



A Parent's Guide for Getting Your Child Ready for Kindergarten: A Calendar of Family Activities



Did you know? Reading and talking to your child are two of the most important activities you can do to prepare your child for school and life.

The **LOU Excel By 5 Coalition** consisting of representatives of a cross-section of the Oxford-Lafayette County-University community became certified on April 24, 2013 as a child friendly community for Lafayette County through the Excel By 5 Program (<http://www.excelby5.com/communities/lafayettecounty/index.php>).

The Excel By 5 Program is an innovative early childhood community certification process focusing on the important roles parents and early childhood care givers play in the lives of children during their most formative years - birth to age 5. Certification requirements are based on best practices and current research in early childhood and brain development (<http://www.excelby5.com>).

The LOU Excel By 5 Coalition members work in one of four focus areas: Community In-volvement, Early Childhood Care & Education, Family & Parent Support and Health & Safety. This document was prepared by members of the Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) area particularly for use by parents in preparing their children for Kindergarten. The LOU Excel By 5 Coalition thanks the ECCE and especially Claire Crews, Kerry Holmes, Nancy Opalko, and Jean Shaw for their leadership in creating the Guide.

For more information or to become involved, call 662.236.4251 or email loueb5.coalition@yahoo.com.

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JUNE AND JULY



Enjoy the great outdoors with your child!

MATHEMATICS



Help your child...

- Find numbers—on signs, on the telephone, at your home.
- Count from 1 to 5, then 1 to 10. Count objects such as toys, household items, or people.
- See and hear patterns—on clothing, as you repeatedly clap and snap your fingers as night follows day and day follows night

SCIENCE



Let your child...

- Enjoy playing in water, feel water's wetness and the way water flows, and pour water from container to container and see how water takes the shape of its container.
- Dig in dirt and sand, feeling textures, smelling the odors, and talking about the colors.
- Talk about and taste summer fruits.
- Notice and discuss summer's hot temperatures, sunny days, and frequent thunderstorms.

TALKING, READING, AND WRITING



Did you know? Children who know the most words become the best readers in school.

Help your child learn new words through talking and reading. Invite your child to...

- Explore his or her world. Talk about the world as you show it to your child.
- Listen to stories and books about real animals, people, and things in his/her world such as the night sky.

- Listen to stories about when he or she was a baby. Tell family stories.
- Draw pictures and "write" about books and stories he or she knows.
- Listen to stories every day. Keep a bag of your child's favorite books in the car and read them while waiting for an appointment, at the laundromat, etc.

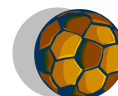
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Help your child gain independence and self-confidence and show pride in his/her many accomplishments...

- Celebrate your child's independence with rewards for all the things he/she can do on their own such as:
 - * put on their shoes
 - * dress themselves
 - * zip or button their jacket/pants
 - * zip their backpack
 - * go to the toilet independently
 - * ride their tricycle
- Let your child use a variety of craft materials to create "masterpieces" of art, Display them on the refrigerator or in their room.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Encourage Large Muscle Development by:

- Creating a safe outdoor place for your child
- Provide opportunities for your child to bounce, throw and catch large rubber balls.
- Hang a hula hoop target from a tree and encourage him/her to throw the ball through the hoop.

Check out these fun and educational books about summer to share and read with your child:
[It's Summer](#) by Linda Glaser, [Sunflower House](#) by Eve Bunting, [In the Tall Tall Grass](#) by Denise Fleming, [Counting on the Woods](#) by George Ella Lyon

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

TAKE TIME TO FIND OUT "ALL ABOUT YOU!"

MATHEMATICS



Invite your child to...

- Say number names as you show number cards you have made. Work with 1-5, then 1-10. Have your child place the correct number of small objects by each card.
- Follow simple commands with position words: put the book on the *bottom* shelf, raise your hands *over* your head, sit *under* the table.
- Identify his/her name in print. Count the letters in the names of family members.
- Make simple patterns with small objects: fork, spoon, fork, spoon etc. or pencil, crayon, pencil, crayon, etc.

SCIENCE



Encourage your child to...

- Name and eat healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, or peanut butter.
- Name and talk about household items that are liquids (they are wet; they pour) and solids (they keep their shape).
- Talk about living things such as birds, pets, squirrels, insects, and farm animals. Discuss what they need to live—food, water, shelter.

TALKING, READING, AND WRITING



Did you know? Playing with the sounds in words is not only fun, but helps your child learn to read and write!

Help your child develop listening skills...

- Count the number of breaks (syllables) in a word. Place your child's hand under his or her chin. Have your child say a word and notice when the chin drops. Together, count the number of times the chin drops when saying a word. For example, 1 chin drop for "ghost" and 2 chin drops for "pump-kin."

- Say poems and nursery rhymes with you such as *Humpty-Dumpty*, *Jack and Jill*, and *Little Boy Blue*. Use the "chin drop" activity to feel the syllables in each word.
- Make up an ending for a rhyme: "Jack and Jill went up a _____." "Hey diddle diddle, the cat and a _____."
- Make up real and nonsense rhyming words: car-far; Molly-tolly-dolly; one, two, buckle my shoe: one, two buckle my zoo.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Help your child learn to cooperate with others and show responsibility...

- Play a card or board game with your child that involves taking turns and following rules.
- Invite a friend over to play with your child so they can practice sharing. Let your child know that sharing toys is more fun.
- Encourage your child to pick up their toys and put them away at the end of play.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Give your child opportunities to use Large Muscles indoors...

- Play music and let your child move to the rhythm. Play fast and slow songs and let him/her march to the beat.
- Set up empty water bottles and let your child use a beach ball to bowl.
- Create an obstacle course in a room with space to move in. Include a taped line to walk on, a table to crawl under, chairs or big box to crawl through, and a book to jump over.

Some books to share:

Matthew A.B.C. by Peter Catalanotto, All By Myself by Alike, It's Hard to be Five by Jamie Lee Curtis, Leo the Late Bloomer by Leo Lionni, George Flies South by Simon James, When Blue Met Egg by Lindsay Ward



OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER HAVE FUN IN THE FALL!



MATHEMATICS



Did you know? Your positive attitudes toward learning and using math will help your child become a better learner.

Invite your child to...

- Count to 15 and begin to read numerals to 15. Use small objects for counting and encourage your child to move them from one pile to another as she or he counts.
- Use numbers and words that tell positions: *first, second, in the middle, next, last*. Line up 3 objects and have your child show which one is *between* the other two.
- Help you sort household items such as clothes (socks, underwear, etc.) or silverware. Count the items once they are sorted.

SCIENCE



Encourage your child to...

- Observe seasonal items such as pumpkins or leaves, looking at them, smelling them, and feeling them. Help your child describe the item's color, texture, shape, and odor. After cutting a pumpkin, let him or her taste the inside and help to count the seeds.
- Talk about seasonal changes—falling leaves from some trees, but not others; temperatures. Walk in fallen leaves and enjoy the sounds, sights, and smells around you. Exercise and play together as you rake and carry leaves.
- Gather natural fall items—leaves, acorns, twigs. Have fun sorting.

TALKING, READING, AND WRITING



Children who become good readers are able to hear the individual sounds in spoken words. Encourage your child to...

- Learn each of the sounds in his or her name. Give your child objects such as milk lids. Slowly say the sounds in your child's name and have your child put a milk lid on the table each time he/she hears a sound.

- Repeat and make up words that begin with the same sounds: *Polly Pumpkin; Tilly the turkey turned ten times*. Ask your child to make up his or her own silly word sets.
- Put sounds together to make words. Draw a picture of a slide. Have your child put his or her hand at the top of the slide. As you say each sound of a word (c/ar/d for "card"), have your child move his/her hand down the slide.
- Pull sounds of words apart and put them together again using a Slinky. As you and your child slowly say each sound of a word (s/l/e/d), pull the Slinky open. Then, say (sled) quickly as you close the Slinky.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Continue to develop your child's ability to cooperate in groups and with adults...

- Provide opportunities for your child to play in small groups of 3-5 children.
- Ask your child to tell you and others their needs and preferences using respectful behavior. Help your child express anger and frustration appropriately. Encourage him/her to use their words instead of hitting or kicking.
- Involve your child in activities that require listening and following directions. Start with 2-step directions such as: "Take off your shoes and put them in the closet."
- Practice 3-step directions. Example: "Put on your pajamas, choose a book to read, and bring me the book." Play Simon Says with 3 step directions: "Simon says sit down, cross your legs, and put your hands in your lap."



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Continue working on Large Muscles by...

- Tossing bean bags into a basket or hoop
- Asking your child to move like different animals: hop like a rabbit, slither like a snake...



Here are some fun fall-themed books to share:

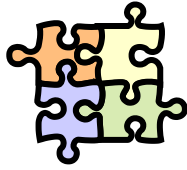
[The Little Yellow Leaf](#) by Carin Berger, [Fletcher and the Falling Leaves](#) by Julia Rawlinson, [Why do Leaves Change Color?](#) by Betsy Maestro



DECEMBER AND JANUARY WINTER HOLIDAYS AND FAMILY



MATHEMATICS



Encourage your child to...

- Find examples of rectangles, squares, circles, triangles, and other shapes. Trace around the shapes with a finger; talk about features such as corners, straight sides or a curved outline.
- Find examples of 3-dimensional shapes: spheres (ball-shaped), cones, cylinder (can-shaped), and cubes.
- Explore the new year's calendar finding the names of the days and the months. Talk about today, yesterday, tomorrow and things you have done/will do.
- Look at names of family members you have printed. Count how many letters are in each. Do any names have the same number of letters?

SCIENCE



Let your child...

- Talk about cold, warm, and cool weather as well as foods that are hot, cold and in-between.
- Help you prepare simple recipes and talk about measuring with cups and spoons.
- Observe birds and squirrels and talk about how they live in winter.

TALKING, READING, AND WRITING



Did you know? Children who learn names of letters and use them to write simple words become good readers and writers.

Help your child learn the names of letters and the speech sounds they stand for. Make sure your child can...

- Identify the first sounds of words. With your child, create a "Sound Box" and collect small toys and/or pictures that begin with the *same* sound to put in the box. Have your child pull something out and

say, "I have a..." For a ball, your child would say, "I have a bbbb-'ball.'" Repeat with other toys and pictures pulled from the box such as bat, balloon, boot, etc. Ask your child to name the letter that stands for the first sound in the word.

- Write his/her name with markers, crayons, paint or with a paint brush and water to tell you the names of the letters. Next, help your child tell you the sounds of the letters.
- Make up lists of words in the same word family: c/at, h/at...c/ar, st/ar..., sn/ow, bl/ow, etc. For each word family, challenge your child to make up as many words as possible including nonsense words such as g/at, bl/at.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Help your child develop good manners by...

- Encouraging him/her to say "please" and "thank you."
- Role play situations that require good manners such as eating at the table, answering the phone, and greeting friends and family.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Help your child develop Small Muscles...

- Allow your child to use safety scissors to cut paper on straight, curved, and zigzag lines.
- Allow him/her to manipulate dough, lacing cards, and string large and small beads.
- Encourage the "artist" in your child by providing craft items such as paper, crayons, fat pencils, washable markers, washable paint, paint brushes, and safety scissors.
- Allow your child to use the computer, "mouse" and keyboard, and become familiar with learning games on websites such as psbkids.org and starfall.com

Some Books to Share:

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats, Our Yard is Full of Birds by Anne Rockwell, The Biggest, Best Snowman by Margery Cuyler, The Berenstain Bears Forget Their Manners by Stan Berenstain



FEBRUARY AND MARCH



Stay Healthy and Safe through the Winter!

MATHEMATICS



Invite your child to...

- Make and use a paper sack puppet to show positions such as *on* the table, *under* your chin, *near* your mouth, *over* your head, and *inside* a basket, and so on.
- Find numbers 1-15 on a calendar, then work on learning more numbers—perhaps to twenty.
- Act out simple number stories such as this: We needed 4 spoons to eat dessert, then 2 guests came. How many spoons do we need now?
- Find more examples of 2- and 3-dimensional shapes and name them: square, cube, circle, sphere, triangle, cone.

SCIENCE



Did you know? Science is all around us in both the natural world and things made by people. Help your child observe the world using their 5 senses.

Have your child...

- Talk about and practice healthy habit such as brushing teeth, washing hands, getting enough sleep.
- Name his or her body parts and tell what they do (feet and legs help us walk; heads or brains help us think).
- Talk about the five senses and what they let us do: eyes to see, mouths and tongues to taste, noses to smell, fingers and other body parts to touch and feel, and ears to hear.
- Notice the ever-changing weather and the effects of rain, wind, sun, and clouds.



TALKING, READING, AND WRITING

Help your child learn to write by listening to speech sounds and pointing to and writing the letters that represent each sound. Have your child...

- Name the letters as together you read alphabet books, build with alphabet blocks, or use letter magnets.

- Use crayons, markers, paint, chalk, or play dough to write letters and words on large pieces of paper, old boxes, the sidewalk, etc. Have your child say the name of the letter and its sound.
- Write simple words. Your child may first scribble and/or make letter-like marks before he or she is able to write letters. Ask your child to read what he/she wrote.
- Look at pictures from store ads and write a grocery or gift wish list.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Help your child learn to feel safe...

- Talk to your child about what he/she need to be healthy, safe and happy.
- Help your child learn his/her name, address, and phone number.
- Encourage your child to share and describe his/her feelings and thoughts using words, pictures, or stories.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Encourage your child's independence and safety...

- Practice walking up and down stairs using alternating feet with and then without assistance.
- Practice dialing his/her home phone number and emergency number.
- Encourage your child to take care of his/her own toileting and to always wash his/her hands after using the restroom and before eating meals.
- Teach your child to recognize stop signs, traffic signals, exit signs, pedestrian crossings, and what they mean.



Here are some great books on staying safe and healthy:

Open Wide: Tooth School Inside by Laurie Keller, The Edible Pyramid by Loreen Leedy, Get Up and Go by Nancy Carlson, The Dirty Little Boy by Margaret Wise Brown, The Berenstain Bears Learn about Strangers by Stan Berenstain



APRIL AND MAY

Spring into getting ready for Kindergarten!

MATHEMATICS



Encourage your child to...

- Continue to read numbers and make sets of small objects to 10 or more.
- Find more examples of 2- and 3-dimensional shapes and talk about them.
- Find numbers to 31 as well as names of days and months on the calendar. You might mark each day's weather for a month, then count days when it was sunny, rainy, or cloudy.

SCIENCE



Draw your child's attention to...

- Measuring tools such as rulers, measuring cups, and scales.
- Plants and animals as they live and grow in the spring. Talk about how your child has grown and can now talk about and do many new things.
- Reading realistic and fanciful books about animals and their habitats and habits.

TALKING, READING, AND WRITING



Help your child understand the stories and information you read together. During and after reading...

- Ask your child to look at the pictures and predict what will happen next in the story.
- Have your child retell the story. He or she can use sock puppets, props, or drama for fun. Encourage your child to speak in complete sentences.
- Ask your child to draw the story in three parts, the beginning, middle, and end.
- Ask your child to look at pictures in books and describe them.

- Ask your child *if-then* questions about the story or information in the book (e.g. *If the spider did not come along, then Miss Muffet would not have run away. If it didn't rain, then plants couldn't grow.*)
- Discuss and show the meaning of unknown words. Relate new words to words your child already knows. For example, during the reading of the nursery rhyme, "Little Boy Blue come blow your horn! The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn," use the word *field* to explain the meaning of *meadow*. If you are reading about the pollen on flowers, take your child outside to see and feel pollen.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Did you know? Children who feel loved and safe learn faster than children who feel alone or fearful.

Help your child get ready and transition to Kindergarten...

- Visit your child's new school and help him/her become familiar with the location of his/her new classroom, the cafeteria, nurse's office, and other important places.
- After the school visit, have your child draw a picture and talk about what you both saw.
- Practice getting on and off a school bus.
- Pretend your child is leaving for school and practice saying goodbye.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Did you know? Reading to your child is the best way to teach your child unusual words.

- Establish a regular bedtime for your child. We are healthier when we go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day.
- Practice eating a meal on a tray and carrying it to the kitchen counter when done.
- Help your child learn to open chip bags, ketchup packets, and milk cartons.

Here are some fun books to share with your child:
[If You Give a Mouse a Cookie](#) by Laura Numeroff,
[Chrysanthemum](#) by Kevin Henkes, [Mushroom in the rain](#)
by Mirra Ginsburg, [The Caterpillar and the Polliwog](#) by
Jack Kent, [The Bus for Us](#) by Suzanne Bloom



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