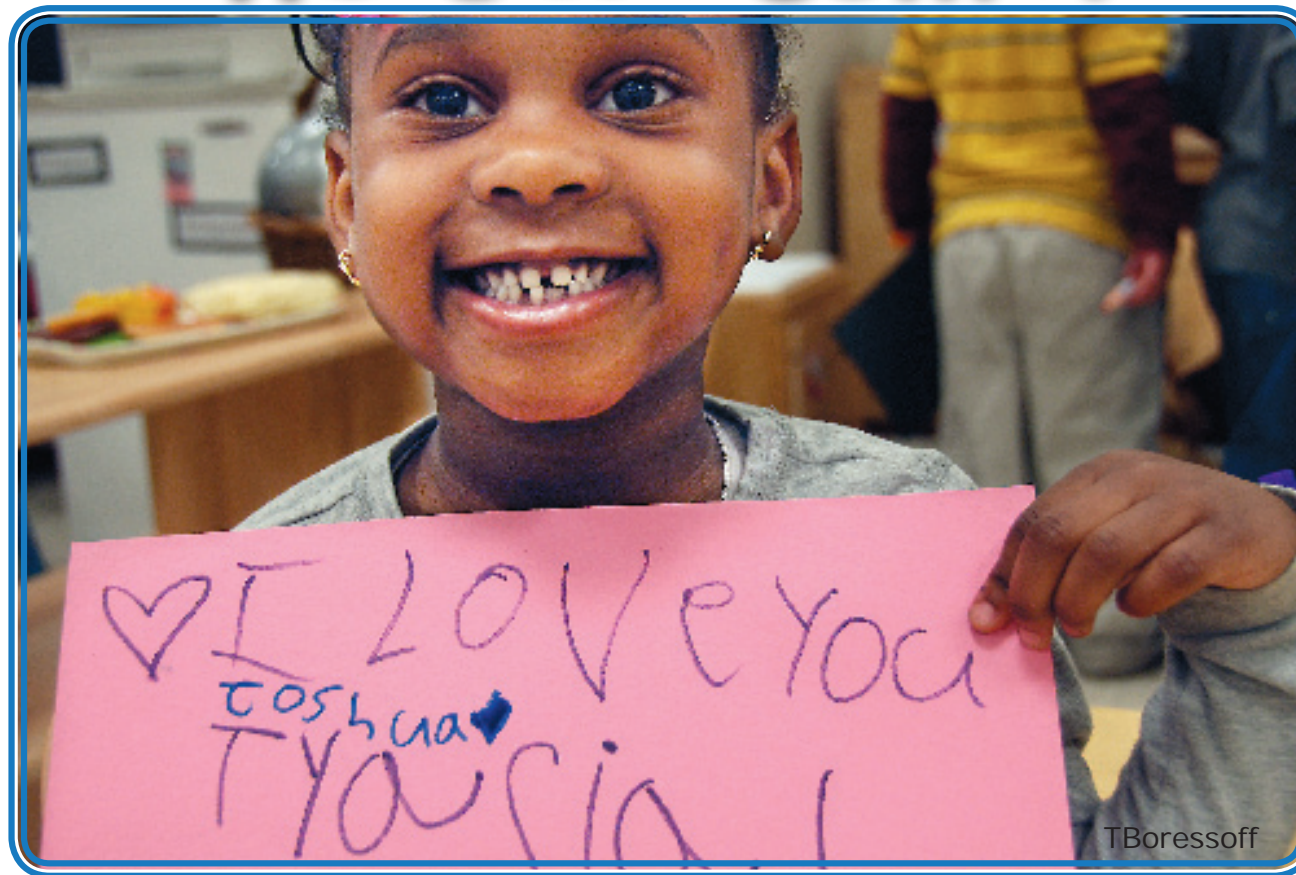


KINDERGARTEN

Here We Come!



TBoressoff

Resources and Activities for Parents and Caregivers of Next Year's Kindergarten Students

Brought to you by:



CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS
NAVIGATING THE WAY TO HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE

KINDERGARTEN... Here We Come!

About This Guide

Welcome to Kindergarten...Here We Come, produced by Child Care Solutions. This guide is designed to help you encourage your child as she or he prepares for kindergarten and to navigate the process of entering school.

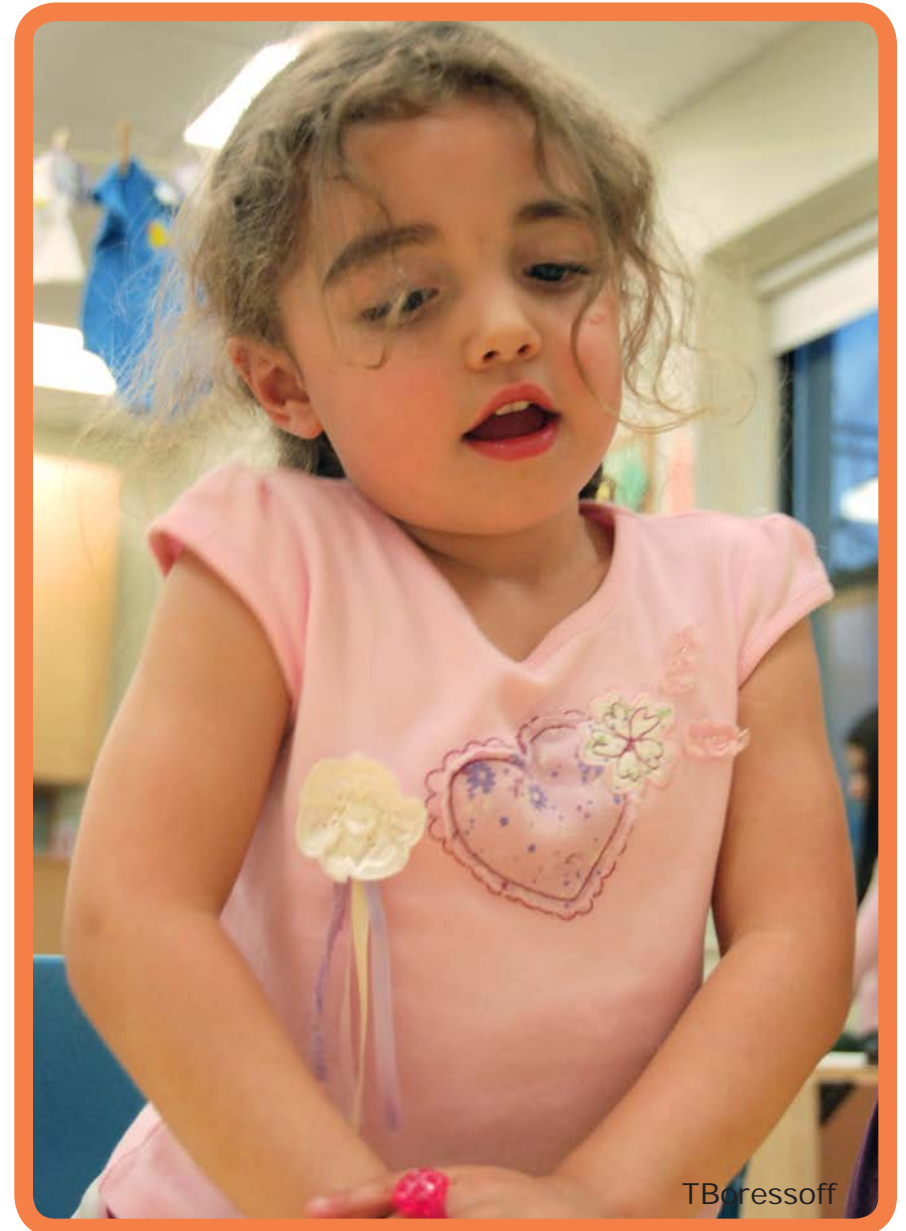
Sooner than you can imagine, your precious preschooler will be entering kindergarten. This is a big step, for it signals the beginning of your child's formal education. It can also be a bit intimidating given that there are such high expectations about when children will read, write, do math, and learn everything there is to know.

Contained inside is information on entering kindergarten for each school district in Cayuga County. It also contains information about important early literacy experiences for preschoolers from the New York State Learning Standards.

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Many thanks to contributing authors, Stephanie F. Leeds and Laura J. Harrington for their thoughtful input. Thanks also to photographer, Todd Boressoff. Todd graciously allows Child Care Solutions the use of his photos for this guide. His photographs are noted with TBoressoff.

If you have any questions about this guide or the services we offer please call Child Care Solutions at 315-446-1220 or Toll Free at 888-729-7290.



About Child Care Solutions

Child Care Solutions is your Child Care Resource & Referral agency serving Cayuga County since 2009 & Onondaga County since 1975. Our mission is to promote early learning, healthy development and high quality care for all children through education, advocacy and support for families & early childhood professionals.

Our Parent Services Team provides referrals and education to the parents of our area so they can be informed consumers of child care. If you want to know what to look for when you search for high quality child care or need help finding an early childhood program in Onondaga or Cayuga County, contact Child Care Solutions:

Phone: 315-446-1220, ext. 303

Toll Free: 888-729-7290

Web: www.childcaresolutionscny.org

We can refer parents to local child care centers, family child care homes, nursery schools, pre-kindergartens and Head Start programs.

Our Professional Development Team creates and implements outstanding training programs, curriculum and development plans so the child care providers of Onondaga & Cayuga Counties can provide high quality child care for our children.

Our Registration Team under the authority of the Office of Children & Family Services registers, inspects and monitors group family child care homes and school age child care centers for health & safety.

Our Provider Services Team ensure that qualified child care programs enroll in and adhere to the requirements of the Child & Adult Care Food Program.



It's All About Language

Developing Language Skills

Reading and writing are based on spoken language. The words children hear and use when they listen and speak are the same words they will read and write when they go to school.

Children who understand and use many words will be most ready for reading and writing. You can help by using rich language with your child. Rich language can come from reading books, singing, having conversations and playing with the sounds in words.

Your library is a wonderful source of books, and your child can get his or her own library card. You can talk every day with your child and take turns talking and listening. These conversations will help your child see that language is important and that he or she has ideas to share.

You know your child best

You know what your child is interested in. Tell the children's librarian at your local library, and he or she will help find all kinds of books that will be just perfect for your child.

Internet Resources

www.nysl.nysed.gov
www.zerotothree.org



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Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Talk about what your child is doing – getting dressed, eating, playing with toys, or going for a walk. Take turns so both of you listen and talk.
- Sing with your preschooler. Sing songs your preschooler knows and make up your own. Don't worry about your own singing voice. Your child doesn't care about that!
- Make up stories with your child. These stories can be about anything your child is interested in such as favorite toys, adventures, family members.
- Read lots of rhyming books! Have your child say the rhymes with you and fill in rhyming words when you leave them off.

Books

Rhyming books:

- *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss
- *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss
- *Each Peach Pear Plum* by J. Ahlberg
- *Time for Bed* by Mem Fox
- *Pass the Fritters Critters* by Cheryl Chapman
- *Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes*

Song and Chant Books:

- *Five Little Ducks* by Raffi
- *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?* By Bill Martin Jr.
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault



“The only thing better than singing...
is more singing.” – Ella Fitzgerald

Reading And Writing

It starts before kindergarten

Parents want their children to be ready to read and write because they know how important this will be in school. Both reading and writing develop over time, and there is so much you can do with your children. Children who are surrounded by print – books, magazines, even print on labels – learn that print has meaning. They begin to ask questions about letters and to follow along with print when you read to them.

Learning to write actually starts with drawing and continues as children talk about how they made their drawings. As your child draws and sees you write, he learns that writing has meaning. He will want to write his own lists and notes. They will begin as scribbles. Then he will add a few letters. Encourage this good start so he learns that his writing has meaning. Your child will be most interested in reading and writing when he sees that you read and write, too.

You know your child best

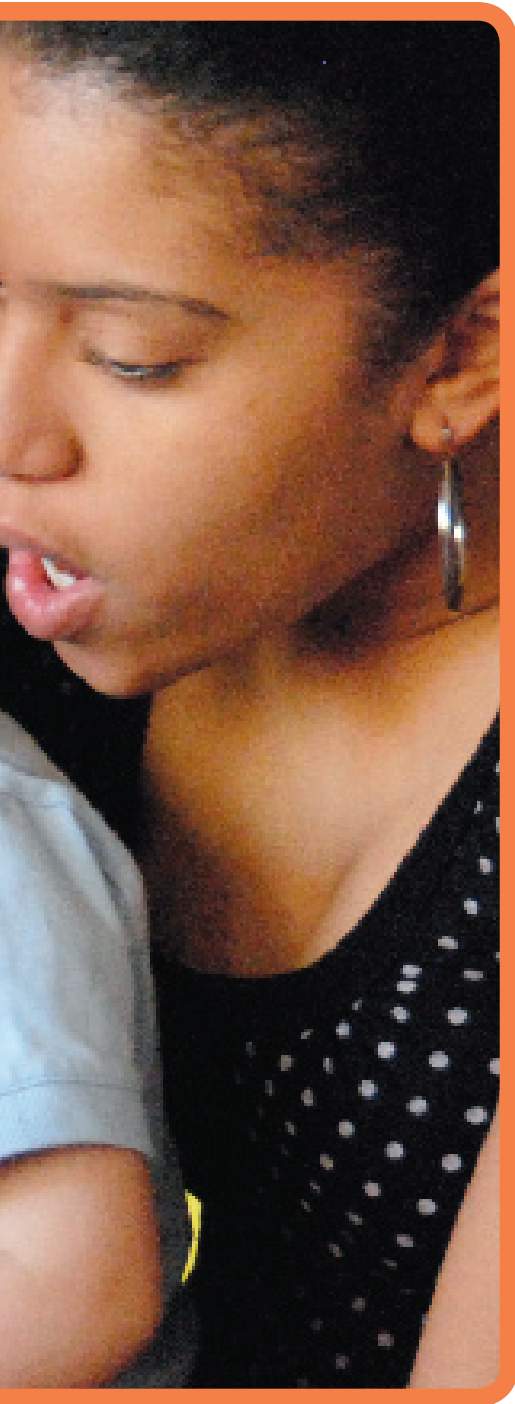
You know how your child likes you to read books to her – whether it's using special voices as you read, letting her turn the pages, asking her questions while you read or letting her read to you. Cuddle up with your child and read a book in the special ways you know she likes.

Internet resources

www.famlit.org (National Center for Family Literacy)
www.rif.org (Reading is Fundamental)



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Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Visit the library and bring home books your child has chosen.
- Notice signs wherever you go. Point them out and read the words to your child. Print is everywhere!
- Show your child the print on food boxes and labels in your home. Point out the letters and read them with your child. You can even make books out of the fronts of food boxes. These will be books your child can read all by himself!
- Give your child different kinds of paper and crayons, pencils and markers to make writing fun.
- Cuddle up with your child and read. Children love to hear their favorite books again and again.

Children's Books About Reading and Writing

- *The Day of Ahmed's Secret* by Ted Lewin
- *A Letter to Amy* by Ezra Jack Keats

Alphabet books:

- *The Z Was Zapped* by Chris Van Allsburg
- *Dr. Seuss's ABC's* by Dr. Seuss
- *Firefighter's A to Z* by Chris L. Demarest
- *Alphabite! A Funny Feast from A to Z* by Charles Reasoner

*"The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go."* - Dr. Seuss

Math: Numbers & More

Math is everywhere.

Your child is learning about math and numbers long before she learns to add and subtract in school. She sees shapes and patterns at home and in nature. She sees you using a scale to weigh fruit at the store. She hears you talk about how much things cost. She compares the size of her piece of cake with someone else's!

As your child learns to count, help her count objects rather than just saying number words from memory. Help your child understand "how many" by guessing how many hair barrettes fit in the box or how long the chicken will take to cook. As your child has real-world experiences, she will begin to understand numbers, size and sorting. These early math experiences will help her solve more complex math problems later in life.

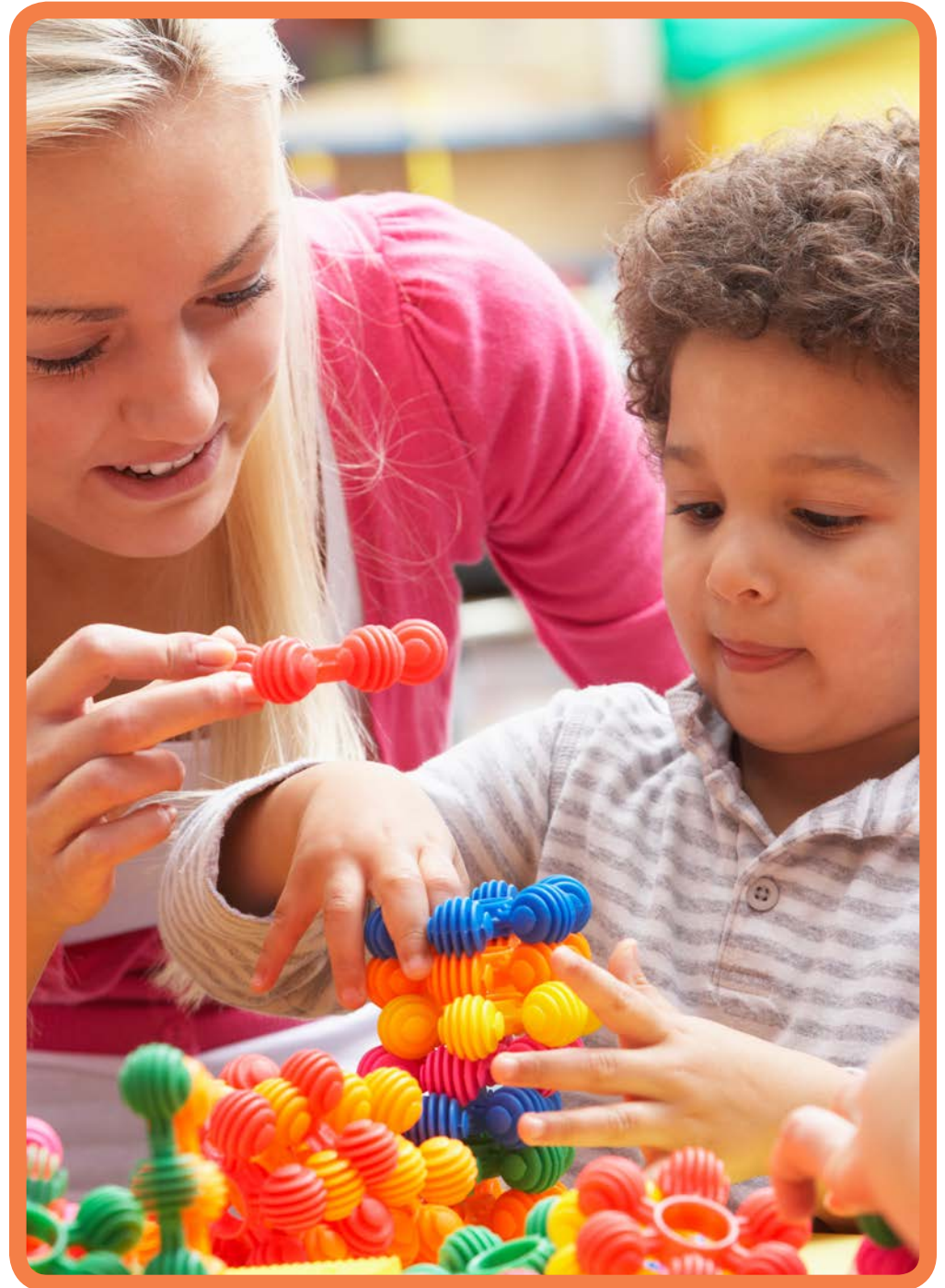
You know your child best.

You know what your child loves to help you with. You can give him math experiences in everyday tasks. If he likes to help put groceries away, have him put all the boxes together and all the cans together. If he likes setting the table, have him put one fork and one spoon next to each plate.

Internet Resources

www.pbs.org/parents/earlymath (PBS Parents)

www.naeyc.org (National Association for the Education of Young Children)





Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Point out the shapes in your home: the clock is a circle, the pizza slice is a triangle, the window is a rectangle.
- Cook or bake with your child. He can help measure, set the timer, and divide the food among family members.
- Sort the laundry. Your child can separate socks from shirts or match socks that go together.
- Use words such as “more,” “less,” “bigger,” “smaller,” “equal,” “shorter,” “longer,” “same,” and “different.”
- Ask your child a math problem. “How many plates will we need for you, Mommy, Daddy and Grandma?” or “There are ten orange slices. How many should you and your brother each get?”



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Books That Explore Math

- *Who Sank the Boat?* by Pamela Allen
- *Shapes, Shapes, Shapes, More, Fewer, Less, & Is it Larger? Is it Smaller?* by Tana Hoban
- *The Greedy Triangle* by Marilyn Burns
- *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins
- *Inch by Inch* by Leo Lionni
- *How Much is a Million?* by David M. Schwartz
- *Anno's Counting Book* by Mitsumasa Anno
- *Henry the Fourth* by Stuart Murphy
- *Missing Mittens* by Stuart Murphy
- *On the Stairs* by Julie Hofstrand Larios
- *One Odd Day* by Doris Fisher and Dani Sneed

“Imagination, curiosity, wonder, the pleasure of discovery and the thrill of exchanging ideas, these are fuel for science and math.” - Alison Lutton

Making Decisions

Children Learn How to Make Decisions

Good decision making is learned, just like any other skill. As a four-year-old, your child can begin to develop the ability to make everyday decisions. Of course, you make the truly important decisions about your child's health, safety, education and behavior, etc. There are other decisions, however, that are important to your child, but don't matter to you. An example might be whether he has orange juice or apple juice. Allowing your child to make these small decisions now, provides him with the practice to make bigger decisions as he gets older.

You know your child best

You know what kinds of choices are important to your child. Maybe she really cares about the socks or barrettes she wears. Let her practice decision making with those. Give her two choices because more than that can be overwhelming. Remember that you are allowing your child to choose, so both choices must be available and acceptable to you!

Internet Resource

www.ahaparenting.com (Aha! Parenting)





Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Let your child choose to have their sandwich cut in squares or triangles.
- When making a snack let your child choose between a banana or an apple.
- Ask your child to choose between brushing her teeth first or reading a story first at bedtime.

Books About Making Decisions

- *The Monster Who Couldn't Decide* by Andi Green
- *Hey Little Ant* by Phillip Hoose & Hannah Hoose
- *Little Red Hen* by Paul Galdone

“Making good decisions is a crucial skill at every level.”

– Peter Drucker

Solving Problems

Learning to Solve Problems

When your child was a toddler, you probably watched as she held a block to her ear pretending it was a phone or put a box on her head and said that it was a hat. No doubt your child was having fun with play, but she was also problem solving. Now that your child is four, she is ready to solve many different kinds of problems.

It may seem easier to step in and “fix” a situation, but don’t hurry to solve every problem your four-year-old experiences. Talk through problems with your child and encourage her to brainstorm solutions. Eventually she will be able to solve problems on her own. Being able to solve problems is important to success in school and supporting your child as she learns to do it is well worth the time it takes.

You know your child best

Some children become angry quickly and easily. Others may be afraid of their own feelings of anger or worry about expressing anger. Help your child learn that anger is a normal feeling, and it needs to be expressed in an appropriate way. You can use a problem solving approach to help your child learn how to express his anger in a way that is fair to everyone.

Internet resource

www.actagainstviolence.org
(Adults and Children Together Against Violence)



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Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Practice problem solving with your child by following these steps:
- **Identify the problem** - Talk about the situation.
Brothers Derek and Anthony are arguing over the last of the animal crackers. Both want them for their afternoon snack. "It looks like there is only one bag of animal crackers left and you both wanted it."
- **Identify the emotions of each person** - Discuss how each person feels.
"You look angry and frustrated about this."
- **Think of possible solutions** - Take turns and name as many as possible.
Derek says he should eat the crackers and Anthony can have an apple instead. Anthony has two ideas. He says they should both have pretzels or they can split the animal crackers.
- **Choose a solution both people can agree on.**
The brothers agree to split the animal crackers. It is important that everyone involved feels the solution is fair.
- **Implement the solution** - Follow through!
Your child may forget what he has agreed to do. Provide guidance and reminders.

Books About Problem-Solving

- *Where is Gah-Ning?* by Robert Munsch
- *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* by Margaree King Mitchell
- *Three Little Pigs* by David Wiesner
- *When Emily Woke Up Angry* by Riana Duncan

"Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve." – Roger Lewin



Registering For Kindergarten

Pre-Registering for Kindergarten

Why pre-register for kindergarten? Because it makes starting kindergarten smoother for everyone. Most school districts in Cayuga County conduct pre-registration for kindergarten during the spring before school starts in the fall.

Although children may arrive on the first day of school and register then, it is really in your child's best interest to register ahead of time. First of all, starting school goes better when the school knows in advance that your child is coming. They have already assigned your child to a class and a teacher, and many of the details about transportation and lunch have already been addressed. In addition, your child will feel less stress about starting school when she has been to the school, seen some of the staff, knows what class she is in, and already feels welcome. Pre-registration allows you as the parent to focus on supporting your child in this very big transition.

You know your child best

Some children are careful and cautious about new situations; some like to jump right in and some are in between. Some will be very excited about starting kindergarten and will want to know and do everything there is to know and do; others will be more low-key and want to approach the experience more slowly. Some will be in between. Take your cue from your child and follow his or her lead; your child will feel more confident and comfortable.

Internet Resource

www.serve.org/TT (Terrific Transitions page of the SERVE website.)



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To Dos:

Make sure you have all of the following documents needed to pre-register:

- Your child's birth certificate
- Proof of your address (lease agreement, utility bill, driver's license)
- Medical records if they are ready by this time. These are not generally required until the first day of school, but it is helpful to have this taken care of in advance.

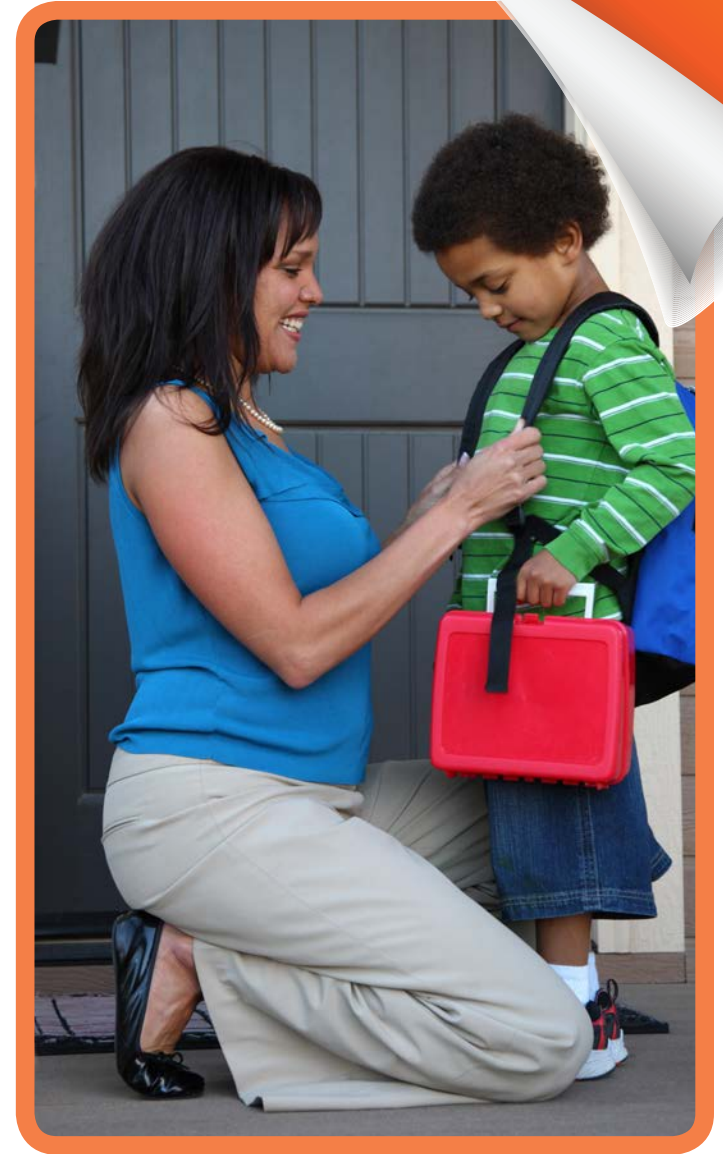
Your child will need:

a physical exam by his or her doctor. The doctor will be familiar with this requirement. The physical must be done during the year before your child starts kindergarten. You can get the forms for the physical at your child's school.

proof of immunization. This is a requirement for all school districts in New York State. Your child's doctor will know what immunizations are currently required to enter school.

Books About Starting Kindergarten

- *Franklin Goes to School* by Paulette Bourgeois
- *The Berenstain Bears Go To School* by Jan and Stan Berenstain
- *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slat
- *Off to School Baby Duck* by Amy Hest
- *Welcome to Kindergarten* by Anne Rockwell



“If ever there is tomorrow when we’re not together, there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we’re apart, I’ll always be with you.” – Winnie the Pooh, by A. A. Milne

School Information

The time and place for kindergarten registration is different for each school district. As part of the process, many districts conduct a screening or readiness evaluation of your child during pre-registration or sometime before school starts. A few districts do these screenings after school begins in September. The chart below contains details about kindergarten pre-registration in each of the public school districts in Cayuga County.

Many schools also have kindergarten orientation sessions for parents and children. These are usually held in the school building where your child will be attending kindergarten. Ask about the orientation sessions when you pre-register.

Here are some questions you may wish to ask when you pre-register your child:

- When does the school day start and end?
- Does the school district provide transportation for kindergartners?
 - Will the pick-up and drop-off be at my home or somewhere in the neighborhood?
 - Will the bus take my child to her day care center or family child care provider after school?
- Does the school offer before and after school programs on-site for kindergartners?
- How does the lunch program work?
- Can my child and I visit the kindergarten classes before school ends this year?
- Will I be able to stay with my child during the screening readiness tests?



School District Telephone and Website Listing

School District	Phone Number	Website	Pre-Registration	Screening
Auburn City School District	315-255-8800	http://district.auburn.cnyric.org	May	At registration
Cato-Meridian School District	315-626-3320	http://www.catomeridian.org	May	At registration
Moravia School District	315-497-2670	http://www.moraviaschool.org	May	May/June
Port Byron School District	315-776-5728	http://www.pbcschools.org	June	Appointment made
Southern Cayuga School	315-364-7621	http:// southern.ny.schoolwebpages.com	March	June
Union Springs School District	315-889-4170	http://www.uscsd.info	March	June
Weedsport School District	315-834-6685	http://www.weedsport.org	May	At registration

“The first and most important step to success is the feeling that we can succeed.” – Nelson Boswell

Learning To Cooperate

Learning to Cooperate

Your four-year-old is learning how to consider the thoughts and feelings of others - not always easy for him to do! He is a member of a family, of a larger community and perhaps of a class. In each of these settings there are plenty of opportunities for him to cooperate with others. Frequent cooperation with others will help your child build social skills such as taking turns, sharing, talking with others and negotiating. Cooperation requires him to interact with others, compromise, and share materials.

At times this may be difficult for him to do. To help support him, give him opportunities to cooperate with you and encourage him whenever he voluntarily works with others. Be sure to be specific when pointing out what your child has done well. "You saw that Grandma dropped papers on the floor, and you helped her pick them up. Good for you."

You know your child best

Your child will learn to cooperate better if she can see the benefits of cooperation. When you are helping your child practice cooperation, start with activities you know your child enjoys and people you know will cooperate with her. Your child may appreciate the benefits of cooperating with you as the two of you make a family snack together far more than if you try to have her cooperate with her little brother to play with blocks.

Internet Resources

www.pbskids.org/rogers (Mister Rogers Neighborhood)



Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Have your child help with household chores. Talk about how the work gets done faster when everyone helps out. Your child can help
 - set the table
 - clean up toys
 - sort newspapers and plastic bottles for recycling
- Do activities with your child that require two people
 - using a broom and dustpan
 - playing throw and catch
- Have your child help make the schedule for a day when you will be together. List both your ideas for activities for the day, and then cooperate to make the final schedule.
- Encourage cooperation by working together when playing games instead of competing.
- Work together on a special project – create a card for a friend
- Work together on a community activity like cleaning up a playground. Talk about how working together makes good things happen.



Books About Cooperation

- *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera Williams
- *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni
- *It's Mine!* by Leo Lionni
- *Little Red Hen* by Paul Galdone

“And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world it is best to hold hands and stick together.” – Robert Fulghum

Making Friends

Friendships are Important to Learning

One of the most important factors in a child's being successful in school and learning to read and write is having and keeping at least one friend. Having at least one friend means that the child is not alone, and there is comfort and security in that knowledge. Children share ideas, worries, joys, and laughter with their friends – all of which supports them in facing the demands that school brings. Also, children develop a sense of self-confidence from having a friend, and this confidence allows them to take on new tasks, assignments, and challenges in their classroom and their school.

Children are able to reach out to other children and form satisfying relationships with them when they are strongly grounded in a relationship of trust and security with their special someone, usually a parent. Preschoolers need to know that their special someone is there for them and that this person loves them unconditionally. Knowing this allows your child to venture forth and make friends of her own.

You know your child best

Your child will learn that you are there for her and love her unconditionally when you are reliable and consistent in responding to her. The more she experiences you as reliable and consistent, the more she can develop trust and security.

Internet Resource:

www.pbkids.org/rogers (Mister Rogers Neighborhood)



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Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Spend special time every day with your child. Let your child decide what the two of you will do together. This will help him be able to make friends with others.
- Playing with other children provides a good start to making friends. Help your child understand what it's like to play with others. Talk about sharing toys. Talk about working together to decide what to play.
- Your local library may have story times for preschoolers. That is a great place to meet other children and parents.
- Talk with your child special friends he may already have. Invite one or two children over for a play date. Keep the group small and stay close by. It will help your child feel safe to have your around.



Books about friendship:

- *Jamaica Find* by Juanita Havill
- *Jamaica and Brianna* by Juanita Havill
- *Frog and Toad are Friends* by Arnold Lobel
- *When Sophie Gets Angry - Really Really Angry* by Molly Bang

“If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.” – Dorothy Pageis

Being Healthy, Staying Safe

Being Healthy, Staying Safe

Helping your child develop habits of good health and safety will contribute to her sense of well-being and to your peace of mind while your child is away from you and at school. Your child will learn these habits from your example and your guidance. When your child sees that you are concerned about her health, she will learn how important it is to practice healthy habits.

With your help, your child can learn life-long skills of healthy eating and exercising when she is young. Provide healthy food for your child along with plenty of opportunities to try new foods. Your child will enjoy foods more when you have family meals with good conversation. Your child needs physical activity – at least an hour each day. Make the effort to go outside with your child and walk, run or play. You will both benefit!

All young children need responsible adults to keep them safe. However, your preschooler can learn rules and habits which will keep her safe and contribute to her sense of well-being. The health and safety habits your child forms now will help her build a foundation for the rest of her life.

You know your child best

What your child eats depends on what is available to him, so it's up to you to make sure that there are healthy foods in the house. You know your child's favorite healthy foods, so keep those on hand. Gradually introduce him to new foods. It may take several tries before your child develops a taste for new foods.

Internet resources

www.aap.org (American Academy of Pediatrics)

www.fema.gov/kids (FEMA)



Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Take your child to regular check-ups with the doctor. The doctor will make sure your child has all his immunizations. Ask the doctor about a lead test. This is especially important if you live in an older house or apartment building.
- Protect your child from tobacco smoke. Even second-hand smoke is bad for him.
- Help your child learn to brush his teeth. Take him to the dentist every six months.
- Always use a car seat.
- Teach your child how to cross the street safely. Make sure he wears a helmet when riding a bike.
- Teach your child not to play with matches, lighters, knives, cleaning supplies, medicines or guns.
- Put sunblock and a hat on your child when going outside.
- Teach your child about safety with other people and what to do if a stranger comes up to him.



Books About Health & Safety

- *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera Williams
- *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni
- *It's Mine!* by Leo Lionni

“They’re funny things, accidents. You never have them till you’re having them.” — Eeyore, *The House at Pooh Corner* by A. A. Milne

Getting Organized

The first day of kindergarten comes faster than you know it. Your child may be excited about going to school. She may also be a little worried. It will help her to do tasks to get ready for school.

Watch for notes from your child's school that tell you what she will need for kindergarten. Talk about the list with your child and make a plan to shop for the things together.

If your child is worried, let her know that you will help her. Talk with her about how much she has grown. Remind her how many things she is able to do. Explain that she will learn to do even more in kindergarten.

You know your child best

Let your child help getting ready for kindergarten. You know what your child would enjoy doing – picking out clothes, choosing foods for snack, buying school supplies.

Internet Resource:

www.nassaulibrary.org/parent/schoolready.html
(a parent page from Nassau County Library)

“The child supplies the power but the parents have to do the steering.” – Benjamin Spock

Ideas and Suggestions

- Visit the school with your child. Check out the classroom, the bathroom and the playground. She will like knowing what her school is like.
- Start a bedtime routine. Have your child go to bed at the same time in the weeks before school starts. This will make it easier to wake up for school.
- Start a morning routine. Help your child wake up at the same time each day. Lay out her clothes the night before. Plan for breakfast too. This will save time in the morning when she starts school.
- Buy a backpack. Your child can pick out one she likes. Talk about all the things she will bring home from school in it.
- Talk to your child about school and things she may be worried about. This might be using the bathroom, eating lunch or getting home. Be calm and tell her that you and her teacher will help her.





Adjusting to School

Adjusting to School

Going to kindergarten is one of the biggest adjustments your child will make. The most important thing you can do is to help your child feel that he will be fine when he goes to school.

Kindergarten is brand new. You know what new things are like for your child. Some children worry about changes and need lots of time to get used to anything new. If your child is like this, talk about kindergarten a little bit but not too much. Even children who look forward to new things may want you to answer questions and help them feel that they will be fine in school.

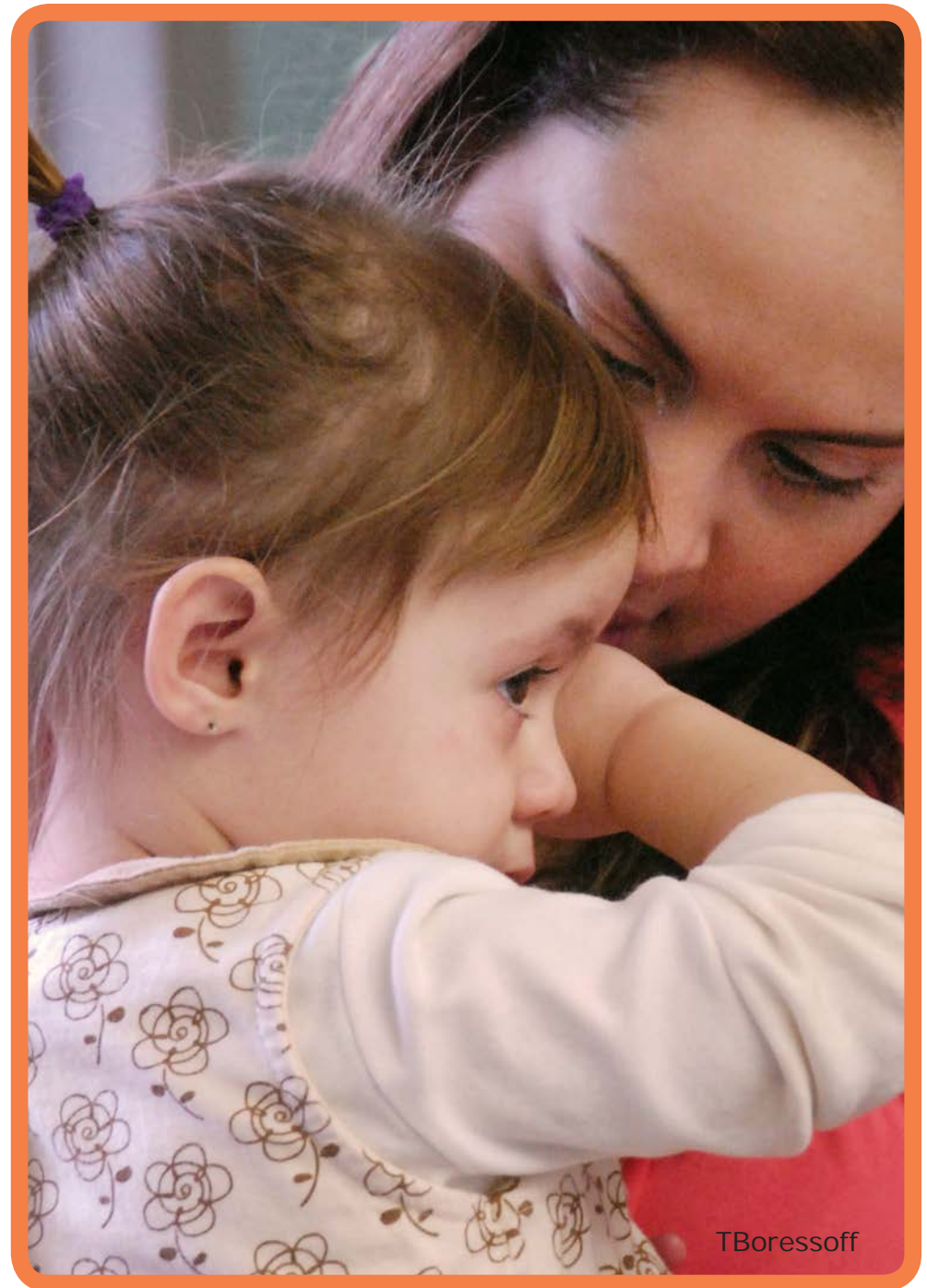
You know your child best

There may be ups and downs when your child starts kindergarten. You can tell when your child is excited and when things may be too much for her. You know when she may need time to relax. You can tell when she needs you to listen to every single word about

kindergarten. You are the person who can help her the most.

Internet Resource

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collection.jsp?id=83> (A series of articles for parents on getting ready for kindergarten)



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Ideas & Suggestions To Do:

- Try not to have too many things planned for yourself the first few days of school. It will be easier to help your child if you have extra time.
- Help your child know the routine of the day. Children like to know what will happen when.
- Always say good-bye to your child when they get on the bus or go into the classroom. Even if your child is sad and cries, don't sneak away. Say good-bye and tell him he will be all right. Make sure he knows he will see you later.
- If your child is worried about being in school, ask the teacher for help. Most kindergarten teachers will understand and know how to help.
- If your child says he feels sick most days or doesn't want to go to school after several weeks, ask the teacher for help.



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Books about going to kindergarten

- *When You Go to Kindergarten* by James Howe and Betsy Imershein
- *Kindergarten Kids* by Ellen B. Senisi
- *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Joffe Numeroff
- *Miss Bindergarten Stays Home From Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate



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“There is always a moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.”— Deepak Chopra



New York State Student Learning Standards

The State Education Department has established learning standards for all students in elementary, middle, and high schools. These standards describe the competencies that students are expected to achieve as they move from one level to the next and finally, to graduation from high school.

Because the early childhood years are so important for giving each child a sound and strong foundation for learning, the State has identified a set of standards for preschoolers, particularly in the area of literacy development. These standards are called the “Early Literacy Competencies,” and include reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The Early Literacy Standards focus on giving children opportunities to experience and explore both oral and written language in the many different ways they are used. For example:

- Children are provided books to look at in order to develop a sense of how books and other reading materials work: – pictures are different from words,
 - we read from front to back, top to bottom, and left to right,
 - there are new words to know,
 - books tell stories about real people and real experiences, and
 - books tap into our creativity.
- Children and adults (parents, grandparents, teachers) play with language in order to get a feel for the sounds of the language:
 - the differences in how big and small words are,
 - how words rhyme with each other, and
 - how words share similar sounds.
- Children have a chance to draw and write with lots of different tools and they are encouraged to talk about their drawings and their writings in order to develop an understanding that words can be written down and used to communicate ideas and messages.
- Children are read to and spoken with in order for them to develop the ability to listen and to understand when others speak or read.
- Children are encouraged to speak about their own ideas in order to sharpen their speaking skills and to communicate their own ideas and feelings.

When children have these and other kinds of opportunities, they will be able to build the literacy skills that will help them succeed in school.

Recipes

Silly Putty

1 cup liquid starch
2 cups Elmer's glue

Pour liquid starch into a large mixing bowl. Gradually add the Elmer's glue. Knead until the desired consistency is achieved.

Cloud Dough

6 cups flour
1 cup oil
1 cup water

Mix all ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Knead.

Goop

2 cups cornstarch
2 cups water

Mix cornstarch and water together in a dishpan until the mixture is solid in the container but liquid when picked up. You may need to add more cornstarch or water to achieve the desired consistency.

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood."

– Fred Rogers

Favorite Playdough

3 cups flour
1 cups water
1 cup salt
3 Tbsp cornstarch
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
10-15 drops food coloring (optional)

Mix all dry ingredients together in a large saucepan. Add food coloring to water and add to dry ingredients. Mix in oil and knead until smooth. Keeps well in a zip seal bag or even longer in a covered container in the refrigerator.

Websites of Interest for Families With Young Children

- **Cayuga County Public Library:** <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/publibs/3fl.htm>
Events and links to branch libraries
- **New York State Education Department:** <http://usny.nysed.gov/parents>
Topics of interest to parents and links to related sites
- **Early Childhood Direction Center:** <http://ecdc.syr.edu>
Information about evaluation and services for children with special needs
- **Burnet Park Zoo:** <http://www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org>
Regular and special events
- **Music for Little People:** <http://www.musicforlittlepeople.com>
A rich collection of music and songs written and performed for young children
- **Parents' Choice:** <http://www.parentschoice.org>
Focused reviews of all media targeted at children
- **Child Care Aware:** <http://www.childcareaware.org>
A national resource for parents to find and learn about high-quality child care
- **Child Care Solutions:** <http://www.childcaresolutionsscny.org>
source to parents, providers, employers, and community leaders who seek solutions to their child care needs
- **NY State Office of Children & Family Services:** <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us> Information about adoption, daycare, child protective services, the blind and visually handicapped and more
- **Imagination Library:** <http://www.gavrascenter.com/imaginationlibrary.php>
Eligible children between birth and 4 years of age who enroll Cayuga County: in the Imagination Library will each receive a free, age-appropriate book every month until they reach 5 years of age.

When Your Child Has Special Needs

Getting Ready for Kindergarten When Your Child has Special Needs

For your family, getting ready for kindergarten also starts months before your child enters into the classroom, but the steps are a bit different. You will still register for kindergarten, take tours, talk to the school and help hone your child's skills. The slight difference is that your child is now transitioning from CPSE (the Committee on Preschool Special Education) to CSE (the Committee on Special Education).

Mid-State Early Childhood Direction Center created an informational booklet called A Guide to Special Education for Children Transitioning from Preschool Special Education that details the steps in this transition. You may contact them at 315-443-4444 if you need more information or would like a copy of the booklet.

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<http://ecdc.syr.edu>



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Kindergarten...Here we come,

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