your child begins kindergarten



@ the West Bloomfield Township Public Library

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Brought to you by the West Bloomfield Township Public Library as part of its Grow Up Reading™ initiative.

# Grow Up Reading™

with the West Bloomfield Township Public Library

## Reading is essential to school success.

**Children get ready to read long before they start kindergarten.** Children who develop important literacy skills before they go to school have an advantage. They start kindergarten ready to learn to read.

**Parents are their children's first teachers.** Learn ways to prepare your child to be successful in kindergarten and beyond with information and resources from the library, such as the *Counting the Days till Kindergarten* calendar.

**Five fun and powerful practices help children develop important early language and literacy skills.** The practices are based on research that shows how interactions between parents and children influence what and how well children learn. The Public Library Association incorporated this research into their "Every Child Ready to Read®" initiative, which uses the five practices below to help children become lifelong learners and readers.

**Learn ways to use these practices, plus counting, the year before kindergarten** to help your child get ready to read and learn.

**Use the calendar to make every day count as you count down to kindergarten!**



## Talking

Conversations with parents are one of the best ways for children to learn early literacy skills. As children hear spoken language, they learn new words and what they mean. They learn about the world around them and important general knowledge. Later, this will help children understand the meaning of what they read. Give your child plenty of opportunities to talk with you every day.



## Reading

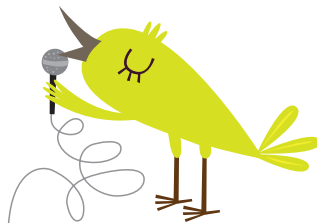
Reading together or shared reading is the single most important way to help children get ready to read. Reading together increases vocabulary and general knowledge about the world. It helps children learn how print looks and how books work. Shared reading also helps children develop an interest in reading. Children who enjoy being read to are more interested in learning to read themselves. A child's interest in reading is a significant predictor of later reading achievement.

## Playing

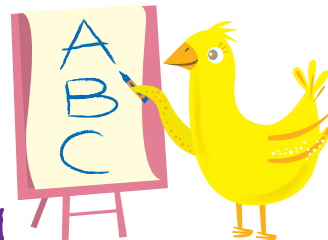
Children learn a lot about language through play. Play helps children think symbolically, so they understand that spoken and written words can stand for real objects and experiences. Play also helps children express themselves, put thoughts into words, and practice social skills. Give your child plenty of playtime. Some of the best kinds of play are unstructured, when children can use their imagination and create stories about what they're doing.



## Singing



## Writing



## Counting



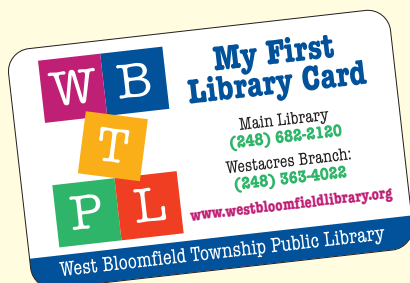
Songs and rhymes are a natural way for children to learn about language. Many songs have a different note for each syllable, which helps children break down words so they can hear individual sounds and notice how they are alike and different. Singing helps children improve listening skills, learn new words and add to their general knowledge.

Reading and writing go together. Both represent spoken language and communicate information. Children become aware that printed letters stand for spoken words as they see print used in daily life. As children scribble and draw, they develop important eye-hand coordination and strengthen the muscles they need to write letters and words.

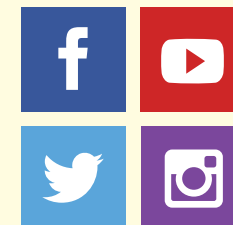
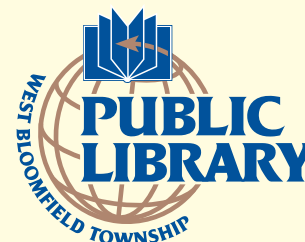
Counting and learning basic math concepts also help children be successful in kindergarten. As they count and play with numbers, shapes and objects, children begin to understand how numbers are symbols just like written words. Sorting, measuring and looking for patterns help children use reasoning skills, make predictions and solve problems. These are important skills for school and life.

## How to use the Counting the Days 'til Kindergarten calendar

Read books from the list of suggested titles, as well as books you and your child choose. Have your child place a sticker on the poster next to each title they read. It's fine to read the same book many times. Children need repetition to understand new words and concepts. If your child has favorite books during a month, note the titles so you can look back and talk about what was special during this time. After you read all the books on this poster, bring your completed poster to the Youth Services department. Your child will earn a book to take home, Happy Reading!



**“My First Library Card”** is designed especially for young children to encourage Library use and promote lifelong reading. Visit the library's website to fill out an application for your child's first library card.



**For the most up-to-date information** about the library and news about services and programs, check our website and follow the library on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Instagram.



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growupreading.org

The library's **Grow Up Reading™ website** provides parents and caregivers of children from birth to age five with information and resources about early literacy and learning to help children grow up to be lifelong readers and learners.

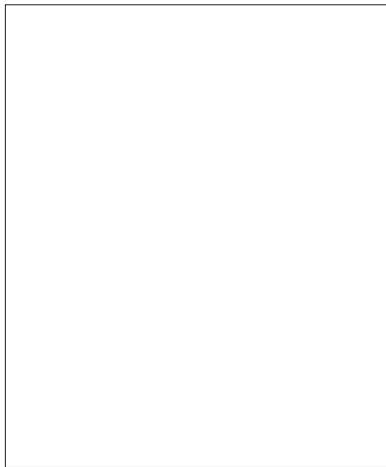


**Subscribe to the Grow Up Reading™ eNewsletter**

This quarterly eNewsletter includes parenting tips, information about new books and other materials, links to quality websites for children and parents, and much more. Visit [westbloomfieldlibrary.org](http://westbloomfieldlibrary.org) for more details.

# September 2022

Start the countdown to kindergarten here!



Attach a photo of your child here. Record your child's height and weight.

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My name

Books I like to read:

**Talk about the concept of “days” and “months.”** Count the number of days in September and the number of months in this calendar. Look for the date your child will start kindergarten and have your child circle it or otherwise note it. Explain that you are going to count down the days until kindergarten begins.

**Help your child find the date of his or her birthday** and decorate the calendar square. When it's time to celebrate your child's birthday, add language activities to the fun. Ask a youth librarian to help find books, music and rhymes to include as part of the celebration.

**Help your child mark other important dates on the calendar:** birthdays, holidays and other events.

**Create a special reading corner in your child's room.**

Set out a beanbag cushion or comfortable chair and a bookcase or basket where your child can keep books. Reserve space for books that you check out from the library.

**Before you begin reading a new book,** look at the front cover and ask your child to predict what the story is about. Look through the book page by page and ask your child to tell you about the story based only on the illustrations. Then read the book and talk about it: “Who was the story about?” “Where did the story take place? When?” “What happened at the beginning, middle and end?” “Who in the story would you like as a friend?” “Why do you say that?”

**Relate what you read to experiences in your child's life.**

For example, after reading *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*, ask your child what helped when they didn't feel well.

**Expand your child's language skills by asking open-ended questions** about what you read and what you do during the day. “What words would you teach a dog first? Why?” “What do you think we should do tonight?” “What was your favorite thing we did today?”

**As you read together, encourage your child to actively participate.**

Interactive experiences boost literacy and language skills and foster a love of reading. For example, when reading *There's a Dragon in Your Book* (from this month's suggested books) ask your child, “How do you think the baby dragon is feeling?” or “How would you get the dragon out?”

**Ask your child to use clues to figure out the meaning of new words.** If you're reading about dinosaurs and your child doesn't know the meaning of “fossils,” ask your child to look at the book's illustrations for clues. Give hints: “Do you see something that looks like a bone? It's really a fossil. It is what was left from a dinosaur after it died. Fossils are how we know what dinosaurs looked like.”

**Write and read your own book.** Have your child draw illustrations and dictate the words for each page. Read the book together.

# Book suggestions for September



*There's a Dragon  
in Your Book*  
by Tom Fletcher



*Go, Dog, Go!*  
by P.D. Eastman



*I'll Teach My Dog  
100 Words*  
by Michael Frith  
illustrated by P.D. Eastman



*The Wonderful Things  
You Will Be*  
by Emily Martin



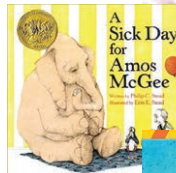
*So Many Sounds*  
by Tim McCanna



*Vivid: Poems & Notes  
About Color*  
by Julie Paschke



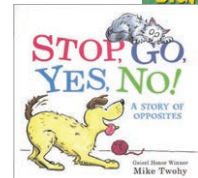
*Knock Knock*  
by Tammi Sauer



*A Sick Day for  
Amos McGee*  
by Philip Stead



*Dig, Dump, Roll*  
by Sally Sutton



*Stop, Go, Yes, No!*  
by Mike Twohy

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## Talking Teaches Language

Young children learn language and literacy skills through everyday interactions with parents and other important adults in their lives. As you talk, name things and feelings, ask questions, use new words, listen and respond. This helps children learn the meaning of words and how words are used to communicate.

Understanding spoken language helps prepare children to learn to read written language. Children need many opportunities each day to hear spoken words. Talking with children frequently helps them develop larger vocabularies. The size of a child's vocabulary when he or she begins school is a predictor of future reading achievement.

# October 2022

Sing along! Music is a great teaching tool.

**The West Bloomfield Township Public Library has created Whiz Kid Guides** about a variety of topics such as *Executive Function Skills Help Children Learn*.

Executive function describes a set of specific skills that help children focus, plan, organize, prioritize, motivate themselves, make good decisions and regulate their behavior in order to achieve goals.

Executive functioning influences a person's intellectual, emotional and social life from

childhood throughout adulthood. These skills can have lifelong benefits by helping children learn and grow into healthy, successful adults.



**As children hear songs and rhymes, they develop a listening vocabulary** that helps them distinguish between different sounds. This is an important skill in learning letter sounds and hearing the different letter sounds that make up words. Listen to a variety of music during the week.

**Read a book that you can also sing**, like *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* or *If You're Happy and You Know It!* For suggestions, email or text a youth librarian or use the Reader's Advisory service on our website.

**Sing a familiar song** in a variety of ways. For example, sing the ABC song in a rap or opera style.

**Go beyond the ABC song to teach letter names.** Check out Discovery Tablets or DVDs that promote the alphabet and letter recognition. Read the alphabet books in this month's suggested book list. Ask youth librarians for recommendations.

**Sing familiar rhymes.** Stop before rhyming words and see if your child can fill in the missing rhymes. Make up and sing your own rhymes. Use your child's name and the names of family members and friends.

**Clap along to the rhythms** in songs so children hear the syllables in words.

**Sing the Itsy-Bitsy Spider** with a GREAT BIG SPIDER using a great big voice or a TEENY TINY SPIDER using a teeny tiny voice. This teaches children about different tones of voice, rhythm and patterns of speech.

**Use songs to build vocabulary.** When children hear new words in the context of a song, it helps them understand their meaning. For example, ask what your child thinks a "waterspout" is that the Itsy-Bitsy went up. Show an example on a house. You can also explain that some words are made up of two words, like "water" and "spout." Point out other examples as you go through your day: blueberry, eyeballs, raindrop, sunglasses, goodnight.

**Make music together.** Plan for a concert with your child and other family members. Make instruments from household items and use any instruments family members play. Practice together and then perform. If you want, make a video of the performance to share with other family members and friends.

**Dance the day away.** Play different styles of music, for example folk, jazz, classical and reggae. Ask your child, "How does this music make you feel? How does it make you want to move?" Dancing helps develop coordination and motor skills and teaches about the rhythm of language.

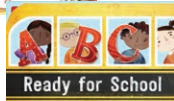
**Stream or download songs** and albums for children from the Library's hoopla service. Turn on hoopla's "Kids Mode" and find music that's family-rated.

**Find more ways to use songs and rhymes** in the library's booklet, *Nursery Rhymes, Songs & Fingerplays*.

# Book suggestions for October



*Papa Bear's Page Fright*  
by Wade Bradford



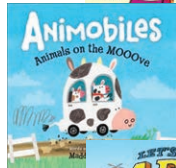
*ABC Ready for School*  
by Celeste Delaney



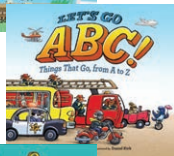
*The New LiBEARian*  
by Alison Donald



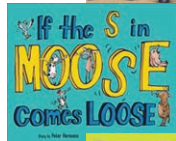
*The Detective Dog*  
by Julia Donaldson



*Animobiles Animals on the MOOOve*  
by Maddie Frost



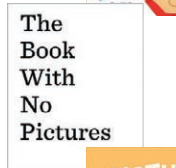
*Let's Go ABC! Things That Go, from A to Z*  
by Rhonda Greene



*If the S in Moose Comes Loose*  
by Peter Hermann



*Boing! A Very Noisy ABC*  
by Tim McCanna



*The Book with No Pictures*  
by B. J. Novak



*Nothing Happens in This Book*  
by Judy Ann Sadler



*Alphabet Boats*  
by Samantha R. Vamos



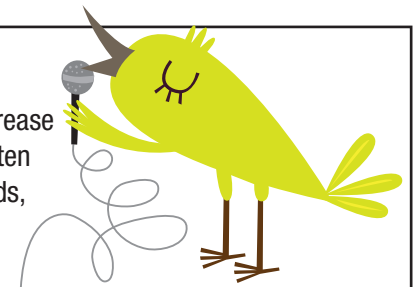
*A Dog Named Doug*  
by Karma Wilson

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## Tune in to Learning

Music and singing stimulate brain growth, help develop verbal language skills, increase vocabulary, and promote math and spatial awareness skills. Rhymes, which are often incorporated into songs, help children hear the different sounds that make up words, an important reading skill. Music can also soothe a child and reduce stress, and singing with children is a wonderful way to bond and build relationships.

Incorporate music into daily routines. Use songs to signal different activities – mealtime, time to put toys away, bedtime, and sing about what happens at each time. Sing or play music when you're in the car. Have a weekly dance party. Listen to different types of music and talk about what you like about each style.



# November 2022

Help your child get ready to read.



**The library's Discovery Tablets are preloaded with interactive learning games and activities.**

Discovery Tablets help children practice literacy and language skills while also developing STEAM skills.

Children build on prior knowledge while improving comprehension, listening and retelling skills. Visit the library to browse the Discovery Tablet collection.

**Make shared reading interactive.** Before you begin a book, look at the cover and predict what the book is about. Have your child turn the book's pages. Ask questions as you read and listen to what your child says. When you finish the book, ask your child to retell the story.

**Knowing letter names and sounds is a strong predictor of early reading success.** Use alphabet books and games to help your child recognize letters and match their sounds. Create a letter matching game by writing all of the uppercase and lowercase letters on small, individual pieces of paper. Turn them over and have fun playing a matching game.

**Talk about the letters that are especially interesting to your child,** like the beginning letter of his or her first and last name. Help your child find those letters on signs, food boxes, mail, and other objects. Repeat this activity using the beginning letter of other things your child likes.

**Tongue twisters help children hear the letter sounds within words,** a critical reading skill. Make up tongue twisters using the first letter of your child's name.

**Play this letter game:** "For dinner, we're going to have a food that begins with "m." What do you think it is?"

**Go on an alphabet hunt** and look for things that begin with each letter of the alphabet. Describe things you see using alliteration: clean clothes, tall trees, silly squirrels, green grass, etc.

**Make edible letters.** Use food such as cereal, goldfish crackers, and fruit snacks to create letters. Have your child create the first letter of their name. Have your child use food to write an M for mom or D for dad. How many letters can you create?

**Children who know more words become better readers.** Use books to help teach new words. Books can teach less common words that children may not hear in everyday conversation. As you read, talk about what new words mean and use the words throughout the day.

**Introduce new words as you talk with your child.** "Look at that street sign. Did you know that a stop sign is an octagon? That means it has eight sides. Let's count them."

**Make a family storybook** with photos and captions. Add to it during the year to help build vocabulary. Have your child "read" the storybook to you.

**Let your child see you reading for fun.** Being a reading role model will nurture your child's love of reading.



# Book suggestions for November



*Max Found Two Sticks*  
by Brian Pinkney



*May I Come In?*  
by Marsha Diane Arnold



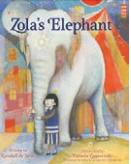
*Got to Get to Bear's!*  
by Brian Lies



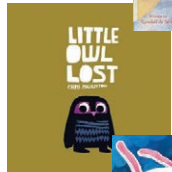
*The Snow Rabbit*  
by Georgiana Deutsch



*Best Friends in the Universe*  
by Stephanie Watson



*Zola's Elephant*  
by Randall de Sève



*Little Owl Lost*  
by Chris Haughton



*Attack of the 50-Foot Fluffy*  
by Mike Boldt



*Kite Day*  
by Will Hillenbrand



*Just Add Glitter*  
by Angela DiTerlizzi



*Go Fish!*  
by Tammy Sauer

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## Read Every Day

Research shows that children who are read to from an early age have a larger vocabulary and more developed early literacy skills when they start school. If children develop pre-reading skills before they start kindergarten, they can focus on learning to read once they begin school. To be ready to read, children should understand that letters are different from one another and that each letter has a name and its own distinct sound. They should be able to recognize upper case and most lower case letters, understand that letters represent sounds, and match letter shapes and sounds.



# December 2022

## Drawing and writing teach pre-reading skills.



Our “Early Literacy at Home” calendars help busy parents easily incorporate early literacy practices into everyday routines. Developed by one of the Library’s Early Childhood Specialists, each monthly calendar suggests one activity per day. Alternate between activities based on talking, singing, reading, writing, playing and counting. These interactive experiences don’t require a lot of time but can have a lasting impact as you help prepare your child to become a lifelong learner.

Request copies at the Library or by calling the Youth Services department at (248) 232-2250.

**Create a writing station or an “office.”** Stock it with paper, crayons, markers, junk mail, scissors and a home-made mailbox.

**Leave notes and cards in your child’s mailbox.** Add a sticker, photo or other clue about the message you’re leaving. Ask your child what they think the message says and then read it.

**Surprise your child with a note** in the pocket of a coat or under a pillow. When your child shows you the note, read it aloud with expression.

**Write a list of things your family plans to do this month** on a family message board. Have your child check off activities as they’re done.

**As you go through the day, point out times you write something:** a grocery or to-do list or a thank-you note. This helps children understand that writing has purpose and meaning.

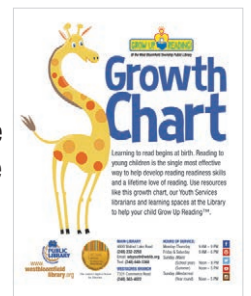
**Write a note to a friend or family member.** Have your child draw a picture, dictate what to write and sign their name. If you mail the note, have your child watch as you write the recipient’s address and your return address on an envelope. Have your child put a stamp on the envelope.

**Label things around your home like toy bins.** Have your child draw pictures to represent what belongs in each bin. Label each picture and tape it to the bin. Your child will know where toys belong and can make the connection between objects and written words.

**Writing requires hand-eye coordination, muscle development and fine motor skills.** Stringing beads, lacing cards, using pegboards, tracing and cutting with scissors help develop the coordination and motor skills needed for writing.

**Give your child a variety of writing materials and plenty of time to experiment** with drawing and writing to help develop motor skills. Practice writing letters on paper, in the air, in a tray of rice, or in sand or snow. These tactile experiences help children feel the shape and motion of the letters, as well as practice motor skills needed to write.

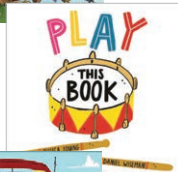
**Ask for a copy of the library’s Grow Up Reading™ Growth Chart.** Have your child tell you the names of favorite books and watch as you write them on the chart. Ask about a favorite memory of reading together and record it on the chart. In June 2023, read what you wrote and talk about it.



# Book suggestions for December



*If You're Groovy and You Know It, Hug a Friend!*  
by Eric Litwin



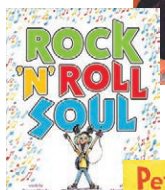
*Play This Book*  
by Jessica Young



*Old MacDonald Had a Truck*  
by Steve Goetz



*Today Is Monday*  
by Eric Carle



*Rock 'N' Roll Soul*  
by Susan Verde



*Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*  
by Eric Litwin



*Zoogie Boogie Fever*  
by Sujean Rim



*Kaya's Heart Song*  
by Diwa Tharan Sanders



*Miguel and the Grand Harmony*  
by Matt de la Peña



*The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet!*  
by Carmen Agra Deedy

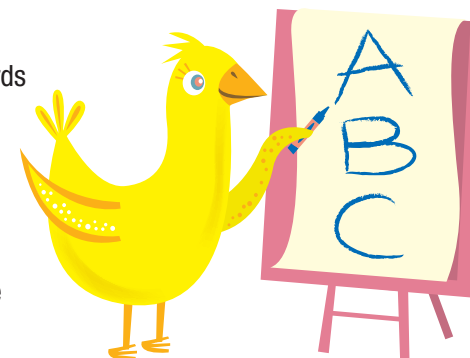


*There's a Hole in the Log on the Bottom of the Lake*  
by Loren Long

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## Write and Read

Children learn a lot about reading when they understand that spoken words can be written and read by others. Model purposeful writing to help your child understand that print has meaning. Let your child see you writing a shopping list, letter, email or reminder note. Point out conventions of English language text as you read stories. When children understand that words tell a story, that we read from left to right and that there is a difference between letters and words, they become aware of some of the visual features of print that are important to reading.



# January 2023

Learning is powered by play.



**Check out Read Alongs with a preloaded audiobook player** permanently attached to a hardcover book. Read Alongs encourage early readers to follow along with the text, which builds vocabulary and listening skills. Children can practice comprehension skills, build background knowledge and gain confidence in their abilities as they use Read Alongs, which are available as picture books, fiction and non-fiction titles.

**Give your child plenty of time, materials and space for open-ended, independent, hands-on play.** Find ideas in the library's booklet, Learning is Child's Play, and at [www.growupreading.org](http://www.growupreading.org).

**Encourage dramatic play.** When children make up stories using puppets or stuffed animals, they develop important narrative skills. This helps children understand that stories and books have a beginning, middle, and end.

Are you looking for something for your child to do during the cold, winter months? Have your child register for the Winter Reading Program. This program promotes reading for pleasure. Visit the library for more details about the Winter Reading Program.

**Dramatic play** with puppets, stuffed animals and dolls help children develop oral language skills, practice putting their thoughts into words, and express a range of feelings and emotions. Dramatic play also helps develop narrative skills. As children make up stories, they understand that there is a beginning, middle and end.

**Choose a favorite book and act out the story together.** Make props with objects from around the house. Encourage your child's imagination by making up alternate endings or extra characters.

**Play word games.** Make up tongue twisters using the first letter of the name of family members and play other games using alliteration. Funny sentences, like "Tommy tickled two tigers," help children recognize similar sounds, which is an important skill for reading.

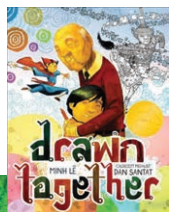
**Play board games.** Along with learning math and reading skills, board games help children practice taking turns, collaborating and being good sports. Children can also plan strategies and problem solve while having fun playing with family or friends.

**A major obstacle to play is screen time.** Even the best educational shows and games aren't a substitute for hands-on, unstructured, creative play. Limit screen time and encourage playtime. Use the library's "Smart Screen Time" and "App Smart" brochures to learn ways to use media to help children develop early literacy and cognitive skills without intruding into important learning experiences like play.

Request a copy of these resources at the library or by calling the Youth Services department at (248) 232-2250.



# Book suggestions for January



*Drawn Together*  
by Minh Lê



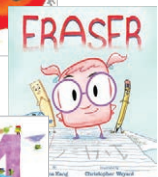
*Green*  
by Laura Vaccaro Seeger



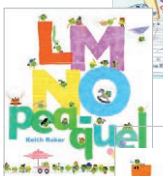
*Blue*  
by Laura Vaccaro Seeger



*The Dot*  
by Peter H. Reynolds



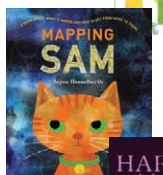
*Eraser*  
by Anna Kang



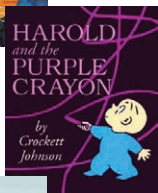
*LMNO Pea-quel*  
by Keith Baker



*LMNO Peas*  
by Keith Baker



*Mapping Sam*  
by Joyce Hesselberth



*Harold and the Purple Crayon*  
by Crockett Johnson



*The Most Magnificent Thing*  
by Ashley Spires

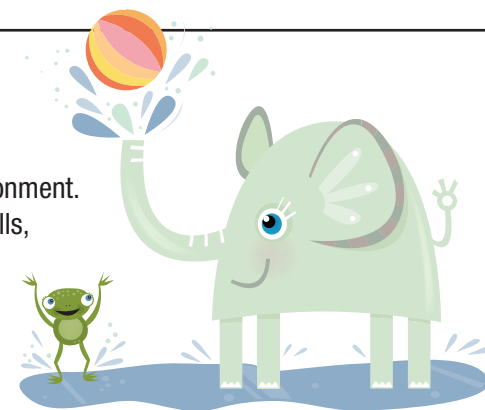


*The Invisible Boy*  
by Trudy Ludwig

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## The Importance of Play

Play is the basis of all early childhood learning. Play leverages children's natural curiosity to propel them to engage with their caregivers and environment. While they play, children develop critical thinking skills, practice motor skills, learn social skills, and build confidence and independence. The best kind of play supports curiosity and encourages children to make discoveries on their own. Provide plenty of opportunities each day for structured and unstructured independent playtime.



# February 2023

Count on it. Math literacy is important, too.



**Scholastic Teachables** provides access to thousands of printable unit and lesson plans, activity sheets and customizable content in a variety of subject areas and grade levels. These are great activities to do with your child to keep them actively engaged or supplement learning at home. Visit the library's "eLibrary" and click on "Databases" to access this great resource.

**Sort and count items around your house.** Use items such as toys, socks, fruits and vegetables, or silverware. Sort the objects by size, color, or shape. Count how many items are in each group. Which group has the most items? Which one has the least?

**Say nursery rhymes with numbers** such as *This Little Piggy Went to Market*, *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* or *One, Two, Three, Four*. As you say each line, hold up one of your child's fingers or toes and say a number in sequence from 1 to 5. This promotes one-to-one correspondence, sequencing and number recognition.

**Bring math words and concepts into everyday activities.** "This piece of cheese is a rectangle. How many pieces do we need so everyone has one?"

**Make a Valentine's Day card for a family member,** list favorite things to do together and then count how many there are.

**Measuring is an important math skill.** Practice as you and your child cook or bake together. Count the numbers on a measuring cup. Ask which is larger: a teaspoon or a tablespoon. Show how two half cups equal one cup.

**Take a scavenger hunt and search for shapes.** Shapes are a way to sort, categorize and describe things, which are important math and reading skills. Across the top of a sheet of paper, draw shapes like a circle, square and sphere. Hunt for objects with these shapes and record them in the corresponding column: a tile is a square, a ball is a sphere, etc.

**Sort magnetic letters or letters from a puzzle by shape.** Group those with tall tails, short tails, circles, hooks, humps, etc. Count the number of letters in each category. This helps with letter recognition as well as classification skills.

**Make patterns with edible objects,** like colorful cereal or candies, trail mix or goldfish crackers. Start with an alternating pattern like yellow-green-yellow-green and have your child complete the pattern. Continue with more difficult patterns. Patterning teaches children to look for similarities and differences, an important math and reading skill.

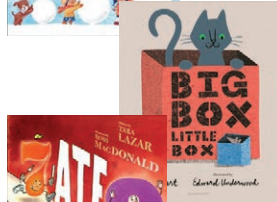
**Play "I Spy" with numbers on the calendar.** Say, "I spy with my little eye, a number that is more than 8 but less than 10. What is it?"

**Use the calendar to discuss numbers, simple math problems and counting.** Count how many days are in February and discuss how many days are in a week. Use this opportunity to discuss a simple math problems such as, "Find February 10. Now count two more days, what number is that? It's February 12, because  $10 + 2 = 12$ "

# Book suggestions for February



*One Snowy Day*  
by Diana Murray



*Big Box Little Box*  
by Caryl Hart



*7 Ate 9: The Untold Story*  
by Tara Lazar



*Crash! Boom! A Math Tale*  
by Robie H. Harris



*100 Bugs! A Counting Book*  
by Kate Narita



*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*  
by Eric Carle



*Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons*  
by Eric Litwin



*Bigger Than You*  
by Hyewon Kyung



*Ten Apples Up On Top!*  
by Dr. Seuss



*Counting Dinos*  
by Eric Pinder



*Ten Magic Butterflies*  
by Danica McKellar

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## Early Math Matters

Math readiness in kindergartners is a predictor of math and reading success in later grades. Helping children learn about numbers, one-to-one correspondence, shapes, patterns, sorting, measurements and other math concepts has the double benefit of developing both math and reading skills. Talking and thinking about math concepts also develops critical thinking and reasoning skills, as well as perseverance and problem solving.



# March 2023

Let's talk! A simple way to learn language.



**Children listen and understand oral language** before they can read and understand printed words. Listening to nursery rhymes and songs is an early literacy experience that helps children understand how language works. The library's *Nursery Rhymes, Songs and Fingerplays* resource includes favorite rhymes and tips for using them to develop language skills.

Request a copy at the library or by calling the Youth Services department at (248) 232-2250.

**As your child gets ready for kindergarten, make a book about what they think kindergarten will be like.** Have your child “read” the book to you. Discuss what kindergarten was like for you.

**Talk about how your child will make new friends** in kindergarten.

**Talk about feelings, positive and negative.** Help your child name different emotions and talk about how to express them. As you read books together, ask your child how characters are feeling. “How do you think (name of character) is feeling? How do you know? When have you felt that way? What did you do? Here’s what I’ve done when I felt like that.”

**Talk with your child about things to do when you’re afraid.** Talk with your child about kindergarten before their first day. Find out what he or she thinks kindergarten will be like. Be prepared to answer questions such as: Where will I eat lunch and play at school? How long will I be at school? What if I miss you?

**When your child uses words that describe feelings,** suggest other words that express the same feeling. “You feel happy that we can see Grandma. I feel elated!”

**Use words that are unfamiliar to your child** to talk about feelings: affectionate, ecstatic, overwhelmed, relieved, tense.

**Make a family tree.** Talk about all of the words that we use to describe our relatives—aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather, great-grandparent, cousin, niece, nephew, etc. Talk to some favorite relatives about their first day of school.

**Drive or walk by the school your child will attend.** Ask your child to describe what they see. Increase vocabulary and observation skills by introducing new words to describe the building and surroundings.

**Help your child learn your address and phone number.** Practice it at home and have your child retell a trusted adult.

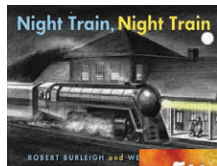
**Create outdoor memories with your child.** Go for a walk in the snow, sled or try a winter scavenger hunt. Talk about what you see and do. Use new vocabulary.

**As you read together, ask your child to become the teller of the story.** Parents can become the audience and questioner. As your child tells the story, ask open-ended questions that require answers with more than one word. For example, “What’s happening here?” or “Why do you think that happened?” Expand on what your child says and follow up with another question.

**Have fun!** Keep your reading times fun and enjoyable.



# Book suggestions for March



*Night Train, Night Train*  
by Robert Burleigh



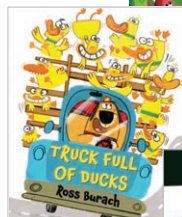
*A Fall Ball for All*  
by Jamie Swenson



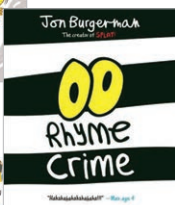
*Summer Supper*  
by Rubín Pfeffer



*Gorillas Go Bananas*  
by Patrick Wensink



*Truck Full of Ducks*  
by Ross Burach



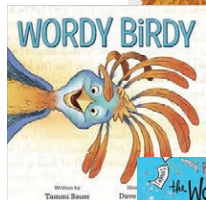
*Rhyme Crime*  
by John Burgerman



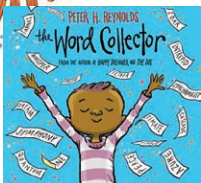
*Food Truck Fest!*  
by Alexandra Penfold



*Hello Hello*  
by Brendan Wenzel



*Wordy Birdy*  
by Tammi Sauer



*The Word Collector*  
by Peter Reynolds

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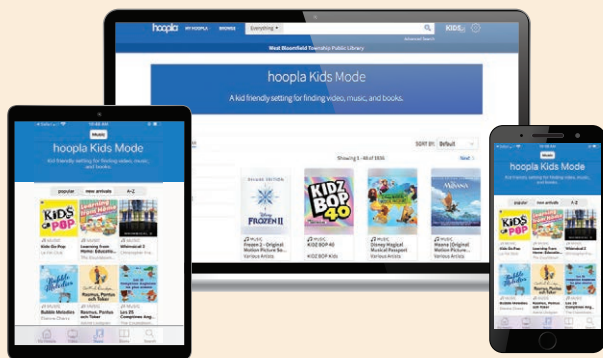
## Tell Me How You're Feeling

Children need to learn how to express feelings in healthy ways. Being able to name feelings in themselves and others is a first step in helping children understand ways to respond to emotions. This is especially important as children enter kindergarten. They need to find safe ways to express and react to their feelings and those of classmates and others. Talk to your child about feelings and how to deal with negative emotions. Role play strategies so your child has ways to self-soothe, problem solve and resolve conflicts.



# April 2023

## Singing tunes up reading skills.



**Stream or download songs and albums** for children from the library's hoopla service.

Turn on hoopla's "Kids Mode" under the Settings menu and find music that's family-rated.

All of the content on hoopla is instantly available. No waiting, no advertisements interrupting your music and it's free with your West Bloomfield library card.

**To use hoopla, visit [westbloomfieldlibrary.org](http://westbloomfieldlibrary.org) and click "eLibrary."**

**Take hoopla wherever you go by downloading the app.**

**Sing with your child** even if you don't feel you have a good singing voice. Children love the sound of your voice and don't care if you are a great singer.

**April is National Poetry Month.** Reading poems and hearing rhymes helps children increase vocabulary, sharpen listening skills and look at familiar experiences in new ways. For titles of poetry books that might be of particular interest to your child, use the library's Reader's Advisory service for youth.

**Promote listening and memory skills** by singing sequencing songs or books such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *The Napping House*, *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*, and *There Was an Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything!*

**Have a dance party with favorite tunes.** This helps develop motor skills and a sense of the rhythm of language.

**Sing "If you're happy and you know it..." and add new verses** with feeling words. "If you're happy and you know it, shout stupendous!" "If you're sad and you know it, say I'm blue." "If you're silly and you know it, say I'm goofy."

**Play "Rhyme time."** Sing a word that is related to spring, and ask your child to sing a word that rhymes: rain/plain, bud/mud, worm/squirm, flower/tower.

**Dance along to songs** and see if your child can move the the rhythm of the beat. Keeping a beat is important to future reading development.

**Play musical games like "Freeze."** Play music, have your child dance along with family members, and when you stop the music, freeze. Repeat the fun! Or make a conga line through your house with everyone dancing along.

**Listen for different instruments in songs.** "I hear flutes. What instruments do you hear?"

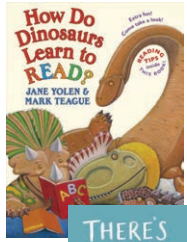
**Adding music can make activities more enjoyable.** Make up songs about brushing teeth, getting dressed or putting toys away.

**Create new lyrics for familiar songs.** Sing "The Wheels on the Train" or "Old McDonald Had a Store."

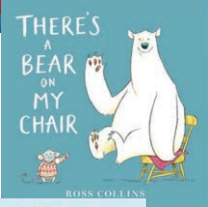
**Use songs to help children learn to follow directions.** Sing "The Hokey Pokey" or "If You're Happy and You Know It" to promote listening skills and following directions.

**Sing a song with a great tempo** that you can speed up or slow down, such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." Start at a slower pace, then go a little faster and sing the fastest at the end. It's a great way to build coordination and gross motor skills.

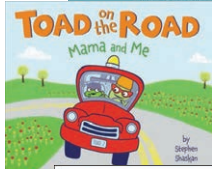
# Book suggestions for April



*How Do Dinosaurs Learn to Read*  
by Jane Yolen



*There's A Bear on My Chair*  
by Ross Collins



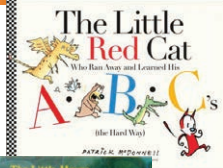
*Toad on the Road  
Mama and Me*  
by Stephen Shaskan



*Where the Wild Things Are*  
by Maurice Sendak



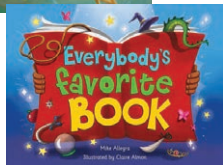
*Bear Can't Sleep*  
by Karma Wilson



*The Little Red Cat Who  
Ran Away and Learned His  
ABC's (the Hard Way)*  
by Patrick McDonnell



*The Little Mouse, the Red  
Ripe Strawberry, and the  
Big Hungry Bear*  
by Don and Audrey Wood

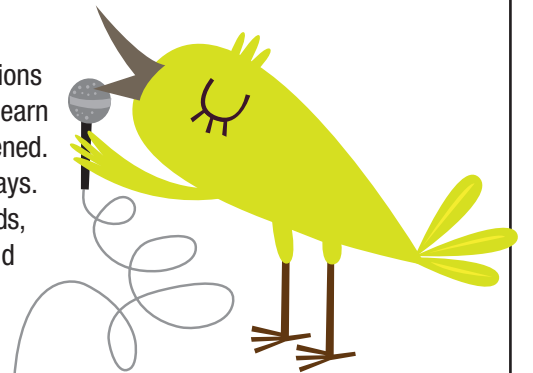


*Everybody's Favorite Book*  
by Mike Allegra

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## Songs and Rhymes Build Brainpower

Listening to music, singing songs and saying rhymes helps build connections between neurons and create pathways in the brain. A child's capacity to learn is directly related to the number of pathways that are formed and strengthened. Making music and singing songs helps create and reinforce these pathways. Children build brainpower as they focus on the sounds that make up words, feel the rhythm of language, learn vocabulary, engage in self-expression and increase their attention span. Songs can also help children feel good, soothe themselves and regulate their emotions.



# May 2023

Explore different kinds of books to read.



**Use BookFLIX to help early readers** in grades Pre K – 3 develop and practice essential reading skills while building real-world knowledge. This online resource pairs classic video storybooks with related nonfiction eBooks from Scholastic to teach comprehension, vocabulary and other important skills. Educational activities and games reinforce skills and extend the learning experience.

## **Need ideas for books to choose?**

Use the Library's Reader's Advisory service for personalized reading recommendations from librarians based upon favorite authors, titles and genres. Go to [westbloomfieldlibrary.org](http://westbloomfieldlibrary.org) and click "Services."

**Read different genres of books** and various types of materials like magazines or Read Along books.

**Before you read a nonfiction or information book**, ask your child "What do we already know about this?" and then "What do we want to learn?" After reading the book, ask "What did we learn?"

**Read an information book about spring or summer.** Have your child describe what the book is about and tell you two or three things they learned.

**Explore fiction and related nonfiction books.** Read a picture book with an animal as the main character, and then read a nonfiction book about that animal.

**Find books about how to make something:** paper airplanes, crafts or puppets. Read about and then make something together. This shows your child that books can have practical applications.

**Talk about how information books are different.** Point out parts of the book, such as the index, topic headings and glossary. Talk about the photographs and other graphics such as captions, charts and diagrams. Show how you can "dive into" an information book and find out what you want to know without reading the book from start to finish.

**Family stories can be a great way to make connections** between what you read in a book and a child's own experiences. After reading a book, talk about a related experience involving family members.

**Read chapter books together as a family**, one chapter a day. This will help develop your child's attention span for longer and longer stories.

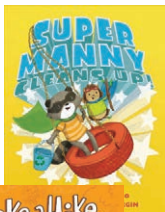
**Read everywhere you go.** Read signs, while driving in the car, shopping at a store or walking around your house.

**Get kids cooking**, and show them the practical side of reading. Try recipes from these books: *Kids Cookbook* by Elizabeth Taliaferro and the *Green Eggs and Ham Cookbook* with recipes inspired by Dr. Seuss by Georgeanne Brennan.

**Read some of your favorite childhood books to your child.** Talk about your memories of reading with your parents or grandparents.

**Let your children see you reading and enjoying the experience.** Talk to your child about a book you're reading to help show you value reading and think books are important.

## Book suggestions for May



*Super Manny Cleans Up!*  
by Kelly DiPucchio



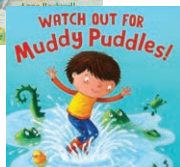
*Take a Hike, Miles and Spike!*  
by Travis Foster



*Be Kind*  
by Pat Zietlow Miller



*Hiking Day*  
by Anne Rockwell



*Watch Out for Muddy Puddles!*  
by Ben Faulks



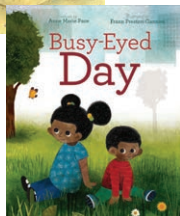
*Pie Is for Sharing*  
by Stephanie Parsley Ledyard



*Spunky Little Monkey*  
by Bill Martin



*The Sandcastle That Lola Built*  
by Megan Maynor



*Busy-Eyed Day*  
by Anne Marie Pace

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### Understanding What You Read

Read different genres of books such as fantasy, mystery, historical fiction and nonfiction. This exposes your child to a variety of ideas and experiences. Read longer stories and chapter books over a number of sessions. This helps your child develop a longer attention span, something that's important in school, and practice comprehension skills.

Comprehension is the "essence of reading." Initially, children understand only the literal meaning of what is read to them. More complex levels of comprehension develop the more children are read to. Discuss what is going on in the stories you read aloud. Talk about abstract ideas such as feelings, and make predictions and inferences.



# June 2023

Reading and writing go together.



## Reading boosts brainpower.

No matter what their age, children who read or who are read to improve cognitive, reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. This is true year-round. But summer reading is especially important.

## Summer reading leads to school success.

Reading over the summer helps students return to classrooms in the fall better prepared to achieve academically. When parents read to pre-readers, they help their children develop early literacy skills and be ready to learn to read in kindergarten.

**Make a list of things your family is looking forward to this summer.** Encourage your child to dictate details about activities: go to the beach, take a picnic lunch, draw designs in the sand and find a shell to take home.

**Write a to-do list to prepare for the first day of kindergarten:** what school supplies are needed, what to eat for breakfast, what to do when you arrive at school. Have your child practice saying your address and phone number.

**Record each day's weather on the calendar** with symbols for sunny, rainy, windy, cloudy, etc. At the end of the month, count each kind of day.

**Make a sensory alphabet to practice letter recognition** and fine motor skills. Write one letter of the alphabet per index card. Using glue and a popsicle stick, have your child trace each letter with glue. Ask them to say the letter and its sound as you go. Sprinkle sand over the glue and set aside to dry. Your child can practice tracing letters with their finger, feeling their shapes and making important connections.

**Encourage writing activities as part of dramatic play.** Children can "write" prescriptions, create menus, take food orders, make signs for a zoo, or draw and label a treasure map during imaginative play.

**Make a name puzzle.** Write your child's name in bold letters on a sheet of paper. Cut the letters apart and scramble them. Ask your child to arrange the letters in the correct order to spell their name. Try this with other words such as mom, dad, dog, cat, or names of family members or friends. It will help your child understand that letters can be combined to create and spell words.

**Help your child organize a "research project."** Decide to study something like birds, plants or stars. Write down observations and questions in a notebook. Read about the subject to find out more.

**Choose an author whose books your child really enjoys and learn more about him or her.** Many popular authors have websites with contact information. Help your child write a note to a favorite author and then mail or email it.

**Help your child** write and illustrate a book about their expectations for kindergarten.

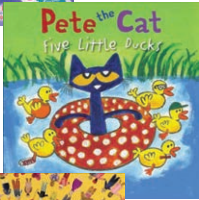
## Summer Reading pays off year-round.

Join Summer Reading 2023 for a summer of reading fun and enjoy the benefits all year long. Register everyone in your household and make Summer Reading a family affair. For details, go to [westbloomlib.beanstack.org](http://westbloomlib.beanstack.org).

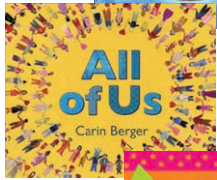
# Book suggestions for June



*The Nuts: Sing and Dance in Your Polka Dot Pants*  
by Eric Litwin



*Pete the Cat: Five Little Ducks*  
by Eric Litwin



*All of Us*  
by Carin Berger



*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*  
by Bill Martin



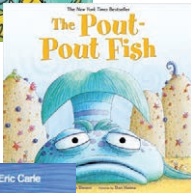
*There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*  
by Simms Taback



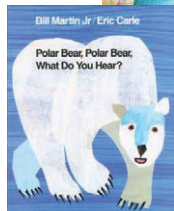
*Sylvia Long's Big Book for Small Children*  
by Sylvia Long



*We Are the Dinosaurs*  
by Laurie Berkner



*The Pout-Pout Fish*  
by Deborah Diesen

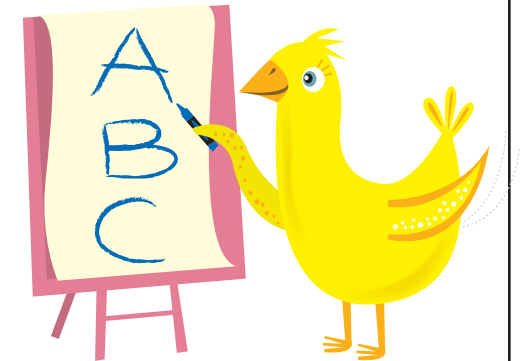


*Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*  
by Bill Martin

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## Writing Helps Children Think

As children draw and write, they practice skills like generating ideas, composing thoughts, planning, organizing, connecting ideas and using symbols to express themselves. This helps children become better thinkers and readers. They learn writing can be used for different purposes: you can create imaginary worlds or a grocery list. Family members can ask questions and comment on what was written, which gives children more chances to think about how words, whether spoken or written, are used to communicate.



# July 2023

Play is fun and games and lots of learning.



The Library's ***Learning is Child's Play*** booklet includes tips for selecting developmentally appropriate toys for children from birth to five years old. The focus is on toys that help children develop cognitive, language, emotional and social skills.

Request a copy at the library or by calling the Youth Services department at (248) 232-2250.

**Play is a great way to practice social and problem-solving skills that children need in kindergarten**, such as learning to make friends sharing and resolving conflicts. Watch for opportunities to help your child with these concepts during playtimes. While children learn these concepts, they gain self-reliance and self-confidence.

**Give your child time to play alone as well as with family and friends.** When children entertain themselves, they build self-reliance and self-confidence. Encourage solo play.

**Support make-believe play with props.** Provide old clothes for dress-up, blankets for forts, dishes for a restaurant, and boxes of all sizes. Make a “prop box” with supplies for something of particular interest to your child: veterinarian, chef, firefighter, teacher.

**Imaginative play — including playing house, grocery store or school — helps children learn about the roles, responsibilities and feelings of others.** This helps children prepare to handle situations that are new to them. Encourage your child’s imaginative play about school by acting out scenarios like riding the bus, going to the lunchroom, talking to teachers, and thinking through possible solutions if they are uncertain about what to do.

**Use play to develop STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) skills.** This helps children learn how things work, as well as how to collaborate and innovate. Playing with blocks is a great way to develop STEAM skills. Use wooden blocks, Legos®, magnetic tiles or other types of blocks to develop spatial reasoning skills, explore engineering principles, learn about geometry and practice problem-solving.

**Encourage safe, physical play.** Take play outdoors and provide opportunities to play with balls, water, sand, bubbles, chalk and paints, scooters and bikes. Let your child run, jump, skip, race and explore. Always make certain play is safe and supervised.

**Play math games to learn and practice math and reading readiness skills.** Games with dice, like Candy Land or Chutes and Ladders, help children recognize numbers, count, remember several pieces of information at once, and talk about spatial relationships (“Who is ahead?” “How far is it to the finish line?” “Which is the longest ladder?” “Which is taller?”).

**Humor is good for the brain.** When children play, laugh at silly antics, talk in funny voices, and tell nonsense stories, they increase dopamine levels in the brain, which has positive effects on learning. Use wordplay, puns, riddles, and joke books to get those laughs going.



# Book suggestions for July



*Lines*  
by Suzy Lee



*The Book of Mistakes*  
by Corinna Luyken



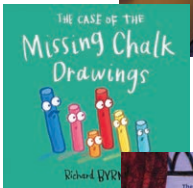
*King Alice*  
by Matthew Cordell



*Hey, Wall*  
by Susan Verde



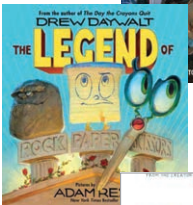
*What If...*  
by Samantha Berger



*The Case of the Missing Chalk Drawings*  
by Richard Byrne



*The Noisy Paint Box*  
by Barb Rosenstock



*The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors*  
by Drew Daywalt



*Mix It Up!*  
by Hervé Tullet

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## Fun and Games Lead to Learning

Make-believe play gives children a chance to act out real-life situations, work through worries and fear, and understand how others feel. Playing with others helps children learn important social skills like sharing, taking turns, negotiating and resolving conflicts.

Outdoor play promotes curiosity and exploration, the development of fine and gross motor skills, and muscle strength and coordination. Children can engage in energetic play outside that might be inappropriate indoors. They can use their imagination in different ways, and build self-confidence.



# August 2023

Count down the last days before kindergarten!

## Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

Use these goals as you help prepare your child to start kindergarten. Remember that children grow and develop at different rates. Check off goals your child has already accomplished. Work to develop remaining goals and competencies over the course of the year with the ideas and activities in the *Counting the Days 'til Kindergarten* calendar.

### Social and Emotional

- Is learning to cooperate and take turns with playmates
- Helps with family chores
- Can follow three-step directions and finish a task
- Is willing to explore and try new experiences
- Can sit and listen to a story and have a conversation about it

### Health and Wellness

- Gets plenty of rest and exercise
- Eats a balanced diet and is willing to try new foods
- Plays with puzzles, colors, paints, and uses scissors to develop motor skills and muscle strength

### Independence

- Puts on and takes off a coat and hangs it up
- Fastens and unfastens simple buttons, snaps and zippers
- Goes to the bathroom and washes hands independently
- Eats neatly, opens simple food containers and cleans up when done
- Writes first and last name in upper and lower case letters
- Knows their phone number and address

### Language and Learning

- Asks questions and wants to know “why?”
- Enjoys going places and uses new vocabulary that is introduced through conversation
- Notices and talks about similarities and differences
- Can sort and classify patterns
- Picks out books of interest and wants to be read to almost every day
- Knows that printed words have meaning and that we read from left to right and top to bottom on a page
- Listens to music and makes music with everyday objects and dances.

### Letters, Numbers, Shapes and Colors

- Knows most of the basic shapes and colors
- Can recognize most of the letters and knows many of the letter sounds
- Knows the difference between a letter, a word and a number
- Can count to 10 and is learning to count higher

## It's Only Just Begun Guidelines

Kindergarten is just the beginning! Throughout your child's school days, teachers want to be your partner in the academic and social success of your child. Here are ways to help your child have a good school experience.

- Keep your child's teacher informed of anything that might affect your child's behavior or academic performance.
- Volunteer at school when your schedule allows. This helps you learn about the classroom, and your child will know that you're interested in school.
- Talk to your child about what they like and dislike about school. Discuss how to solve problems at school.
- Make a spot for homework. Talk to your child about school assignments.
- Be sure your child has time to play outside of school. Playing supports cognitive growth, social skills, creativity and problem-solving.
- Continue to read and write with your child.
- Help your child develop independence and self-control. Children need to practice expressing their feelings at home so that they express themselves appropriately at school.
- Limit screen time. Spend time together talking, singing, reading, writing, playing and counting!
- Continue to give your child firsthand experiences. Children understand concepts and skills more quickly if they have experience with the real thing.

# Book suggestions for August



*Five Busy Beavers*  
by Stella Parthenio Grasso



*Groovy Joe Dance Party Countdown*  
by Eric Litwin



*10 Little Ninjas*  
by Miranda Paul



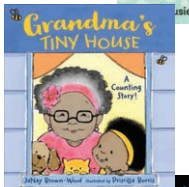
*Ducks Away!*  
by Mem Fox



*One Leaf, Two Leaves, Count with Me!*  
by John Micklos



*Stack the Cats*  
by Susie Ghahremani



*Grandma's Tiny House*  
by JaNay Brown-Wood

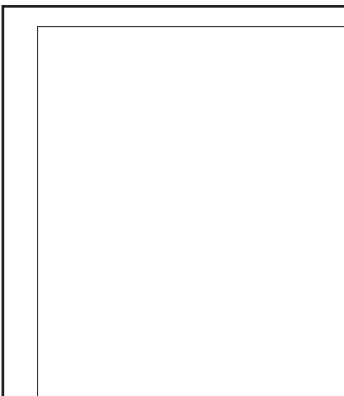
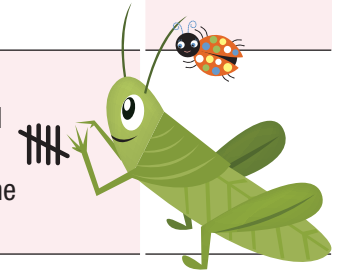


*Who's the Biggest?*  
by Delphine Chedru



*A Hundred Billion Trillion Stars*  
by Seth Fishman

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Count the number of days until kindergarten begins. Mark off each day and count down to the first day of school!	



Take a photo of your child on the first day of school and add it to this page. Compare your child's height and weight now to what you recorded in September 2022.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

*I'm going to kindergarten!*

# Grow Up Reading™ with the West Bloomfield Township Public Library

Young children learn best through hands-on, active experiences.

The Counting the Days 'til Kindergarten calendar is part of the library's comprehensive Grow Up Reading™ initiative. Use this calendar and other resources from the library to help your soon-to-be-kindergartner develop important cognitive, motor, creative and social skills.

Watch for the library's "100 Picture Books to Read in Kindergarten" poster, which will be available to kindergartners in the fall of 2022. The poster lists some of the very best books to read with kindergartners.

Ask our Youth Services librarians for information about all of the Grow Up Reading™ services and resources or go to our special website: [growupreading.org](http://growupreading.org).



The nation's highest honor for libraries.



@ the West Bloomfield Township Public Library  
[growupreading.org](http://growupreading.org)

#### MAIN LIBRARY

4600 Walnut Lake Road  
(248) 232-2250  
TDD: (248) 232-2292

#### WESTACRES BRANCH

7321 Commerce Road  
(248) 363-4022

#### EMAIL & TEXT

Email: [wbrief@wplib.org](mailto:wbrief@wplib.org)  
[wacref@wplib.org](mailto:wacref@wplib.org)  
Text: (248) 648-3368

[wplib.org](http://wplib.org)

