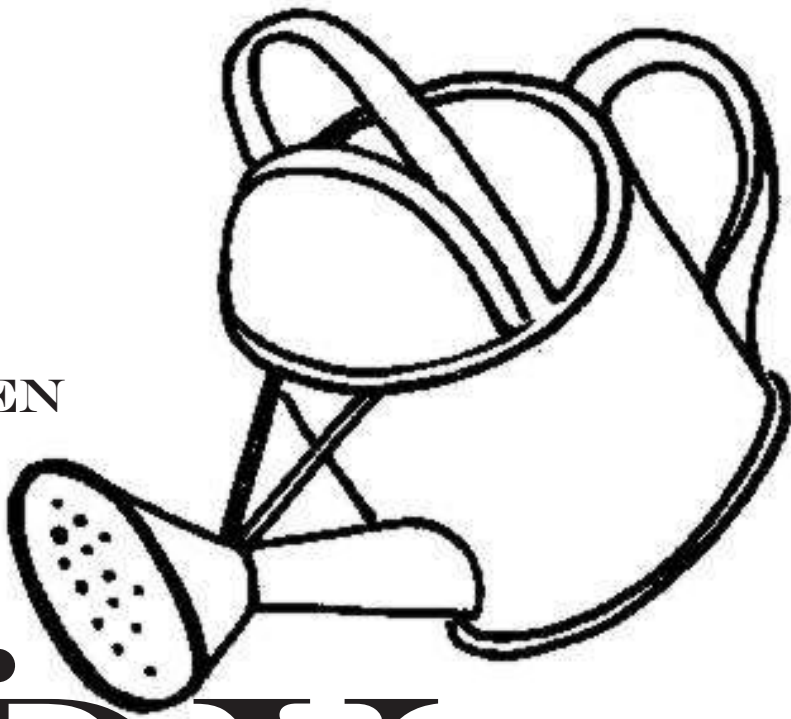


A GUIDE FOR
PARENTS OF
CHILDREN
ENTERING
KINDERGARTEN



READY
• SET
GROW!

We at Shenendehowa Central School District look forward to working with you as your child prepares to enter kindergarten. You are the most important teacher your child will ever have.

Children learn about the world from their own exploration and from their parents. As a parent, you tell your child what to call things, show them acceptable behavior, and teach them about the world around them. You do this by your actions, by listening, and most importantly by talking with your child. Everyday experiences are the building blocks of lifelong learning.

Success in kindergarten and throughout school depends on the growth of the whole child. This includes social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. This booklet contains ideas and suggested activities to help you as you continue to guide your child's development. We hope that you will read it now and refer to it in the coming months.

W**E****L****C****O****M****E**

MAKE THE MOST OF EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES

As children explore their surroundings, ask questions and communicate with those around them, many of the skills they need will be acquired naturally. Opportunities for helping your child to learn exist in the home, in the neighborhood, and on trips you take together.

HOME

DAILY CHORES

Encourage your child to help. Children learn responsibility and develop a sense of belonging when their efforts are valued. Remember that participation is more important than perfection. Have your child feed a pet, make a bed or pick up toys.

MAKING CHOICES

Children need to practice making decisions from the time they are two years old. Allow your child to make simple choices between equally acceptable alternatives.

1. Would you like orange or apple juice?
2. Would you like to wear the red or the blue shirt today?
3. Which book would you like to read?

TIME TOGETHER

A learning experience need not require extensive planning or expensive materials. You can teach your child a great deal just by spending time together. Play a game, walk and talk together, share a story or television program, or draw or color together.

TIME ALONE

Play is the work of childhood. In order to become independent learners, children need to spend time by themselves doing the things they enjoy. Playing with toys, building with blocks, listening to music or story tapes, pretending (dress-up, puppets), drawing.

OUTSIDE PLAY

Children benefit from daily exercise and fresh air. There are many outside activities that help children grow and learn. This is also a good time to establish safety rules with your child (i.e. crossing streets, leaving the yard). Children can: skip, jump, hop, run, climb. play with balls, play in dirt, sand or snow.

You can help your child. Observe nature, listen for and identify sounds. note changes in weather and seasons.

NEIGHBORHOOD

The neighborhood is a place to learn. Many childhood experiences and acquaintances influence the attitudes and values a child retains throughout life.

COMMUNITY HELPERS

Children need to be aware of people who work in their community.

1. Show them the fire department, post office, school, playground, medical offices and recreational facilities.
2. Talk about the jobs people do in the community.
Emphasize the positive roles these helpers have.
3. Discuss your job(s) with your child. If possible, take your child to your place of business so that she/he can get a better idea of the kind of work you do.

STORES AND SHOPPING

Trips to the store can provide a wide variety of learning opportunities for your child. Write a grocery list, practice reading the list, look for the items in the store. You can expand vocabulary by talking with your child about what you see (color, size, shape, packaging, texture, cost, use).

CHOICES

This may be an opportunity for your child to practice decision making.

1. Which of these two jackets do you like better?
2. What fruit would you like to buy for snack?
3. We can only get one book. Which one would you like?

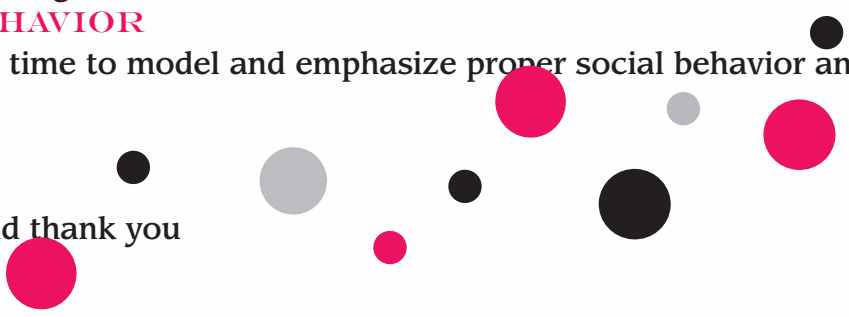
MATH CONCEPTS

There are numerous ways to introduce and reinforce basic math skills like counting, sorting and classifying.

1. Please put six oranges in the bag.
2. Let's use a separate bag for all the things that are kept in the refrigerator.
3. Is this a fruit or a vegetable?

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

This is an excellent time to model and emphasize proper social behavior and acceptable manners.

1. Waiting in line
 2. Taking turns
 3. Saying please and thank you
- 

TRIPS

CAR RIDES

Riding in the car is a great time to interact with your child. You can use this time for:

1. Telling or retelling stories
2. Discussing what can be seen or heard (colors, numbers, letters, signs, sounds)
3. Playing word games (How many green cars can you see? What do you think is in that truck?)
4. Singing favorite songs
5. Reinforcing safety rules (seat belt use, quiet voices)
6. Reinforcing beginning sounds of things you see.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

The playground or park offers an opportunity for fun, socialization, exercise and cooperative play. Children can practice:

1. Swinging
2. Meeting other children
3. Climbing
4. Taking turns

LIBRARY, MUSEUMS & CULTURAL EVENTS

A visit to the library or a museum can stimulate a child's imagination, creativity, and expand his/her range of experiences. There are many free and/or inexpensive programs available in our area.

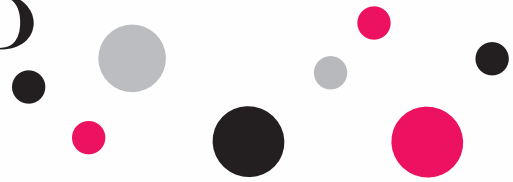
1. Story hour at the library
2. Snake show at the Junior Museum
3. Children's theater

SEASONAL OUTINGS

Each season has its own activities which you can share with your child. This is a chance to talk about change and the cycle of nature.

1. Apple picking in the fall
2. Strawberry picking in the summer
3. Maple sugaring/farm day in the spring
4. Sledding, skiing or skating in the winter

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY



From the time they are born, children begin to learn language naturally, first by listening and then by modeling everyone around them. By listening and speaking with your child, you provide a language-rich environment. Everyday routines (a trip to the store, going out to eat, taking a bath) can be learning experiences in the use and understanding of language. Asking the “W” questions (who, what, where, why, when) helps children to develop their language skills.

Talk with your child about how things look, feel and smell. Is it large or small, soft or hard?

Take the opportunity to expand vocabulary by naming familiar and not-so-familiar items. Go choose some broccoli for dinner. This apple looks ripe.

As a fire truck passes ask: Why are they going so fast; what is the siren for?

An informal approach to language development is more enjoyable than quizzing or drilling your child.

As language develops naturally, so can literacy. Parents can create an environment that encourages reading and writing. When children see a parent reading a book, magazine or the daily newspaper, writing a grocery list or letters to family members, they are learning that reading and writing are important and useful.

Studies show that reading to your child is the single most important thing you can do to help him/her become a good reader. Sitting together and sharing a book can provide a closeness that fosters positive attitudes toward books and reading. Children will eventually learn how to read, but attitudes that begin developing at home encourage children to become lifelong readers.

READ, LISTEN, TALK, WRITE!

Introduce your child to the library and visit frequently. Take advantage of pre-school story hours and other programs.

Draw attention to environmental print (road signs, store signs, cereal boxes, ads).

While reading, include your child as a partner. Ask: what will happen next; fill in the word; what are they doing in the picture?

Give books as gifts so that your child has his/her own collection. Keep these books special by providing a special place for them.

Read a variety of literature to your child (nursery rhymes, classics, popular books).

Provide paper and writing tools to draw, scribble or write.

SUGGESTIONS: GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

Building blocks of learning need a solid foundation. It is helpful if a child is well rested, well fed, clothed appropriately, and feels good about him/herself. A routine which incorporates these needs should be started now to prepare your child for school attendance in the fall.

1. Children at age 5 or 6 need approximately 11 hours of sleep. A quiet, regular routine encourages restful sleep. (Perhaps a bedtime story or talking over the day's events). Getting your child to bed early is more easily accomplished if it is done gradually over a period of several days rather than abruptly the night before school starts.

2. Children are not at their best if they are hungry. Children need 25 percent of their calorie intake at breakfast. Juice, unsweetened cereal, milk and toast is an example of a breakfast which would provide a good start.

3. Snacks should contribute to a child's total diet and not just add empty calories. Snacks of fruits, juice or vegetables provide vitamins and minerals children need.

4. Neat grooming allows children to look and feel good about themselves. Bathing at least three times a week, brushing teeth twice a day, washing hands before eating and after using the bathroom promotes good health habits and a positive self image.

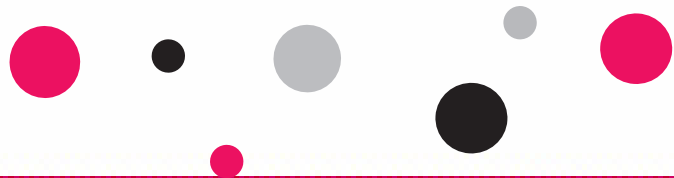
5. Try to provide adequate time to eat and prepare for school. Setting out clothing and bookbags the night before can reduce the early morning rush.

6. Clothes need to be comfortable and allow children to play without fear of ruining them. Clothing which can be put on, buttoned and zipped by the child fosters independence.

7. Television viewing and video games encourage passive learning. Some programs may overstimulate or frighten a young child and interfere with sleep. Providing limits on how much and what your child watches can help make better use of television time.

8. New experiences can be scary for anyone. Talking with your child about what to expect at school can help alleviate some anxiety. Letting your child know where you will be during the day can provide security.

9. Children need to feel good about themselves as learners. Emphasize your child's strengths. Encourage your child to try new experiences and praise his/her efforts.



QUESTIONS PARENTS COMMONLY ASK



1. Does my child need to know all the letters and numbers before coming to school?

While knowing letters is not a requirement for Kindergarten, it is recommended that children as preschoolers be exposed to upper and lower case letters of the alphabet. If your child lacks awareness of the ABC's, then she or he may be invited into an early intervention program.

2. Does my child need to know his address and phone number?

This is not required, but it is expected early in the school year. It is helpful for safety reasons if your child knows this information.

3. Will my child learn to read in kindergarten?

Children learn to read at different ages. Although some children do learn to read in kindergarten, reading is not an expected outcome of kindergarten.

4. My child makes some letters backwards. Should I be concerned?

No. Reversals are common at this age.

5. Does my child need to know how to tie a shoelace?

No. This skill is not expected before coming to school. However, if your child expresses an interest in learning, you might want to practice with him/her.

6. Does my child need to know how to use scissors?


Most children have had experience using scissors before coming to school. Practice with a blunt-ended pair of scissors would be helpful.

7. Where do I get information about busing ?

Shortly before school starts, you will receive in the mail a bus tag for your child and information regarding busing arrangements. If you do not receive this information or have questions, you can call the transportation department at 881-0240.

8. How will she/he find the classroom?

Special area teachers' aides and volunteers will assist the children until they can do this on their own.



9. *My child is worried about not knowing anyone. What should I do?*

Children at this age make friends easily. Assure your child that everyone feels this way and that the teacher will help him/her meet new people. In the first days children will start out in a small group (4 to 5 children) and parents may also stay in the room.

10. *Will my child need a snack?*

A time for snack is offered to every child. Teachers have different procedures for supplying snacks. Your child's teacher will provide information to you about this early in the year.

11. *Whom should I contact if I have concerns about my child's ability to start school?*

Your school's psychologist is available to talk with you about your concerns.

12. *How can I help my child be a better listener?*

Provide your child with opportunities to listen and to follow simple directions. Be an interested listener when she/he speaks to you.

13. *How can I help my child speak better?*

Being a good speech model is better than correcting specific speech sounds.

14. *Should I be concerned if my child mispronounces or repeats words?*

Certain speech sounds develop at different ages. Some repetitions are normal. A speech/language therapist is available to evaluate your child.

15. *How is articulation different from language?*

Articulation is how the word is pronounced. Language is how the idea is expressed.

16. *How much time should I spend reading to my child?*

The amount of time will vary depending upon the child and the book you choose. Making reading a daily habit is more important than the length of time.

17. *Who should I talk with if I have concerns about my child or specific questions before school starts?*

Many of your questions and concerns will be addressed in the various communications you will receive before school starts. Also, your child's teacher will be sending home information during the first few days of school. If you have a question and do not know who to ask, call your school principal and you will be directed to a person who can provide the information you need.

RESOURCES

Superintendent	881-0610
Transportation	881-0240
Student Services	881-0660
Curriculum, Instruction, Learning	881-0640
Management Services & Quality Control	881-0665
Public Information	881-0610
Arongen Elementary	881-0510
Chango Elementary	881-0520
Karigon Elementary	881-0530
Okte Elementary	881-0540
Orenda Elementary	881-0550
Skano Elementary	881-0560
Shatekon Elementary	881-0580
Tesago Elementary	881-0570

GAMES

- 20 questions
- I spy
- I'm thinking of ...
- Memory
- Card games
- Puzzles

TRIPS

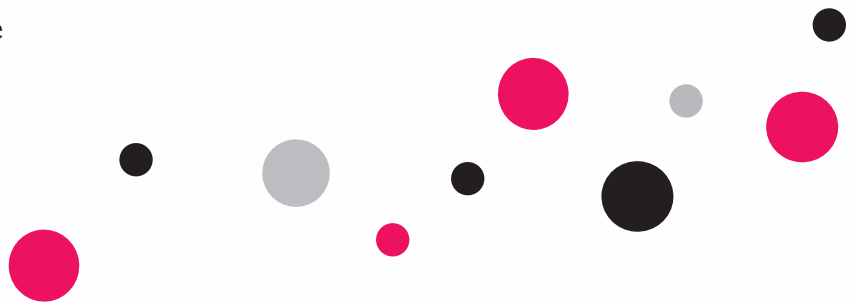
- State Museum
- Clifton Common
- Airport
- Train Station
- Rensselaer Junior Museum
- Saratoga Children's Museum
- Five Rivers Preserve
- Library
- Corning Preserve

SONGS

- CD'S and DVD'S from the library
- ABC song

MATERIALS

- Primary scissors
- Pencils
- Glue
- Markers
- Crayons
- Old magazines
- Playdough





This booklet was produced in cooperation with the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service.

The Shenendehowa Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, age or handicap as defined by law, and is in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Compliance officer for the Title IX and Section 504 is available between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the Shenendehowa Central School District office, (518) 881-0600.

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