



# C H I L D H O O D

# E A R L Y

## Early Childhood Calendar

Suggestions, ideas, and  
tips to help prepare children  
for kindergarten through literacy-based  
play and interaction

For family members,  
child care providers, and preschool teachers

Birth - Kindergarten

*"Children  
learn as they play.  
Most importantly, in play  
children learn how to learn."*  
- O. Fred Donaldson



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Hello!

Just the fact that you are viewing this calendar says that you care about a child in your life and want to help him or her to be ready to enter school when that day comes. These activities will work for you whether you are a family member, child care provider, or preschool teacher.

The suggestions, ideas, and tips in this calendar are simple ways you can help a child to prepare for kindergarten. They can be changed to fit your activities and can be a springboard to further adventures. They are based on research that has been conducted in early literacy. The content was collected and grouped by experts in early childhood education and literacy.

The calendar is undated, so you may begin using it at any point in the year. However, if you choose, you and your child may want to work together to put the dates on the calendar. This provides an opportunity to talk about the number of days in a month, the names of the days, etc.

We welcome your suggestions and ideas for future revisions of this calendar. Please let us know how you are using it and how we can make it better. Feedback should be sent to [tricia.parker@nebraska.gov](mailto:tricia.parker@nebraska.gov).



# Alphabet and Number Practice

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh

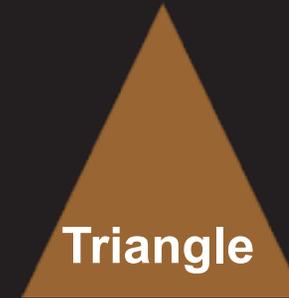
Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp

Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx

Yy Zz 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

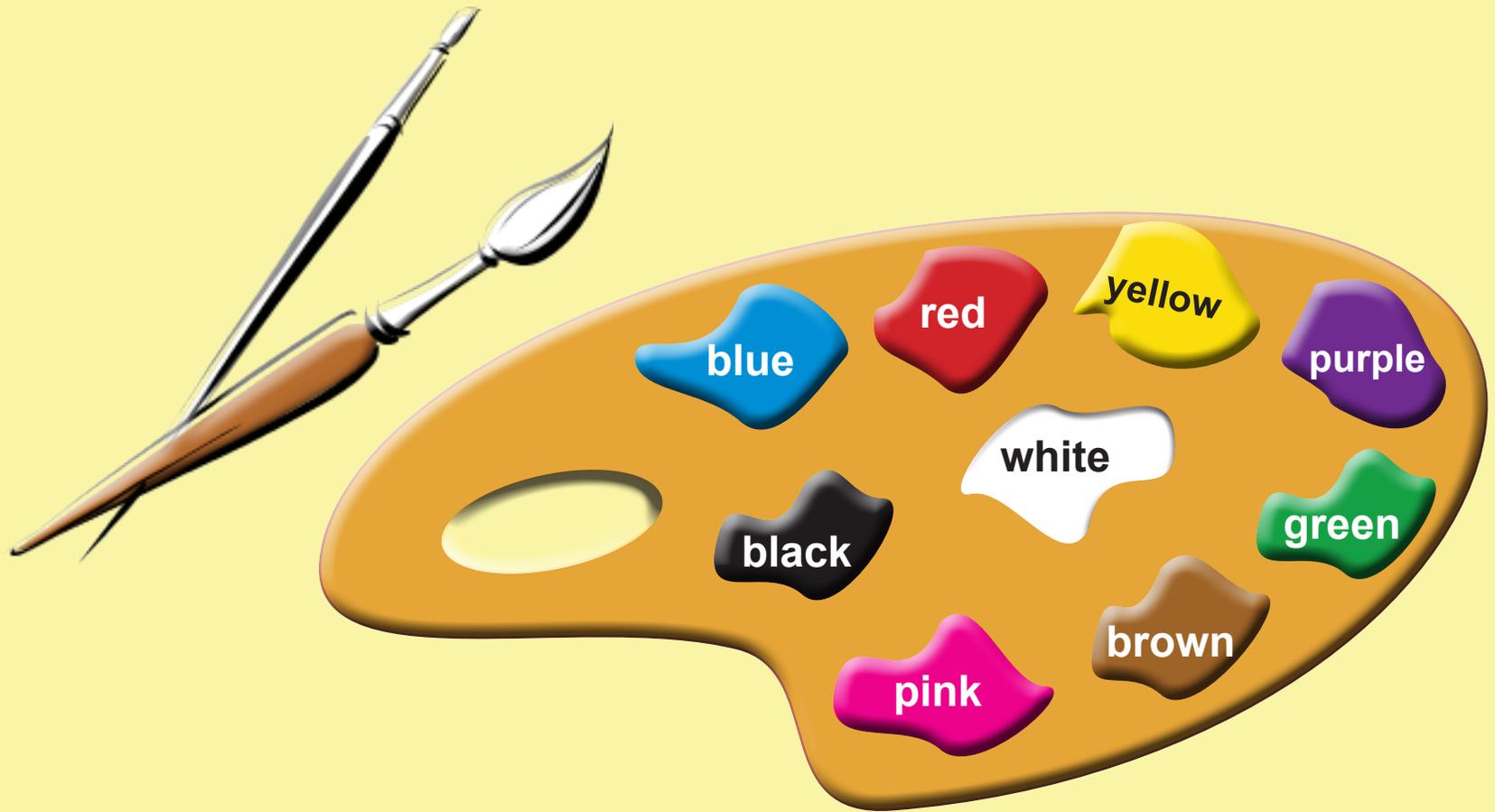
- Ask me to name as many letters as I can.
- Try mixing up the order and asking me to point to different letters. Be sure I understand the difference between upper and lowercase letters.
- Talk to me about how uppercase letters are used at the beginnings of sentences and names.
- Visit “Get Ready to Read” at [www.getreadytoread.org/skill-building-activities](http://www.getreadytoread.org/skill-building-activities). Find activities cards, online games, and other early literacy resources.





Can you help find the shapes on the board?

What shapes do you see around you?



What is your favorite color?

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# Reading

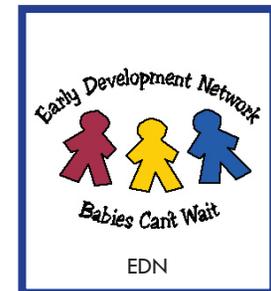
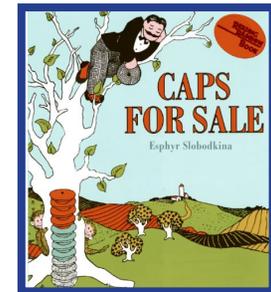
Draw something from our reading.

Have me draw a picture of a funny hat.

I can write my name.

Children are more likely to be fluent readers and enjoy reading more if parents have fun reading to them and if they show children that reading books is a source of enjoyment (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Book and Apps/Website of the Month



I can look through the pages of books and point out familiar pictures.



I can choose favorite books and pretend to read using pictures to tell a story.



I can begin to notice some letters and words and retell parts of stories.



# January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Let me see you reading. Your example will help me see that reading is fun and important to you.			Check out: 10 Things You Can Do to Raise a Reader: <a href="http://goo.gl/UpFrs">http://goo.gl/UpFrs</a> It will help you find tips to help me learn and grow. 			Read me a picture book, especially one with faces, and describe feelings. When I'm older, I will be able to identify and learn to manage my own feelings.
	Snuggle up with me under a blanket on a cold day to read a book.				Go to the library to find my favorite book. Check out other titles by the same author.	
		Throw a blanket over a table in our house to make a cozy reading fort. Have me create a secret password to get into the fort.		Check out a book of jokes to help me celebrate Global Belly Laugh Day on January 24th. <a href="http://www.bellylaughday.com/">http://www.bellylaughday.com/</a>		
<p>Write down something I said that made you laugh. </p>			Share one of your favorite childhood books with me or take me to the library to choose books that look fun to read.			Ask me to help turn pages and predict what will happen next in the book. It will keep me interested.
	Show me that books read from front to back, left to right, and top to bottom. These are called "concepts of print," which I will learn in kindergarten.			Help me share books with the people I love by writing notes to them about the books we've read together.		



# Writing

## Print Awareness

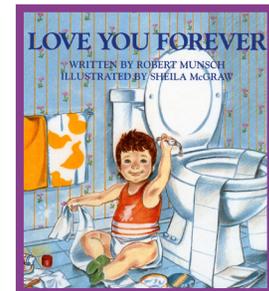
Draw something from our reading.

Have me draw something I love.

I can write my name.

Research has shown that when adults provide print-rich experiences (opportunities to see lots of different kinds of print) and talk with children about the letters and sounds that they see, children learn more words than their peers who did not (Vukelich, 1994).

Book and Apps/Website  
of the Month



 **TEXTS 4 TEACHERS**

Texts 4 Teachers



I can recognize familiar signs and places in my neighborhood.



I can pretend to read and write lists and name familiar words on signs (Example: STOP Sign).



I can recognize my name and my family members' names.

# February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February 2nd is Groundhog Day. Help me celebrate by talking about writing a story about what the groundhog might be thinking as he comes out of his hole.			February is Black History Month. Help me learn about all people in our community and why we are all special by talking about our heritage and special holidays.		Show me signs in store windows and ask me if I can guess what they say based on their pictures. Explain that stores use these pictures to get customers to buy certain things.	
	Help me build a snowman and sing the Frosty the Snowman song. You can hear it here: <a href="http://youtu.be/pmuJDmj-q">http://youtu.be/pmuJDmj-q</a>			Help me write notes, letters, and cards to the people I love. This is a good opportunity to show me that symbols (such as hearts) can be used in place of words sometimes.		
		February is Great American Pie Month. Help me make a pie or take me out for a piece of pie. Talk with me about all of the things we could put into a pie.			President's Day is celebrated this month. Talk to me about who the President of the United States is and what that means.	
<p>Describe one activity that we loved.</p> 			Teach me the names of the presidents who are honored on President's Day: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. We can pick books from the library to learn more about these men.		Ask me to bring objects to you by describing them (e.g., Please bring me the big blue bowl, or Please get your fluffy yellow pillow).	
	Look online or in a book at the library. Write down as many ways as you can find to say, "I love you." Choose a few to memorize.	Help me trace my hand and tape or glue the third and fourth fingers over. This means, "I love you" in sign language. Talk to me about sign language and why it is used.				Show me a weather map on TV or in the newspaper. Show me what the symbols mean, and explain that we sometimes use symbols to replace words.

# Listening & Understanding

Draw something from our reading.

Draw something we hear outside.

I can write my name.

Research shows that conversation is important when children are young, providing them with experiences that are important to their cognitive and social-emotional growth (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Book and Apps/Website of the Month



I can show interest in the sounds of people and events around me.



I can listen to and follow simple directions.



I can follow multi-step directions, answer questions, and listen to and recall detail about stories.

# March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Play the "Stretch It" game. Say a word slowly to me. Then have me say it at a normal rate (e.g., bi – cy – cle). It helps me to hear the sounds in a word.			Record songs or stories that I like or that you liked as a child. Have the babysitter play them for me when you can't be there to put me to bed.			
	Say the name of an animal and have me make the animal's sound (e.g., A cow says...moo!).			Download the Nebraska Early Development Network App, Staying on Track, at: <a href="http://edn.ne.gov/stayontrackapp.html">http://edn.ne.gov/stayontrackapp.html</a> or by clicking on the QR code in the next box. It will give you great ideas for me!		
		Sing a song with me and show me how to do the finger-plays that go along with it (e.g., The Itsy Bitsy Spider). If you don't know any finger-plays, make them up! It's all about the fun.				Ask me to put on my clothes in reverse order: first shoes, then socks, then jeans, then my underwear. Ask me why it's important to do things in a certain order.
Point to pictures of family members and say their names. Ask me to say them, too. This will help me learn names and faces—especially for those people I don't see often.			Encourage me to speak correctly, not by correcting me, but by modeling. If I say, "I wrote my name." Say to me, "Oh, wow! You wrote your name! Good job!"		Celebrate St. Patrick's Day by asking me what objects I know that are green. Help me look around and find some more green items.	<p>Describe one song that we loved.</p> 
	Take a walk with me and listen for the sounds of animals. Talk about birds that are tweeting, dogs that are barking, sheep that are bleating, etc.			Sing the alphabet song for me while I am brushing my teeth or taking a bath.		

# Speaking & Communicating

Draw something from our reading.

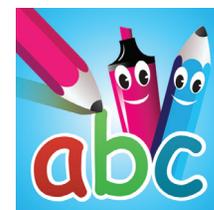
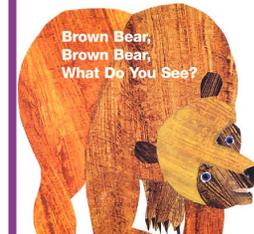
Help me paint a watercolor picture of my favorite animal.

I can write my name.

Research says that children benefit from adult/child conversations that are about topics that challenge children's thinking (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001).

Book and Apps/Website of the Month

Bill Martin Jr / Eric Carle



abc Pocket Phonics



I can name familiar objects, animals, and people.



I can describe many familiar items and am understood by most people.



I can ask and answer questions and use many new and different words.

# April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Help me celebrate April Fool's Day by telling a silly story and asking me to help make up new details.	If I'm starting kindergarten this fall, be sure we attend open house.		Make funny faces in the mirror to express how you are feeling. Name the feelings you are showing. Then ask me to do the same.			Celebrate Spring with me by reading a book about animals and their babies. Some possible titles: <u>Is Your Mama a Llama?</u> <u>The Runaway Bunny</u> <u>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</u> <u>Make Way for Ducklings</u>
		Read <u>Good Night, Gorilla</u> to me and let me help you make up the words as we go, describing what we are seeing. Then, help me make up our own word-less story.			Ask me questions that make me give you more than a one or two word answer. Instead of, "Did you have fun?" ask me, "What was your favorite part? Tell me about it!"	
	Talk to me as we are doing things together. Every time you describe what you are doing it helps me to learn new vocabulary and helps me communicate better.			Tell me the things about me that make me special such as the special tricks I do, how funny my jokes are, how much you like my singing, etc.		
Tell me stories about when you were a child. Talk to me about times you were happy, sad, scared, or excited. Let me tell you my stories and feelings.			April 22nd is Earth Day. Help me celebrate by planning a spring garden that we can plant together or taking a walk to see if flowers, trees, and grass are starting to emerge.			Let me help you cook and read the recipe out loud. Explain to me why we do certain steps (e.g., We preheat the oven so that it is hot when we are ready to put our food in there).
		Listen to me as I talk about things that are important to me. You may not be interested in what I am talking about, but it shows me you care about me.			Model the use of many kinds of describing words when we are eating together such as crunchy, shiny, squishy, stringy, sticky, etc.	

# Reading

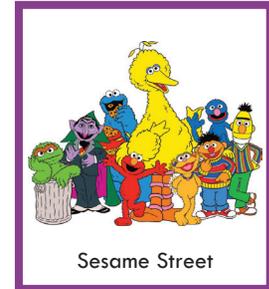
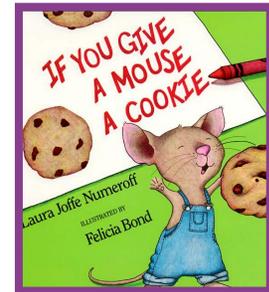
Draw something from our reading.

Help me draw my favorite kind of cookie.

I can write my name.

Research says that reading to children enhances the information they know and can apply to new situations and learning (Morrow, 1985).

Book and Apps/Website of the Month



I can pretend to read a book.

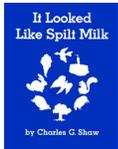
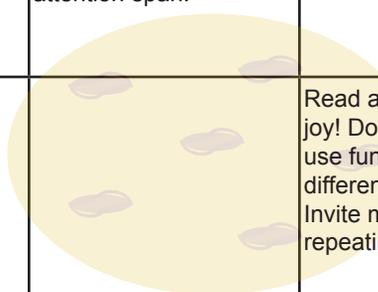


I can ask and answer questions about a book.



I can select different kinds of books for different reasons: to learn about a topic, to hear a funny story, etc.

# May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>May 1st is Mother Goose Day! Celebrate by reading her books with me.</p>			<p>Give me the gift of my very own library card. We can learn how to check out books together.</p>			<p>Help me find books at the library on topics that interest me from penguins to princesses.</p>
<p>Read books about starting preschool or kindergarten so I know what to expect when I attend.</p>		<p>Don't be upset if I want you to read the same book to me over and over. I am learning to love reading and language. Sharing this special time together creates positive memories.</p>		<p>Let me handle and look through books on my own. Teach me to treat them carefully so that they don't get ruined.</p>		
		<p>Let me "read" books to you that I have memorized from the many times you've read them to me. Even if I'm not really reading, I'm practicing retelling a story—an important skill.</p>			<p>Select and read longer and longer books to me over time so that I learn to sit for longer periods and lengthen my attention span.</p>	
<p>Lay on the grass outside with me and help me find shapes in the clouds. Tell me stories about things we find in the clouds.</p> <p>Read <u><a href="#">It Looked Like Spilt Milk</a></u></p>			<p>Ask my teacher or a librarian for a list of books we can read together this summer. Help me set a goal.</p>			<p>Read aloud to me with joy! Don't be afraid to use funny voices for different characters. Invite me to join in on repeating parts.</p>
	<p>Ask the children's librarian if they have books on tape or cd that we can borrow. That way I can have something to do besides watching TV, while you are busy doing other things.</p>			<p>Sign me up for a summer reading program at our local library. They offer weekly story times, and I might be able to get some fun prizes for my reading.</p>	 <p>readaloudnebraska.org</p>	

# Writing

Print Awareness

Draw something from our reading.

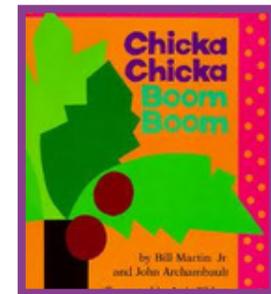
**Edible Play Dough**  
8 oz. creamy peanut butter  
6 tbsp. honey  
Non-fat dry milk

Combine peanut butter and honey.  
Slowly add dry milk until dough is  
smooth and pliable, but not sticky.

I can write my name.

Research says that alphabet knowledge is a strong predictor of later reading, writing, and spelling ability (National Early Literacy Panel, 2004).

Book and Apps/Website  
of the Month



UR Parent



I can begin to look at  
letters in books and  
around my world.



I can recognize some  
letters of the alphabet.



I can understand that  
words are made up of  
letters and that spoken  
words can be written.

m

# June

a

q

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Ask me to name the objects in a picture. This helps me to know that all objects have a name.		Start a journal of our adventures with letters. Every time we do something new together, talk with me as we write down our experiences.		Show me how to make letters out of play dough. We can spell our names and other words with our dough letters. Here are some recipes for homemade play dough:	<b>Scented Play-Dough</b> ½ cup salt 2 cups water 2 tbsp. cooking oil 2 cups flour 2 tbsp. alum 1 packet of Kool Aid powder  Dissolve salt in boiling water. Stir in Kool-Aid for color and scent. Slowly add the oil, flour, and alum. Knead well.
		Let me play with alphabet magnets on the door of our refrigerator, on a metal cookie sheet, or another magnetic surface. Help me spell my name and recognize the letters.			<b>Oatmeal Play Dough</b>  1 cup flour 1 cup water 2 cups oatmeal  Mix well until smooth.	
	Take me on an "Alpha Safari" by hunting for certain letters on signs and other places while walking, driving, shopping, or playing.		Flag Day is June 14th. Teach me the Pledge of Allegiance, The Star Spangled Banner, or other patriotic songs or sayings from our culture.			
		Sing the ABC Song with me. Then, let me sing it to you to show you that I know my letters.		Let me look at newspapers, magazines, catalogs, and books. Talk to me about the different kinds of print (e.g., size, bold print, letters, colors, etc.).		
	Let me help you cook alphabet soup or pasta in letter shapes. Help me name the letters as we eat them.		Playing with food can be inexpensive and educational. Show me how to spell my name using cooked spaghetti, form dough into letters to bake and enjoy together.		Help me make a card for someone we know. Let me write some or all of the letters.	

w

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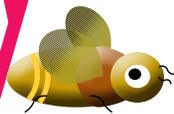
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k

# Listening & Understanding

Draw something from our reading.

Help me create a crazy bug.

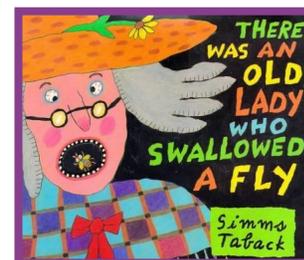


Don't forget to name it!

I can write my name.

Research says that rhyming and matching letter sounds are significantly related to reading success (Bradley & Bryant, 1983).

Book and Apps/Website of the Month



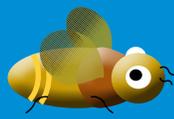
I can enjoy and begin to join in with rhymes and songs.



I can sing songs, recite rhymes and begin to fill in missing rhyming words.



I can name rhyming words and begin matching and identifying beginning sounds in words.



# July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Help me practice using onomatopoeia (sound words) such as “whoosh”, “bang”, “gulp”, “pop”, “meow”, and “woof”.			Help me to make up silly words by changing the first sound in the word (e.g., puppies could become zuppies or fluppies).		
Read and memorize nursery rhymes with me. We can choose a book at the library if we don't have one at home.			Help me create a list of words that rhyme with my name. It's ok if they are silly words that we make up together...Dr. Seuss used to make up words all the time!			Let me create musical instruments out of boxes, sticks, soda cans, or anything that makes noise. We can have a family concert with our new instruments!
		While we are driving, talk to me about the sounds we hear at the beginning of words, (e.g., What is the sound at the beginning of 'bear'? Buh..buh... buh—it's the letter 'B'!)			Read aloud to me every day. Even just 15 minutes per day will make a big difference in my skills when I get to kindergarten!	
	Watch my face when adults are talking about things when I am around. See how I am reacting to and feeling about what is being said. Ask me if I have questions.			Encourage me to use puppets, stuffed animals, or other toys to make up my own story or to tell you a story I've heard before.		Play a sound game with me by asking me to think of words that start with the same sound (e.g., cat, cow, cake, candy).
Sing with me! We can sing, “If You're Happy and You Know It.” We can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stomp our feet</li> <li>• Clap our hands</li> <li>• Shout, “Hurrah”</li> <li>• Do all three</li> </ul>			Talk to me while you're preparing a meal or feeding me. It helps me to learn about the food that I am eating or the tools we are using.			Children who turn five on or before July 31 are eligible for kindergarten in Nebraska.

# Speaking & Communicating

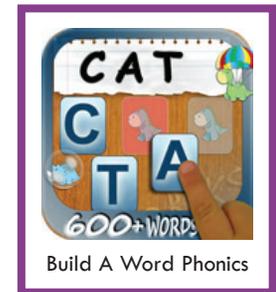
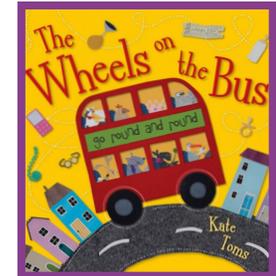
Draw something from our reading.

Draw something we will see at school.

I can write my name.

Research says that exposing children to new words and in many different ways can have a significant impact on future learning (Dickenson & Tabors, 2001).

Book and Apps/Website  
of the Month



I can use one or two word phrases.



I can share about objects, people, and events.



I can engage in lengthy conversations about my experiences.

SCHOOL BUS

STOP

# August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Help me identify words I don't know in the books we read. Talk with me about what they mean and other words that might mean the same thing. This builds my vocabulary.				Talk with me about the routines at school or preschool. Sometimes I need to understand that our routines and procedures are meant to keep me safe and happy.		Begin talking with me about preschool or kindergarten so that I know what to expect when I get there.
		Take pictures of us showing different kinds of feelings through our facial expressions. This helps me to label and understand how people are feeling by looking at their faces.			Start practicing the evening and morning routine with me so that when school starts, I will be ready.	
	Tongue twisters are a fun way to help me develop my ability to speak clearly. Try some with me, such as, "Sally sells seashells by the seashore." You can find more at the library.		Help me to cut out pictures from magazines, newspapers, or catalogs. Then ask me to tell a story using a few of the pictures as objects, characters, or places in the story.		Help me to interact with the stories I read by asking me, "Why do you think that happened?" or "What would you have done if you had been in the story?"	
Play "I Spy" with me by selecting an object in the room and describing it until the other person figures out what it is. (e.g., "It's shiny, it gets hot, and I put bread in it."—the toaster!).						Talk to me about making choices (e.g., "Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt? It's going to be cold out today and the blue shirt has long sleeves. Do you think it will be warmer?").
<p><b>Research Corner:</b> The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development states that children in higher quality care scored higher in their ability to express and comprehend language. (NICHD, 1999)</p>		Sing "Mary Had a Little Lamb" with me. Replace some of the words with other names, adjectives, and animals to create silly songs (e.g., Ellah had a fuzzy duck).			Play the "Directions Game" with me. We can take turns giving directions while learning "position words" such as up, down, left, right, back, and front. Let me give directions, too!	

# Reading

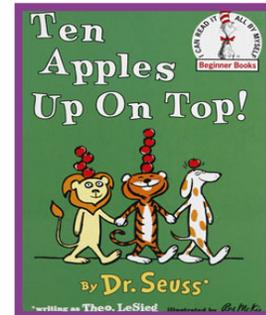
Draw something from our reading.

Help me make an apple stamp  
(cut apple in half and dip in paint).

I can write my name.

Research says that dramatic play is effective in building reading comprehension skills  
(Pellegrini, 1982).

Book and Apps/Website  
of the Month



ebook magic



I enjoy hearing stories.



I can begin to make up  
stories about my friends  
and families.



I can retell stories using  
props and pictures and  
recall the sequence of  
events.

# September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Talk aloud as you read and write sometimes so that I can see how your ideas connect to what you are reading and writing.			Ask me to tell you about my favorite part of the book.	
Observe International Literacy Day with me by helping me to choose books from the library that we can read aloud together.			Keep a basket of books and magazines where we spend a lot of time (kitchen, family room, bedroom) so that we can see them and remember to read together often.			
	Help me learn my letter sounds by making a game or song out of it while we are driving places (e.g., I see a dog. What sound does dog start with?).				On September 19th, help me celebrate International Talk Like a Pirate Day by reading pirate books, burying a treasure, and creating a treasure map for someone else to follow.	
			Encourage me to read with friends and family. This builds relationships and strengthens my reading skills.			
	Please visit the Center for Early Literacy Learning website at: <a href="http://go.unl.edu/ja3">http://go.unl.edu/ja3</a> to help me learn pre-literacy skills to help me prepare for kindergarten. 				<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px;">                     Help me to create my own book with paper and crayons or markers. You can also help me create a digital story online at the Storybird website: <a href="http://storybird.com/">http://storybird.com/</a>  </div>	

# Writing

Print Awareness

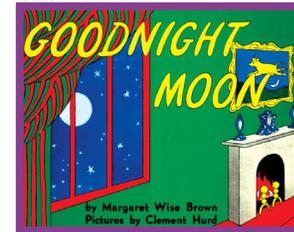
Draw something from our reading.

Help me draw a funny pumpkin face.

I can write my name.

Research says that children learn the uses of print before they learn letter forms (Taylor, 1983).

Book and Apps/Website  
of the Month



KinderTown



I can hold a marker or crayon, and with your help start to make scribbles.



I can make scribbles and marks with crayons and markers.



I can begin to write my first initial and all of my name.



# October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Help me to send a text message, an email, or a letter to someone I love. This teaches me that we communicate in many ways.			Help me collect writing and drawing supplies. This could include pens, pencils, markers, scissors, glue, paper, newspapers, magazines, and anything else that teaches me about print.	
Help me to write words the way I hear them (phonetically). It's ok if my spelling isn't perfect because I'm still learning about letters and the sounds they make.		When there's print in the pictures of the story, point out the letters and help say the word. For example, "HELP."		Encourage me to play dress up and pretend to use writing in different jobs (e.g., reporter interviewing, wait staff taking orders, a doctor taking notes, a teacher writing on the board).		
	Help me build my finger and hand strength and skills (dexterity) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacing beads on a string</li> <li>• Attaching clothespins to a rope or string</li> <li>• Using tongs or tweezers to pick up objects</li> <li>• Practicing buttoning and zipping my clothes</li> <li>• Picking up coins</li> </ul>				Keep writing supplies (e.g., notepad, crayons, pencils, magnetic doodle pad) in the car or in a bag for when we are on-the-go and I have time to play, draw, or write.	
Let me practice writing in "fun" places (e.g., On a foggy bathroom mirror, in the snow or sand, in flour spread out on the table, with bathtub crayons in the tub or shower).				Draw self-portraits with me, then help me count and label what I've drawn (e.g., 2 eyes, 1 nose, 1 mouth, 2 eyebrows, 2 ears, etc.).		
	Let me type on the computer or draw me a keyboard so that I can pretend I am typing. This shows me that the keyboard is another tool for writing.		Help me find free e-books online that we can read together or that are read to me. <a href="http://www.magickeys.com/books/">http://www.magickeys.com/books/</a> <a href="http://go.unl.edu/r9y">http://go.unl.edu/r9y</a> <a href="http://www.childrensbooksonline.org/">http://www.childrensbooksonline.org/</a> <a href="http://pbskids.org/clifford/stories/index.html">http://pbskids.org/clifford/stories/index.html</a> <a href="http://www.cmlibrary.org/bookhive/">http://www.cmlibrary.org/bookhive/</a> <a href="http://www.storylineonline.net/">http://www.storylineonline.net/</a>			Help me write down the stories I create. This helps me to think about ideas and to see them in writing.

# Listening & Understanding

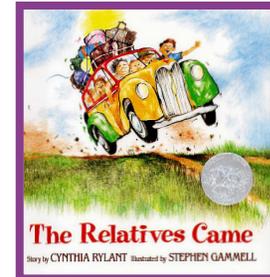
Draw something from our reading.

Help me draw something for which I am thankful.

I can write my name.

Research says young children are strongly influenced by parent models in learning social skills (Dewar, 2009).

Book and Apps/Website of the Month



I can use words to express my needs and wants.



I can use social greetings among children and adults.



I can use language and appropriate social skills in many different settings.

# November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Help me learn to talk about the books we read by starting a family book club. We can read together and share our thoughts and ideas about what we've read.			Take me outside when it's snowing and help me find words to describe what I am seeing, feeling, and experiencing.		Ask me to tell you about the best and worst parts of my day.
		Help me recycle my books by collecting my old/unused books and taking them to donate to a library, another family, or another community organization.			Play the category game with me to help me learn to categorize words. We could think of categories such as words that mean 'hot' or 'warm', animal and baby animal names, opposites, etc.	
Ask me to tell you how to complete a task by talking you through the steps in order (e.g., brushing my teeth, making a sandwich). You might need to demonstrate it for me.			Take me to see Grandma or another relative and have them give us a tour of their home while telling me about the special items in each room (e.g., Uncle Harvey's watch).			
	Help me read a recipe and help you to prepare it. One fun recipe we can make is butter!	After reading a story, ask me to tell it back to you in my own words.			Talk with me about the things for which we are grateful.	
	<p><u>Homemade Butter</u>            1 cup heavy whipping cream            1 tsp. salt            Put into a jar and cover with a lid. Shake hard until it makes butter. Add herbs or honey if you'd like.</p>	Take me to our local library for reading time.		Let me help you make a family scrapbook with pictures, movie tickets, or other items, and let me watch you write about our experiences.		When you read my favorite book to me again, pause and let me say what comes next. I may need you to point to the pictures if I need a hint.

# Speaking & Communicating

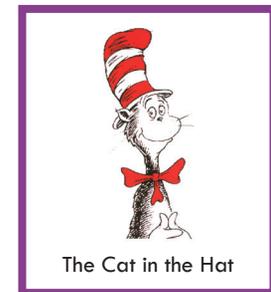
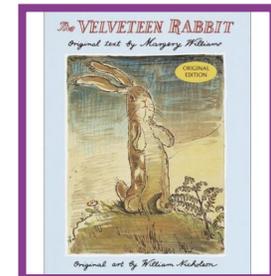
Draw something from our reading.

Help me draw my favorite stuffed animal or toy.

I can write my name.

Research shows every time you talk with a child you increase their vocabulary and their word count. This interaction has been proven to help children be more successful in school (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Book and Apps/Website of the Month



I can learn about the sounds of language when you talk with me.



I can learn about the world around me when you talk with me as we are driving.

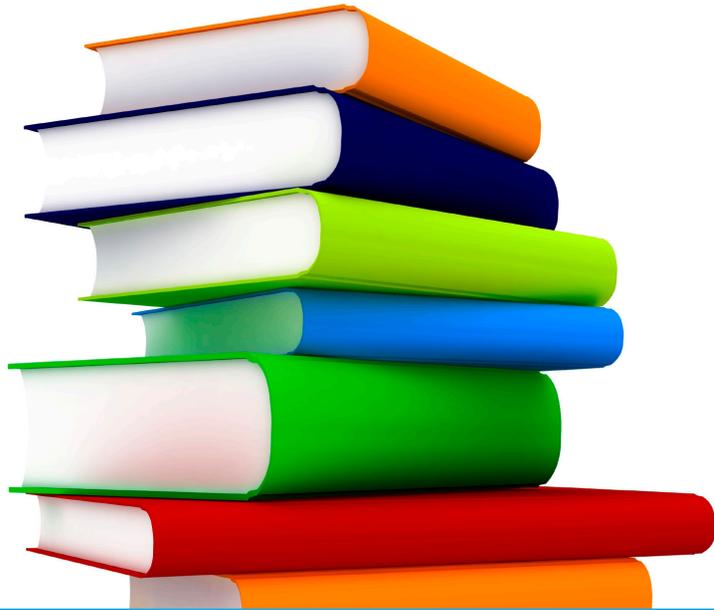


I can learn to communicate clearly with those around me by talking with them.

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Let me help with writing or signing my name on greeting cards. When we receive them, let me guess who it's from. I may need several hints.		Talk with me about the story of my birth or adoption.			Help me learn new words by using describing words to categorize the objects (e.g., shiny, soft, hard, green, cold).	
Help me learn new words by choosing a "word of the week" that we can use together in new sentences.			Help me make up silly songs to tunes I already know (e.g. Sing a song about taking a bath to the tune of "The Itsy Bitsy Spider").			Help me to experiment with the sounds of language by talking with a different accent (e.g., southern accent, English accent, etc.).
Write down, word for word, how I describe pictures I draw. These make great memories and gifts.		Help me clap the syllables in my name (e.g., Sa/man/tha).			Help me learn about Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by taking turns telling each other about our hopes for the future by starting with the phrase, "I have a dream..."	
	Talk with me about my day and tell me about yours. Be sure to give everyone a turn to talk—this teaches me how to have a conversation.			Show me pictures from our family and friends and tell me the stories that go with them.		Talk with me and really listen to what I have to say to show me that I am important and that my ideas matter to you.
Help me make up silly sentences that have words that start with the same letter (e.g., Sally sings silly songs softly).		Help me bond with my preschool teacher and child care provider.  Children with a closer teacher/child relationship in child care have been shown to have better classroom and social thinking skills, language ability, and math skills, beginning in preschool and carrying on into elementary school. (Peisner-Feinberg, et al, 1999).			Tell me about your favorite childhood holiday tradition/memory.	





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## **A Good Reader:**

- **Enjoys reading - has fun looking at books**
- **Names objects, which helps to develop vocabulary**
- **Learns the alphabet - knows the names and sounds of letters and points them out**
- **Holds a book so it can be read and follows the words on a page (awareness of print)**



# Traditional Nursery Rhymes

Read Nursery Rhymes to your children to start engaging them with literacy. They help teach concepts of rhyming words, word families, and new vocabulary.

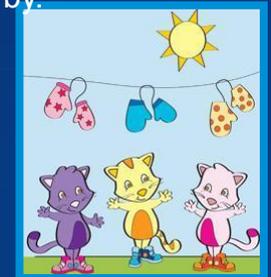


The three little kittens, they lost their mittens,  
And they began to cry,  
Oh mother dear, see here, see here,  
Our mittens we have lost.  
What? Lost your mittens? You naughty kittens!  
Now you shall have no pie!  
Mee-ow, mee-ow, no, you shall have no pie!

The three little kittens, they found their mittens, and  
they began to cry,  
Oh mother dear, see here, see here,  
Our mittens we have found  
Put on your mittens, you silly kittens,  
and you shall have some pie.  
Purr-r, purr-r,  
Oh let us have some pie!

The three little kittens put on their mittens,  
And soon ate up the pie;  
Oh, mother dear, we greatly fear  
Our mittens we have soiled.  
What! Soiled your mittens, you naughty kittens!  
Then they began to sigh,  
Mee-ow, mee-ow.  
Then they began to sigh.

The three little kittens they washed their mittens,  
And hung them out to dry;  
Oh, mother dear, do you not hear,  
Our mittens we have washed!  
What! Washed your mittens, then you're good  
kittens, but I smell a rat close by.  
Mee-ow, mee-ow.  
We smell a rat close by.





Hickory Dickory Dock  
The mouse ran up the clock.  
The clock struck one,  
the mouse ran down,  
Hickory Dickory Dock.



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.



There was an old woman who  
lived in a shoe,  
She had so many children,  
she didn't know what to do.  
She gave them some broth with  
tasty brown bread.  
Then kissed them all soundly and  
put them to bed.





Mary had a little lamb,  
Whose fleece was white as snow,  
And everywhere that Mary went,  
The lamb was sure to go.  
It followed her to school one day,  
Which was against the rules.  
It made the children laugh and play  
To see a lamb at school.



Jack and Jill went up the hill  
To fetch a pail of water.  
Jack fell down, and broke his crown,  
And Jill came tumbling after.



Jack Spratt could eat no fat,  
His wife could eat no lean,  
And so between them both,  
you see  
They licked the platter clean.



Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.  
All the king's horses and all the  
king's men,  
Couldn't put Humpty together  
again.



The Queen of Hearts  
She made some tarts,  
All on a summer's day;  
The Knave of Hearts  
He stole those tarts,  
And took them clean away.



Rock-a-bye baby on the treetop,  
When the wind blows the cradle will rock.  
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,  
And down will come baby, cradle and all.





Old King Cole was a merry old soul,  
And a merry old soul was he.  
He called for his pipe, and he called for  
his bowl,  
And he called for his fiddlers three.  
Every fiddler he had a fiddle,  
And a very fine fiddle had he;  
Oh there's none so rare, as can  
compare  
With King Cole and his fiddlers  
three.



Little Boy Blue, come blow your  
horn!  
The sheep's in the meadow, the  
cow's in the corn!  
Where is that boy who looks after  
the sheep?  
Under the haystack fast  
asleep!



Little Miss Muffet sat on her  
tuffet  
Eating her curds and whey.  
Along came a spider, who sat down  
beside her,  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.



Hey Diddle Diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle,



The cow jumped over  
the moon.



The little dog laughed to see such  
sport,  
And the dish ran away with the  
spoon.



Old Mother Hubbard  
Went to the cupboard  
to give her poor doggy a bone.  
When she got there, her cupboards  
were bare,  
and so the poor doggy had none.



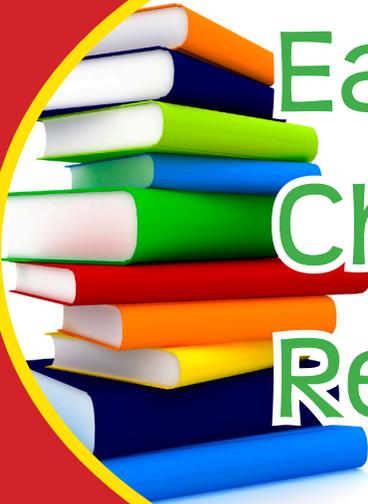
Little Jack Horner sat in the corner,  
Eating his Christmas pie.  
He put in his thumb, and pulled out  
a plum,  
And said, "What a good boy am I!"

# Ready for Success

What Families Want to Know about

Starting School in  
Nebraska

[tiny.cc/joiwow](http://tiny.cc/joiwow)



# Early Childhood Resources

# PBS Kids

Online books, games, and activities for  
children.

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



# Customize this calendar just for your child or classroom!

[www.education.ne.gov/READ/  
Earlychildhoodcalendar.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/READ/Earlychildhoodcalendar.html)



# The Early Learning Guidelines

[www.education.ne.gov/oec/elg.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/oec/elg.html)

Assist Early Childhood caregiver/  
teachers, parents, and other adults with  
information about supporting the  
learning development  
of young children.



## Resources

### **Center for Early Literacy Learning- Resources for Parents**

[www.earlyliteracylearning.org/pgparents.php](http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/pgparents.php)

### **KETV special on Raising Successful Children (Video)**

<http://bit.ly/Ih4tVR>

### **Ages & Stages, What You Can Do (Birth through age 5)**

[www.bornlearning.org/default.aspx?id=19](http://www.bornlearning.org/default.aspx?id=19)

### **First Connections with Families: Learning Begins at Birth, child development, reading to your child, and child health & safety information**

[www.education.ne.gov/OEC/fcwf.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/fcwf.html)

### **The Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines support any adult working with any child, in any environment, in all areas of development (Birth through age 5) and Nebraska Kindergarten Early Learning Guidelines**

[www.education.ne.gov/OEC/elg.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/elg.html)

### **Student-Friendly Language Arts Standards (K-12)**

[www.education.ne.gov/read/StudentFriendlyStandards/StudentFriendlyStandardsMain.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/read/StudentFriendlyStandards/StudentFriendlyStandardsMain.html)

### **Transitioning to School: Tips on how to avoid some common anxiety and fears**

[www.extension.org/sites/default/files/w/3/3f/JITP59-60mo.pdf](http://www.extension.org/sites/default/files/w/3/3f/JITP59-60mo.pdf)

### **Transition Tips: Toolkit of Practices and Strategies**

[www.hdi.uky.edu/nectc/NECTC/practicerearch.aspx](http://www.hdi.uky.edu/nectc/NECTC/practicerearch.aspx)

### **Kindergarten Readiness Indicators & Activities; Transition Toolkit**

[www.getreadytoread.org/transition-kindergarten-toolkit](http://www.getreadytoread.org/transition-kindergarten-toolkit)

### **Terrific Transitions**

[http://center.serve.org/TT/fam\\_par.html](http://center.serve.org/TT/fam_par.html)

### **Back to School Time: Tips to Help Children Adjust**

<http://readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/virtual-library/1996/bck2schl.html>

### **Transitions from the Children's Perspective (Video)**

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/center/transition>  
& [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ku4jXmiirA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ku4jXmiirA)

### **What children and parents can expect and how to prepare for Kindergarten (Video)**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICNsAX1JNQo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICNsAX1JNQo)



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