



# JOURNEY INTO LEARNING



Near North  
District School Board





## Welcome from our Director

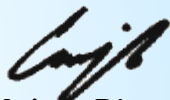
Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are thrilled that you and your child have made the decision to continue your Journey Into Learning by registering for Kindergarten! In the Near North District School Board (NNDSB), early learning is alive with rich, play-based opportunities that encourage children to think, plan and do with growing independence. Our program promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of all children. We value and prioritize excellence in teaching and learning, innovation, communication and building relationships. In partnership with you, we will support your child to build self-confidence, solve problems independently and collaboratively, build reading skills, connect math to the world around them, explore and connect with the outdoors and develop 21st century skills. All of our programs are based on the belief that young children are competent and capable learners. We strive to create caring and rich learning environments that allow all children to reach their full potential by:

- ★ Creating expectations that are responsive to the needs of each child
- ★ Allowing children to apply their unique ways of thinking and learning through play, exploration and inquiry
- ★ Providing the student and family with on-going communication that demonstrates learning and areas of growth
- ★ Respecting the diverse social, cultural and linguistic perspectives of children and their families

On behalf of myself and all of us here, we would like to welcome you to the Near North family.

Sincerely,



Mr. Craig Myles, Director of Education

# PLAY EACH DAY



*“Play nourishes every aspect of children’s development...*

*Play develops the foundation of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional skills necessary for success in school and in life. It paves the way for learning.”*

- CANADIAN COUNCIL ON LEARNING, 2006



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Topic

## Page

What is Journey Into Learning?	1
The Kindergarten Program in Ontario	3
Parents as Partners	5
Indigenous Education	7
Self-Regulation	13
Fine Motor Skills	17
Math Skills	21
Literacy	25
Oral Language Skills	27
Reading Skills	31
Writing Skills	33
Outdoor Learning	37
Stay Connected to NNDSB	41

# What is Journey Into Learning?

Journey into Learning, or JIL for short, is how the Near North District School Board welcomes our newest learners and their families.

Journey into Learning (JIL) is intended to build a bridge between home and school. Through our JIL school sessions, this guide, and its accompanying kit, our aim is to share information about the Ontario Kindergarten Program, the types of learning that will take place at school and what families can do at home to support their child's learning journey.



## Using the JIL Guide

This Journey into Learning guide is designed to support families and educators in working together to promote student learning and growth. The guide is accompanied by a Journey into Learning kit, which provides students with all the materials they need to participate in the activities outlined within this guide.



## Using the JIL Kit

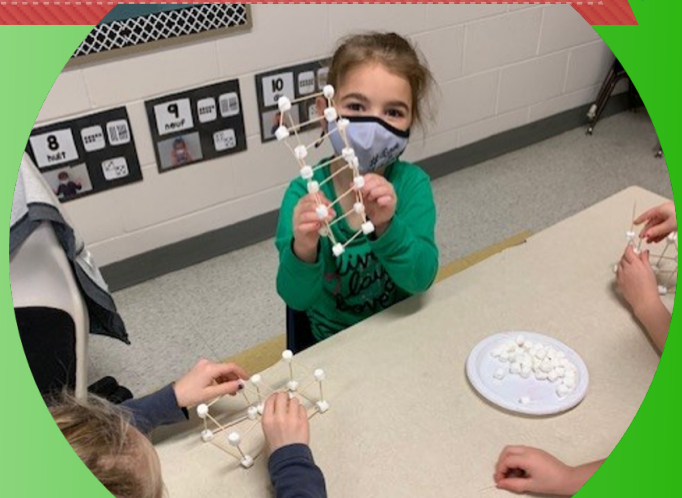
The Journey into Learning kit comes in a drawstring bag, which is used for storing an extra set of clothes at school. The bag's tag provides a list of suggested items.

Number Path

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

Growing your child's mathematical thinking will be fun with items such as counters, number paths and dice. Great ways to use these math tools are outlined on page 21.

Items to support fine motor development, such as scissors and beads, are included in the kit; many items to further develop these important muscles can be found within your home. Turn to page 17 for fun ways to build these skills!



A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O
P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y
Z				

a	b	c	d	e
f	g	h	i	j
k	l	m	n	o
p	q	r	s	t
u	v	w	x	y
z				

The kit includes resources to build literacy skills including two sets of alphabet cards (upper and lower case). The laminated sheets provide a fun surface for developing writing and drawing skills using the white board marker, or your child can work on forming letters using the tracing sheets. To learn more about how to use these materials, turn to page 25.

# Kindergarten in Ontario

Children connect with others, their community and the environment to develop an understanding of how people contribute to the world around them

Children explore the environment, make meaning of their world and share their curiosity and innovative thinking with those around them

Belonging and  
Contributing

Problem Solving  
and Innovating

Belonging

Engagement

Children  
Families  
Educators

Expression

Well-Being

Demonstrating Literacy and  
Mathematics Behaviours

Self-Regulation  
and Well-Being

Children communicate thoughts and feelings, experience understanding of math skills, concepts and processes

Children recognize the thinking and feelings of themselves and others, regulate their emotions, and communicate their physical health and well-being

The Ontario Kindergarten Program is structured around 4 “frames” that help to bring attention to the way children learn and grow.

## Meet the team

In Ontario, Kindergarten classes that have 16 or more students will have a Kindergarten educator team. This team consists of an early childhood educator (ECE) and teacher. Both educators bring a different expertise to the classroom and their complementary skills allow them to create a nurturing and stimulating environment. ECEs are trained in child development (how children grow and develop) whereas teachers are trained in pedagogy (how children learn). Together, the Kindergarten educators plan and implement the Kindergarten program as well as assess, observe, monitor and respond to student growth and learning! Classrooms with fewer than 16 students will not have an ECE but benefit from the same curriculum and pedagogy.

## What is play-based learning?

Play and “learning” are not two distinct categories for children: they are completely linked. Children learn through play and it is through play that children are able to test out their theories, ideas and practice “real-life” experiences. Children develop social, cognitive, emotional, physical and self-regulation skills through play. They learn to collaborate, share, inquire, and communicate. Play is not a privilege for children. It is a right that is recognized by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Will my child play all day?

In a play-based learning environment there is a balance of child-initiated and teacher-supported learning. It is important that children have the freedom to follow their interests and have the time to engage deeply in their play, but it is also necessary for educators to guide and build upon this learning through questioning, observation and careful planning that challenges thinking. Elements of explicit teaching are crucial in order to ensure that children develop the important foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, self-regulation and problem-solving. Even during explicit teaching, play can be used as the vehicle to share information! Learning is FUN!





# Parents as Partners

*YOU are your child's first and most important teacher!*

## Communication

*Talk to your child and engage them in conversation. This helps to build their vocabulary and their knowledge base. Extend their thinking by asking them questions and let them ask you questions!*

## Routines

*Routines are important for children and you can start developing routines for school early. Start to establish bedtimes and wake times, and encourage your child to express their needs. You can speak to your child's teacher about what the school schedule looks like so you can start to plan ahead.*

## Play

*Learning is fun! Whether you are outside on a nature walk, folding laundry, playing a game, singing, cooking dinner, or reading, these can be playful learning experiences for your child!*

## Practice

*Help your child learn to be independent. Practice packing their lunch box and opening containers, putting on shoes, zipping up their backpack, washing their hands and using the bathroom. This can help your child feel more prepared for school.*

## Read

*Read out loud to your child every day! Leave time to add rich reading experiences to your child's day whenever you can! Reading aloud exposes your child to new words, and new experiences.*



*“Families are experts on their children. They are the first and most powerful influence on children’s learning, development, health, and well-being. Families bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Families should feel that they belong, are valuable contributors to their children’s learning, and deserve to be engaged in a meaningful way.”*



-The Kindergarten Program, 2016

A child in a yellow raincoat and blue backpack is walking away from the camera on a path in a park. The background is slightly blurred, showing trees and a grassy area.

# Indigenous Education

## Did you know that...

culturally responsive pedagogy is a student-centred approach to teaching in which each student's unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote both academic achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world?

NNDSB supports student well-being and a strong positive identity by creating environments that foster the appreciation of all languages and cultures.

We are committed to deepening our understanding of Indigenous education and actively seek to learn about treaties, the legacy of colonialism and our shared history alongside our students. School communities continue to explore equity and support inclusive, safe and caring spaces for all identities.

A land acknowledgement is a way for people to insert an awareness of Indigenous land rights, presence and role in everyday life which opens up room for respect, growth and honour. A land acknowledgement is an investment that recognizes the past, confirms the present and provides hope for a reciprocal relationship for the future. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies or public events.

## Land Acknowledgment



Juliana Armstrong

## Smudging

Medicines, which are found naturally on the land, are used in smudging. Medicines such as sage, cedar, tobacco & sweetgrass are lit to create a smoke. One smudges themselves with the smoke, bringing the smoke over their body to cleanse and bring balance. Smudging can be used for many different reasons including to start or end your day, during celebration or when you need some good energy.

## Grandfather Teachings

These teachings are built upon throughout one's life. They are practiced and maintained daily so that one can walk in a good way. When we follow the Grandfather Teachings we create a good life, mno bimaadziwin (living a good life).

## Beading

Beading is a way to express one's creative self and it offers a unique outlet for bonding with others through the passing on of generational teachings. Use Pony Beads (larger plastic beads) to create a necklace or bracelet with a pattern of your choice. The medicine wheel colours can be arranged in a variety of patterns.





Artwork by Juliana Armstrong





# Greetings

Aanin

Hello

Boozhoo

Hello

Aanin dash?

How are you?

Nmaanaadendam

I am sad

Nminwendam

I am happy

Baamaapii

See you later

Miigwech

Thank you

Many Indigenous languages exist throughout Canada. Schools in the Near North are situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek territories, both from the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 and the 1923 Williams Treaty. To acknowledge the original peoples of this land, the Near North teaches Anishnaabemowin. The dialect featured here comes from the people of Nipissing First Nation.



# Counting

Bezhik

1

Niizh

2

Nswi

3

Newin

4

Naanan

5

# Medicine Wheel

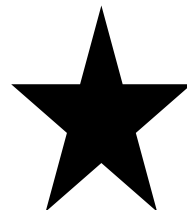
Zaawaa  
(yellow)



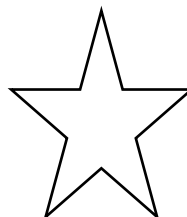
Mshkwaa  
(red)



Mkadewaa  
(black)



Waabshkaa  
(white)





# Self-Regulation

## Did you know that...

...self-regulation is an important component to school success?

Our Kindergarten programs help children develop social emotional learning (SEL) skills, which help them to communicate their needs and wants with adults, build positive relationships, develop their sense of self, as well as notice and name their feelings. The Ministry of Education has recently added social emotional learning to other curriculum areas, including Grade 1-8 Math and Grade 1-8 Health and Physical Education.



In the Near North District School Board, we practice inclusive education, which means that we see all children as competent and capable. Each child is welcomed into our Kindergarten program at their starting point. Our educators anticipate that each child will come with a unique set of strengths and areas for learning and development.





Using an asset-based perspective, teachers and early childhood educators support each

student in learning the skills they need to be successful socially, academically and physically. If you believe that your child would benefit from a tailored transition into the Kindergarten program to support specific needs, please contact your school. Each child can be successful and we want to support you, your family and your child in having a positive school experience from Kindergarten through to their Grade 12 graduation.

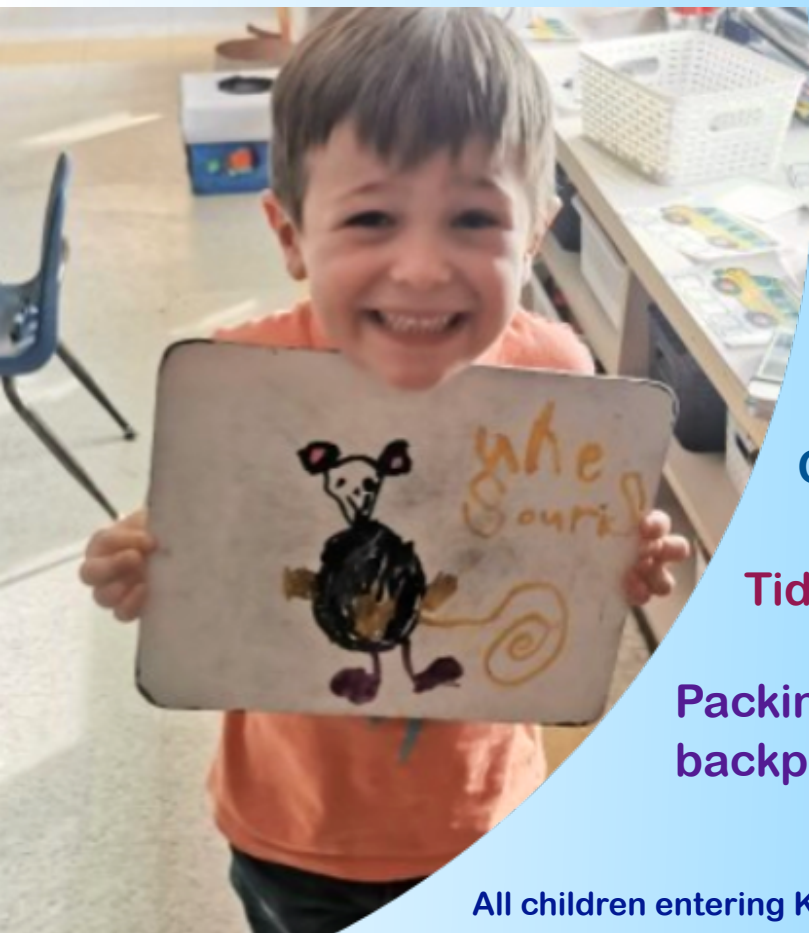


Talking about feelings at home with your child is a great way to develop self-regulation and social emotional skills. Sometimes it can be hard for a young child to find the words to describe their feelings. The Zones of Regulation program, used throughout the Near North Board, helps kids match feelings to words using colours and visuals. The Green Zone is great for learning but we want children to know that all feelings are okay. You can practice naming feelings by helping your child identify what they look and sound like when they are in the Green, Blue, Yellow or Red Zones.

Knowing what to do when unsettled feelings come up is the next step. What types of things can they do to turn their unsettled feelings around and get back to Green? Is there a tool that can help, such as a calming object? You can also begin thinking and talking about positive social behaviours with your child. How do they feel when someone asks them to play? How do they feel when a friend shares or doesn't share with them? Role playing these scenarios can help children anticipate their feelings, which provides them with another opportunity to notice and name their feelings.

			
<p><b>BLUE ZONE</b></p> <p>Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly</p>	<p><b>GREEN ZONE</b></p> <p>Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn</p>	<p><b>YELLOW ZONE</b></p> <p>Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control</p>	<p><b>RED ZONE</b></p> <p>Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control</p>

Building independence also helps to support self-regulation; as students are able to do more and more independently, they can help themselves (and others)! Praising your child's effort as they practice these skills will keep them motivated. You can encourage building independence for Kindergarten by having your child practice every day skills such as:



**Asking for help when needed**

**Getting dressed (including shoes/jacket)**

**Washing and drying hands**

**Opening containers in lunch box**

**Tidying up toys**

**Packing and unpacking their backpack and lunch box**

All children entering Kindergarten are seen as competent and capable. We recognize that all children arrive with a variety of skills, needs, and different experiences. Although developing independence is great, please rest assured that our educators will support students no matter their starting point. Building independence looks different from person to person; honour where your child is at.



# Fine Motor Skills

A child with blonde hair, wearing a blue t-shirt and blue sneakers with yellow accents, is kneeling on a light-colored floor. They are focused on a small electronic circuit board held in their hands. The floor around them is covered with various small, colorful components and tools, suggesting a hands-on learning activity or a science experiment.

## Did you know that...

...fine motor activities help to develop the muscles in the hand, fingers and thumb?

These small muscles are important because they play a big role in grasping items for writing, drawing, buttoning, zipping, feeding and so much more!

Luckily, there are many fun ways to grow these muscles.

Try some activities to grow your fine motor skills today!



# Activities To Grow Fine Motor Skills



**Buttons and Zippers:** Children can practice buttoning and unbuttoning, zipping and unzipping their jackets. Start with bigger buttons and progress to smaller ones.



**Cutting:** Draw straight and curved lines on a piece of paper and have your child cut along the line. Think of “thumbs up butter cup” to remind kids of how to correctly position their hands within the scissor holes.



**At the Table:** Eating with silverware develops fine motor skills. Practice holding a fork and spoon correctly.



**Puzzles:** Start with shape matching puzzles then move to multi piece puzzles. Begin with 5 or 10 piece puzzles and work your way up to 25 pieces.



**Build:** Using Legos, blocks, or household items, try building towers and other structures to grow fine motor skills. This grows problem solving skills, too!



**Craft:** Pasting smaller items onto paper, cutting and colouring all help develop fine motor skills.



**Threading:** Punch holes in paper and have your child use string to weave in and out, or tie a knot on one end of a string and have your child thread Cheerios to make a necklace. This can be done with a variety of items, including pasta, paper tubes, or beads.



**Tweezers:** Children have a fun time picking up cotton balls or other soft materials using tweezers, which is another way to build up strength in small hand muscles. Begin with large, plastic tweezers and graduate to smaller and smaller ones.



**Finger play:** Practice touching thumb to each finger, forward and backward. Acting out songs like Itsy Bitsy Spider helps children to use both hands simultaneously.



**Crayons:** Practice drawing or doodling using a functional finger grip. Strong muscles are required for a correct grip, so practicing the above mentioned activities will help with this skill, too.

## Play Dough Fun

**Make 2D and 3D shapes**

**Create cookie patterns**

**Build towers**

**Make patterns using different colours of play dough**

**Build numbers or letters**

**Create play dough balls and use them to create addition and subtraction sentences**

**Fill a bowl by rolling small play dough balls or small rolled snakes**

Play dough is the best tool for developing fine motor skills. Make a batch and try these fun games.

## Play Dough Recipe

Mix all dry ingredients. Pour boiling water, oil, and food colouring into dry ingredients. Mix and then knead until combined. This play dough will last for several weeks in an airtight container. If you do not have all these ingredients, try Salt Dough instead.

2 cups white flour

1/2 cup salt

2 tablespoons cream of tartar

1 tablespoon oil

2 cups boiling water

Food colouring



## Salt Dough Recipe



Mix all ingredients together. This dough hardens quickly and will only keep its consistency for a few days in an airtight container. It is perfect for making creations that you would like to keep because it hardens when dried.

2 cups white flour

1 cup salt

1 cup water




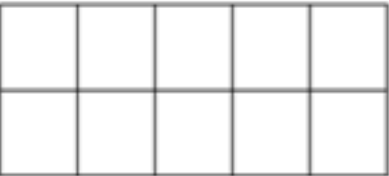




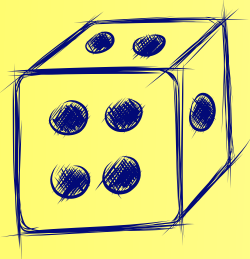
# Math Skills

## Did you know that...

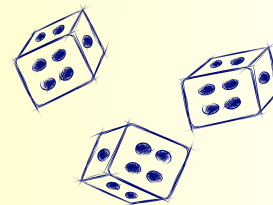
...developing inquiry and math skills such as exploring shapes, numbers, counting and patterns has been shown to set kids up for success as they continue to grow and progress both in and out of school? Caregivers can support this by following their child's curiosity about the world around them and using questions and materials to extend their understanding. The materials and ideas in this Journey into Learning kit support numeracy and spatial reasoning skills; they have been selected based on current research that explains how kids best learn math.

# Math Tools in the Journey into Learning Kit

Math Tool	Structure	Examples of Uses
<b>Five Frame</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 squares side by side</li> <li>• Connections to 5 fingers and half of 10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count 1-5 while placing counters</li> <li>• Use 2 colours to show parts that make 5</li> </ul>
<b>Ten Frame</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 rows of 5 squares side by side</li> <li>• Connects to 10 which is the base of our number system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count 1-10 while placing counters</li> <li>• Use 2 colours to show parts that make 10</li> <li>• Use 2 colours to show 1 and 2 more or 1 and 2 less than a number</li> </ul>
<b>Number Path</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side by side squares with digits up to a set number (20 in this kit)</li> <li>• Shaded to highlight groups of 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice counting skills up to 20</li> <li>• Practice recognizing numerals up to 20</li> <li>• Begin to recognize relationships between numbers (i.e. 9 is the number I say just before 10, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Subitizing Cards</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dot images in familiar structures (dice images or ten frames)</li> <li>• Each card is separate for use in different games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize small quantities of dots without counting (subitizing)</li> <li>• Matching dots to numerals and other number representations</li> <li>• Compare and order quantities</li> </ul>



There are many ways to use the math tools provided. Allow your child to explore with the mats, cards, and counters to see what they decide to do with them. Being curious along with your child and expressing “wonderings” will help them become curious and explore ideas related to number, spatial thinking, and quantity. Examples of these explorations and wonderings are included below.



## Frames

Using the Five or Ten frame and some counters, place one counter in each square. Using materials found around your house may increase your child’s engagement and exploration. Examples of counters could include rocks, buttons, play dough, beads, small toys, etc. Using 2 different kinds of counters can support children in seeing 2 parts that make the total amount.

### Wonderings:

*“I see that on the 5 frame you have placed 2 yellow toy cars. How many more cars do you need to fill in all 5 squares? Can you fill the rest of the squares with blue cars? What do you notice?”*

*“Let’s count aloud as we put a button in each square. Can you count with me?”*

*“I see that you have 6 beads on the ten frame. How many would be left if I took one away?”*

## Subitizing

Subitizing is the ability to recognize the quantity of a small group of items without counting. Use the subitizing cards as a game: Hold up a card and ask how many dots your child sees. How did they see them? The cards could be used as a Flash Card, Matching, Go Fish or Memory Game.

### Wonderings:

*“You said you saw 5 dots. How did you know there were 5 there (2 here, 3 there to make 5 altogether, 2 here, 2 here, 1 there to make 5 altogether)? Did you count them or use another way to figure it out?”*

*“Can we make the same design from this card using the counters? I wonder if there is a different way to arrange the counters to show the same number.”*



## Representing

Ask your child to secretly think of a number and find a card that represents this number or make this number with counters on a 5 /10 frame. Encourage them to answer questions about the number they chose so their partner can guess what they chose.

### Wonderings:

*"Is your number before or after 5 on the number path? Do I say your number if I count 1, 2, 3?"*



Try making a pattern out of household items!

## Number Path

A numeral is the symbol or name that stands for a number. Use the number path to practice saying the name for each numeral. Students can point to or place a small item on each numeral as they say its name.

### Wonderings:

*"I heard you count and point to each number up to 6. What number comes right after 6? What number comes just before 6?"*

*"Can you point to the number 8 on the number path? Let's use our finger to trace the number 8. Can you draw it in the sand or on the whiteboard?"*

Young children are curious and capable budding mathematicians who flourish with the support of families and teachers who create an environment that promotes and extends early mathematical thinking.

# Literacy

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize the spoken parts of words and sentences and is crucial for reading and writing/spelling. As children grow and develop their phonological awareness skills, they will become more and more sensitive to word parts or structures. For instance, they will begin by noticing that sentences are made up of words, that words are made up of syllables and finally, that words are made up of individual speech sounds (this skill is known as phonemic awareness: when children recognize and can manipulate the individual speech sounds). The development of phonemic awareness is directly related to a child's success in reading.



Developing literacy skills in young children is a vital component to their overall development. Literacy skills are the foundation of reading, writing, communicating and socializing, skills which are necessary not just at school, but outside of school as well. Developing strong literacy skills can contribute to your child's overall sense of well-being, socialization, problem-solving skills and decision making.

Before young children can read and write, they need to develop the building blocks that will get them there. Building skills around oral language,

vocabulary development, phonics and phonological awareness, as well as giving children opportunities to explore their interests, inquire and play, are all vital components in developing the skills in service of reading and writing.

In Kindergarten, development of these early literacy skills will help your child "learn to read". Strong reading skills, along with exposure to different experiences and information, will allow your child to "read to learn" which will support their growth and development for the future!

The materials found in the JIL kit will support the development of literacy skills at home and will allow you to share and extend experiences happening in the classroom!







# Oral Language Skills

## Did you know that...

...reading builds on oral language? In fact, oral language lays the foundation for reading and writing skills in children. Stronger oral language skills will also help children develop communication skills, confidence and overall well-being. Children who hear more words spoken at home will learn more words and build a larger vocabulary. When having conversations with your children, don't shy away from using new and "big" words. You don't need any tools at all to play with and develop oral language skills at home! The activities on pages 29-30 honour many things already happening. The colours will help you identify the particular type of skills that can be targeted through these activities!

# Nursery Rhymes

Not only are nursery rhymes a fun way for you and your child to interact, they are also important for language acquisition and speech development. Nursery rhymes help kids to hear rhymes, and rhythms, as well as sounds and syllables. They also help in developing mouth and tongue muscles!

Hickory dickory dock, the mouse  
ran up the clock.

The clock struck one, the mouse  
ran down.

Hickory dickory dock.

Hickory dickory dock, the mouse  
ran up the clock.

The clock struck two, the mouse  
said "BOO!"

Hickory dickory dock.

Hickory dickory dock, the mouse  
ran up the clock.

The clock struck three, the mouse  
said "WHEE!"

Hickory dickory dock.

Hickory dickory dock, the mouse  
ran up the clock.

The clock struck four, the mouse  
said "No more!"

Hickory dickory dock.

I'm a little teapot short and stout.

Here is my handle, here is my  
spout.

When I get all steamed up, hear  
me shout.

Just tip me over, and pour me  
out!

One, two, three, four, five.

Once I caught a fish alive.

Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,  
then I let it go again.

Why did you let it go?

Because he bit my finger so.

Which finger did he bite?

This little finger on the right.

# Oral Language Skills Development: Part 1

Try these activities to promote listening, re-telling and grammar skills!

**Yellow:** these activities practice the skills of remembering and following directions

Play Simon Says and have your child listen and follow your directions.	Choose a picture that can be coloured and give your child instructions for completing it (e.g. colour the horse brown, then the flower orange).	Encourage your child to recall simple poems (e.g. Jack and Jill, Humpty Dumpty). Teach longer ones as you go.	Have your child look around a room in your house for 10 seconds, then leave. Encourage them to name 5-10 items in that room from memory.	Play follow the leader and have your child give you directions to follow. Encourage them to use words like <b>In, On, Under, Beside, In front or Behind.</b>
--	---	---	--	--

**Blue:** these activities practice hearing grammar in sentences

Ask your child to describe themselves making sure to use "I" (e.g. I have brown eyes).	Play the plural game. You say the plural and your child names the singular (e.g. houses/house, boxes, box).	When in the kitchen with your child, ask them to find things that are bigger than the toaster and smaller than the toaster.	Have your child talk about their friends. What do you think they are doing right now? Encourage use of <b>He is</b> and <b>She is</b> .	Find a story book about people and instead of their names, say He, She, and They (e.g. <b>She</b> is walking in the woods. <b>He</b> is going swimming. <b>They</b> will go for a picnic.).
--	---	---	---	---

**Coral:** these activities practice how to give good details and share those details in logical order

Ask your child questions to help them learn important information. What is your full name? Where do you live? What is your phone number?	Make microwave popcorn and have your child tell you all the steps involved.	Read a short story out loud and ask your child to re-tell the story in their own words. If you get stuck, you can cue them with who, what, when, where and why.	Play 20 questions. Think of an item and have your child ask questions to figure out what it is. Encourage use of who, what, when, where and why.	Look through photo albums or pictures in magazines and select one. Encourage your child to create a story of what they think happened in that picture.
--	---	---	--	--



## Oral Language Skills Development: Part 2

Try these activities to boost vocabulary and learn new words!

Play "I Spy" with your child to help with describing skills.	Give your child a measuring tape and have them measure items around the house. Get them to sort the items from shortest to longest.	Give your child two words and have them tell you how they are alike and different. (e.g. whale/minnow, cat/dog, tape/glue).	Name some animals with your child and sort them by those that can: fly, swim, run, gallop, waddle, or jump.
Choose a colour and have your child look around the house for items that match.	Hide an object in your house. Give your child hints to find it by using prepositions such as <b>in</b> , <b>on</b> , <b>under</b> , <b>in front</b> , <b>behind</b> .	Have your child set the table for a meal. Help them by using directionality words (e.g. right, left, above, below, beside).	Gather a variety of items from around the house and have your child sort them into categories (e.g. colour, shape, size, type).
Name an animal and ask your child to give an action word that goes with it (e.g. rabbit-hops, fish-swims).	As your child tidies up their toys, have them sort the toys by different attributes (e.g. type, colour, size, shape).	Line up household items and name them as first, second, third, fourth and last.	Play an opposites game. Give your child a direction and have them do the opposite (e.g. stand up, cry, say hello, smile, tie your shoe, etc.).
Ask your child to describe today's weather. Write the words he/she uses such as: cool, rainy, windy, hot. Talk about the words they used when describing what they observed.	Play <i>Word Chain</i> : one person says a word and the next person says a word that goes with the first (e.g. cheese/mouse, couch/TV). Keep going until you get stuck.	Clean out the cutlery drawer and sort the forks, knives, and spoons. You can have them count the items in each group.	Go for a walk and encourage your child to name things that they see.



# Reading Skills

## Did you know that...

...children learn to read by connecting letters to speech sounds? You can help your child learn these skills at home by:

- \*Listening for, noticing and playing with rhyming words
- \*Listening for and noticing sounds in words (e.g. first, middle and end sounds in the word 'cat')
- \*Allowing your child to select books of interest to cultivate a love of reading
- \*Reading books aloud to your child
- \*Playing with words by moving, changing adding or taking away sounds

# Prepare for Reading

Phonological awareness skills include rhyming, segmentation of words in sentences, segmenting/blending/deleting syllables, and identifying/blending/segmenting/deleting/adding and manipulating sounds in words.

Learning these skills are important so that children develop good reading skills. When children are involved in word play, they can learn to see patterns in words and use this information to read and build words.

Try the green, yellow and pink activities to grow specific skills:

**Green:**  
**Word Level**

**Yellow:**  
**Syllable Level**

**Pink:**  
**Sound Level**

Have your child think of a sentence to describe an event that happened recently. Clap out the words in the sentence and count them. Make the sentence longer and count the words again.	When unloading groceries, clap out the syllables for each item (e.g. 'car-rot' or 'po-ta-to'). How many times did you clap?	Point out items in your child's everyday life (e.g. on a walk or around the house) and ask them what sound the word ends with.	Using compound words, ask what is left when you take away one of the words. (e.g. If you start out with 'starfish' and you take away 'fish', what is left?).
When folding laundry, ask your child to say the first sound of an item (e.g. What is the first sound in the word socks?).	Say two rhyming words out loud. Ask your child to add another rhyming word. Go back and forth, adding words that rhyme (e.g. cat, mat, hat, sat, etc.).	Have your child do jumping jacks to count out syllables in words (start with one-syllable words, then two-syllables, then three-syllables, etc.).	Line up Cheerios on the table and ask your child to push one forward for every sound they hear in a word (e.g. last = l-a-s-t).
Play a robot game with your child. Your child gives you a word and you say it in your best robotic voice, separating the syllables (e.g. ha-ppi-ness). Then switch roles – give your child a word to try.	Use your child's name to make silly words. (e.g. Jessica, if your name started with the /mmm/ sound, what would it be? Messica! How about the /t/ sound? Tessica!).	Play "I Spy" by changing the sentence to "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with ____." You can do this on a walk, in the car or at home.	Do a scavenger hunt and ask your child to find things around the house that start with a specific letter sound.



# Writing Skills

## Did you know that...

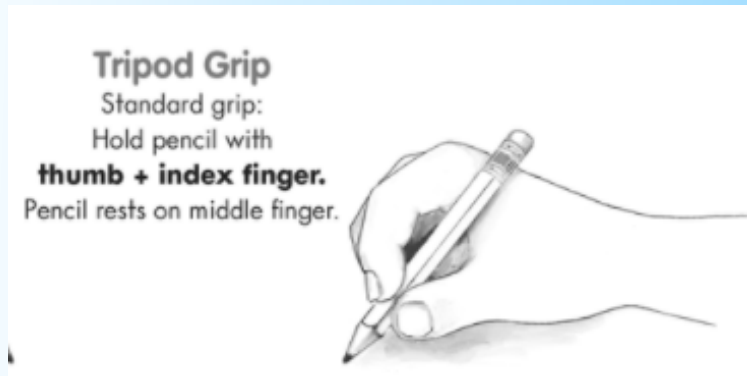
...developing phonological awareness and phonemic awareness skills is critical, but children also need to connect the sounds they are hearing to letters?

Associating letters (or graphemes) with a speech sound is known as phonics. Phonological awareness and phonics are used together in successful reading and writing.

The materials in your JIL kit include laminated sheets which can be used as a white board, marker, alphabet cards and tracing pages. These are tools that teachers use all the time and you can have fun with them at home, too!

# Pencil Grip

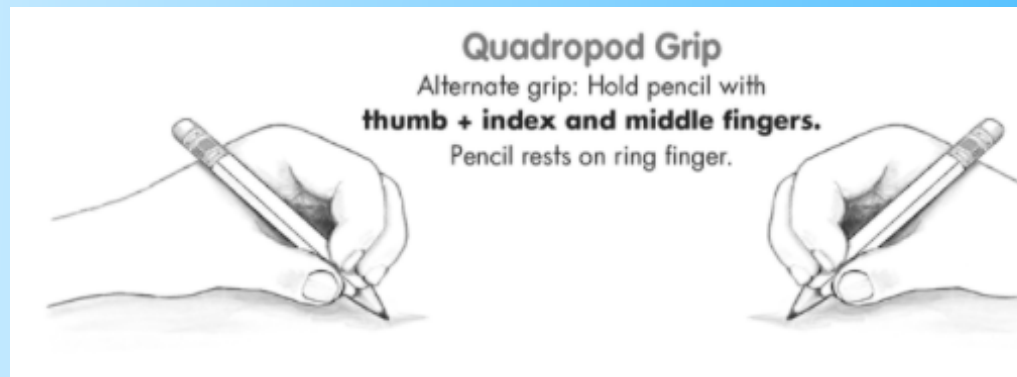
Learning to write with a pencil means that children need to practice controlling hand and finger muscles. These muscles can be developed through fine motor skills activities (turn to page 17 for more information) and are used to support a functional pencil grip. When starting to write, children will demonstrate a variety of pencil grips, but it's best if you can encourage them to adopt either a tripod or quadropod grip.



When children are just starting out, try using small pieces of crayon or chalk. This prevents them from using their entire fist to hold the pencil or having their fingers spread out, two common grasps that children experiment with while developing their pencil grip!

This skill takes a lot of time to develop; keep modelling correct grip for your

child and applaud all of their efforts. It's important to let children 'scribble' write (forming unique shapes to represent letters, numbers or words). This allows them to experiment with the relationship between sound and written word.



Find more tips, tricks  
and information on  
the website Learning  
without Tears

Graphics from LEARNING WITHOUT TEARS



Match upper case and lower case letters to each other - this can be made into a game in many ways such as by playing memory with upper and lower case cards, by playing BINGO with the cards, or drawing a card and looking around the environment for the matching letter.



Once your child is comfortable with some letters and the sounds they make, you can create words.

Start with 2 or 3 letter words such as at, if, on, bat, car, etc.

Make word chains with the letter cards. Start with at, ask "What happens if I change the 'a' to 'i'?" "What happens if I change the 't' to 'f'?"

## Scavenger Hunt



Go on a letter scavenger hunt inside or outside



Where do you see letters?



What letters do you see?



Can you make the letter's sound?



Look for things that start with a specific letter or sound.



Look for familiar words around you. Can you find STOP?

Recognizing print in the environment is a great way to make learning letters and sounds fun!





## Fun with Names

Use your child's name, or other familiar names, to learn to recognize letters and the sounds they make! Here are some ways you can play with names:



Cut out the letters of your child's name from magazines, newspapers or other print and then practice putting the letters back together.



Use the letters from their name to make new words - nonsense words or real words.



Practice naming the letters and the sounds the letters in their name make. Look for or name other words that begin with the same sound as the first letter of their name. As they become familiar with the letters in their name they can look for or name words that begin with the same sound as other letters in their name.



Practice writing the letters in their name on the laminated sheets. Ensure to practice proper letter formation (forming letters from top to bottom) and pencil grip when writing (see page 34 for more information).



Encourage your child to write their name and letters in the sand, in the snow, with paint, with rocks, with play dough, etc.

# Outdoor Learning

## Did you know that...

...outdoor play helps develop vestibular sense in children?

Vestibular sense is considered the sixth sense and is the awareness of your body in space. The more a child moves outside of the upright position (standing or sitting), the more developed this sense becomes! The vestibular sense helps coordinate eye movement, as well as attention and focus. Children need opportunities every day to develop this sense. Let your child be active outdoors: encourage them to spin, roll, climb and change positions.

Try these fun outdoor activities with your child to promote many skills that align to the 4 frames of the kindergarten program:

## Math

Seeing the math that lives all around us can bring many math concepts to life, create excitement and engagement, as well as solidify numeracy skills!



Represent quantities with natural objects. Discuss more and less, practice counting, talk about the relationships between numbers.



Measure and compare sizes of objects using non-standard or standard units of measure.



Create a balance scale with a stick and some recycled containers. Weigh different natural objects that you find and compare them.



Create patterns with natural objects.



Go on a number hunt and look for numbers that are found in your environment.

## Literacy

You can bring literacy outdoors in so many ways from very simple activities to activities that need a little more organization or preparation. Build oral language into your preparation by considering the weather: "What outdoor clothing will you need today? How do you know?"



Bring a great storybook or read aloud outside and find a nice spot to share the story.



Go on a scavenger hunt. How many birds can you count? How many pairs of boots do you see?



Write letters or words in the snow, in the sand, in the dirt, or with natural objects.



Play guessing games. Hide a natural object in a bag and have your child ask questions that will help them figure out the object.



Create an outdoor journal in which your child can share pictures, stories or drawings.





## Belonging and Contributing

Children are drawn to their environment. Spending time in nature, whether it is in their own yard, at a local park, or in the school yard, helps children become connected to that space. When children feel a connection to their environment, they naturally want to protect and care for it.

Encourage your child to choose a special outdoor space. This might be in a park, a spot in your yard, a special tree, a beach, or a garden. Visit that space often and discuss how that spot changes over time, through the seasons. Ask your child what they notice: What is the same? What is different? Have them look down, look up, see that space from different perspectives. How can they take care of that spot? This is a great way to help your child care for their environment and become stewards in their communities.



## Self-Regulation and Well-being

The outside space often has a calming affect on

children. The stressors that might be present in indoor spaces such as noise, harsh lighting, crowded spaces, strong smells, bright colours and visual overloads are not often present in the same way in outdoor spaces. Therefore, time outside can be very beneficial to children's well-being. Talk to your child about how they feel when they are outside, and connect this to their senses: what they feel, smell, see and hear. Go on a listening walk with your child. Try not to talk throughout the walk but tune in to what you hear and discuss it after your walk.

Discuss the difference between hazards (a potential danger, such as a rotting branch on a tree a child is climbing) and risks (challenges and uncertainties, such as figuring how high they should climb in a tree safely). Children build self-regulation skills when they are able to manage risk by determining their own limits. Discussing boundaries and choices with your child can help them learn to make good decisions about safety.

# Problem Solving and Innovating

## Help Your Child Foster Awareness by Saying:

- **Notice How...**these rocks are slippery, that branch is strong...
- **Do You See...**the poison ivy, your friends nearby?
- **Try Moving...**your feet carefully, quickly, strongly...
- **Try Using Your...**hands, feet, arms, legs...
- **Can You Hear...**the rushing water, the singing birds, the wind?
- **Do You Feel...**stable on that rock, the heat from the fire?
- **Are You Feeling...**scared, excited, tired, safe?

## Help Your Child Problem Solve By Saying:

- **What's Your Plan...**if you climb that tree, cross that log?
- **What Can You Use...**to get across, for your adventure?
- **Where Will You...**put that rock, dig that hole?
- **How will you...**get down, go up, get across?
- **Who will...**be with you, go with you, help you if...?

The learning that takes place in classroom experiences can be explored in the “extended classroom” that nature provides. Similarly, the natural environment can be reflected in the indoor learning environment.

Graphic from [Back Woods Mama](#)





**KINDERGARTEN ALREADY?**  
PLAY, LEARN, AND GROW TOGETHER

REGISTRATION OUR PROGRAM WELCOME TO SCHOOL SUPPORTING LANGUAGES PARENT LINKS CHILDCARE TRANSPORTATION FIND YOUR SCHOOL

**THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY/PLAY-BASED LEARNING**

Journey into Learning with the Near North District School Board

Our Kindergarten teams are excited to welcome you and your child into their classroom this September. To prepare for this exciting day and answer any questions you may have, each school is hosting a Journey into Learning event. These events are a great way to meet the teachers and learn more about the Kindergarten program at your child's school. Find out more by visiting your school's webpage or Facebook page. [Your school's information can be found here.](#)

Learn more and stay connected by visiting our website:

[NearNorthSchools.ca](http://NearNorthSchools.ca)

and check out our [Kindergarten](#) section for more information on:

[Community Partners](#)

[Indigenous Education](#)

[Resources for Parents](#)

[Child Care and School Aged Programs](#)

[French Immersion Programming](#)

Look for us on Facebook and Twitter, too!

**We look forward to supporting your child on their Journey into Learning**







