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# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

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Full-day kindergarten (kindergarten) is designed to give your child a stronger start in school and in life – by providing an engaging learning program that is based on a child's natural desire for play. All children enter school capable, competent and ready to learn.

Kindergarten helps children:

- develop socially and emotionally through their relationships with other children, and the educators who guide them;
- learn to think for themselves, understand their feelings and the feelings of those around them, recognize and respect differences in others and assess the consequences of their actions;
- think critically about ideas and information in literacy and math;
- solve problems and think creatively; and
- develop as a citizen through a sense of personal connectedness to various communities, like their class, their grade and their school.

The kindergarten program is organized into four broad areas or “frames.” These frames reflect the way in which learning naturally occurs during children's exploration, play and inquiry.

- » **Belonging and Contributing**
- » **Self-Regulation and Well-Being**
- » **Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours**
- » **Problem Solving and Innovating**

In kindergarten classrooms with a teacher and an early childhood educator, they work together as a team. This partnership helps to create a nurturing learning environment that encourages new ideas and supports the unique needs of each child.



[ontario.ca/kindergarten](http://ontario.ca/kindergarten)

## What will your child learn in Kindergarten?

Children in kindergarten will grow and develop in many different ways while they learn new ideas, skills and concepts. Each of the four frames helps educators and families to focus on how a child's learning develops.

**Belonging and Contributing** – Children learn how to communicate and understand the importance of relationships with others and with the environment around them. Children's sense of connectedness to others, to their community and to the natural world is part of this area of learning and development. Children begin to develop their sense of belonging and contributing through their relationships with their families and classroom communities.

**Self-Regulation and Well-Being** – Children learn about emotions and feelings and how to adapt to new situations. The goal is for children to develop an understanding of how they best focus and learn, to respect themselves and others and to promote well-being in themselves and in others. This gives them a strong foundation for life.

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Parents receive three "Communication of Learning" reports during the school year – in fall, winter and at the end of the school year. These reports include information about your child's strengths and growth as well as provide suggestions for the next steps your child is ready to take in their learning.

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### **Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics**

**Behaviours** – Through play, children develop a wide vocabulary and improve communication skills. Play helps children to think critically, respect different perspectives and process various kinds of information, including mathematical thinking and reasoning. Children use mathematical thinking to make sense of the world. They see patterns, spatial relationships, measurement and quantity, and communicate their understanding of this to others. Children develop a richer vocabulary in all areas, including mathematics, which will help them communicate their thinking and reasoning with confidence.

**Problem Solving and Innovating** – Learning to think creatively, analytically and critically is important in all aspects of life. Children are naturally curious. By asking questions, testing theories, solving problems and thinking creatively, they learn to understand the world around them. Through play, exploration and inquiry children develop their ability to innovate and problem solve.

## Supporting Your Child's Learning

Parents are the first and most influential in their child's learning and development. Here are some ways to contribute as your child is beginning school:

- For some children, this might be their first time in a formal school setting. If school is new to your child, consider introducing them to the school by taking them there before school starts, so that it feels more familiar.
- Learn about the kindergarten program by speaking with the educators. Read what the educators send home or post online about what your child is learning in class.
- Share information about your child with the educators, such as tastes, interests, etc.

## How you can support your child's growth and development outside the classroom

There are a number of ways that parents can offer learning opportunities:

### ...at home

- Make everyday objects, such as plastic food containers, paper tubes, blocks and boxes, available for your child to play with.
- Give your child time and space to create and build.
- Make time to have conversations with your child.

### ...in the community

- Play outside and explore the natural environment. A small patch of grass or garden allows your child to search for bugs and worms and observe the life cycle of plants.
- When you are out in the neighbourhood, share your observations, ask your child questions, and listen to what they are saying about what they see, hear, feel or smell.
- Encourage your child to explore new activities such as sports or creative programs.

### ...in conversations with your child

- Notice and name your child's thinking and learning, such as, "You stopped when you were tired and got a snack. You are learning to listen to your body when it tells you it needs to rest."
- Identify your child's emotions and help name them accurately. For example, identifying emotions such as sadness, happiness and anger are a starting point, but identifying frustration, excitement and boredom are more challenging. "I notice that you are frustrated. Is there something I can do to help?"

- Ask open-ended questions that allow your child to share his or her thoughts, opinions and ideas. For instance, "How did you make that work?" or "What makes you say that?"
- Give your child time to respond to your questions.

## More information for parents

Find out more about what your child will learn and do in the classroom, the educators working in the classroom and how to prepare your child at [www.ontario.ca/kindergarten](http://www.ontario.ca/kindergarten).

- Full-Day Kindergarten: A Question and Answer Guide for Parents – <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/multi/english/FDKFactSheetEN.pdf>
- Kindergarten Curriculum: The Kindergarten Program (2016) – [https://www.ontario.ca/document/kindergarten-program-2016?\\_ga=1.104406976.1139960261.1473363079](https://www.ontario.ca/document/kindergarten-program-2016?_ga=1.104406976.1139960261.1473363079)
- Calm, Alert and Happy (Dr. Stuart Shanker): Lessons from Research about Young Children – <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ResearchBriefs.pdf>
- Promoting and Supporting Student Well-Being in Ontario – [www.ontario.ca/studentwellbeing](http://www.ontario.ca/studentwellbeing)