

Getting ready for any journey takes time and thoughtful planning. As the young children in our lives find their way along the path of lifelong learning, the adults that care about them can offer support and important lessons that will help them to succeed. This calendar has been created to help you become aware of some of the ways in which you already help your child to grow and develop, and give you some tips and ideas to do even more to support your child during the year before they start Kindergarten. This calendar will also give you some new ideas of practical, everyday activities that you can engage in with your child so that you both can feel confident about the move into Kindergarten. You will find suggestions for books that you and your child can read and fun things you can do together along the way. We've also included some encouraging ideas for the grownups in the family, to help them feel supported as well. Much of the activities and information in this calendar has been gathered from *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers*. Foundations was developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC public education) to identify the widely held expectations for 3 – 5 year old children. We hope you will enjoy using this calendar. May it help you to celebrate the beginning of the journey to school and beyond! Get ready, Get set, Go!



there are other options. Does your school system offer year-round schools? How about magnet schools or charter schools? If other schools are an option, consider visiting each school you are interested in to see if it will meet your child's needs. If you wish to apply for these other schools, be sure to find out when applications are due.

- Participate in Kindergarten Registration or Kindergarten Orientation activities sponsored by your child's preschool or kindergarten program.
- Ask for a school calendar for the upcoming school year. Be sure you know what the school hours are for your child's school, as well as when teacher workdays and holidays are scheduled. Make arrangements for before and after school care if needed.
- Learn about transportation. If your child will be riding the school bus, ask questions such as: What is the bus number? When and where will your child be picked up and dropped off?
- Since many kindergarten classes start the school year on a different schedule from the rest of the school, be sure to ask the school about your child's schedule for the first few days of kindergarten.
- Ask your child's school about opportunities for families to get involved and participate as much as your schedule allows (e.g. PTA/PTO, volunteer, etc). Research tells us children whose families are involved in the school, experience a higher rate of school success.
- Gather the forms required for kindergarten registration, including
 - » Your child's birth certificate
 - » Proof of residence, such as a rental agreement, mortgage statement, a current electric or gas bill, etc.
 - » Legal custody papers, if custody has been granted to a parent or other caregiver as a result of a divorce or other legal action.
 - » Completed Kindergarten Health Assessment form and immunization record

Getting Started . . .

- In North Carolina, if a child is five years old on or before August 31st, he or she is eligible to start Kindergarten for that school year.
- If your child is in a preschool program, talk with the teacher about what activities are planned to help children transition from preschool to kindergarten.
- Call your local school system to find out what school your child will attend. Ask if

Kindergarten Health Assessment

- Call your child's doctor or health department to schedule an appointment for the health assessment that is required before going to kindergarten. The doctor will use the Kindergarten Health Assessment Report to record the results of the vision, hearing, and developmental assessment. This health assessment must be completed within one year of the start of the school year.
- Immunizations must be up-to-date before your child enters kindergarten. This can also be taken care of during the required physical.
- If your child has special health care needs (e.g. asthma, severe allergies, etc.) or if medication must be available or given at school, work with your child's doctor to develop a written plan for the school so that those needs can be met.

» **NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breakfast provides fuel necessary for a child's brain and makes learning easier. High protein, low sugar breakfast foods such as whole grain cereals, yogurt, fruit, and peanut butter are good choices for kindergarteners. Breakfast should be available at your child's school.

» More and more children are becoming overweight. The extra pounds affect a child's health, activity, and self esteem. Review the school lunch menus with your children and help them make healthy low fat, low sugar choices. Or, you may wish to send healthy food choices from home for your children. Snacks are also an important source of needed nutrition for children. NC law does not allow high sugar non-nutrient candy and soda in kindergarten and elementary school vending machines.

» Physical education will be part of your child's school day. Be sure your child is dressed warmly enough to go outside as winter approaches and make sure your child wears shoes that are appropriate for exercising. You can support a healthy and active lifestyle by spending additional time each day in physical activities you and your child can enjoy together.

» **DENTAL CARE** The North Carolina 2005 Calibrated K-5 Dental Assessment showed that 42 percent of children already had tooth decay by the time they entered elementary school. More than one in every five kindergarten children had untreated decay. Six out of every ten children in North Carolina are expected to be affected by dental disease by the age of

17 years old. Brushing, flossing, cutting down on sugary snacks and getting regular dental care are the best ways to prevent dental disease for children and adults.

» **SLEEP** Many school-age children do not get enough sleep. Lack of sleep makes it harder for children to pay attention in class and to learn. Children 5-9 years of age need at least 10 to 11 hours of sleep each night. Establish a routine bedtime for your child with a relaxation time before lights are turned out.

