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# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO PLAY-BASED LEARNING IN 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 during the school day that is based on a child's natural desire for play. All children enter school capable, competent and ready to learn. Kindergarten will help your child grow physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.

The kindergarten program is organized into four broad areas or “frames.” They 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**

## About Play-Based Learning

Children are naturally curious about the world. They actively explore their environment and the world around them through play. By exploring ideas and language, manipulating objects, acting out roles, or experimenting with materials such as blocks, natural items, playdough and paint – these are some of the ways children learn through play.

Play has an important role in learning and is used to further children's learning in all areas of the kindergarten program. This is how children work out their theories and ideas. Children ask questions naturally. One of the first questions a child asks is “Why?” In trying to find out the answer, children move through the world with curiosity, awe and wonder. In kindergarten, this is called an “inquiry stance.”

Your child will be offered a variety of opportunities for learning through exploration, play and inquiry. Through these experiences, they will develop and grow, in relation to the four “frames” of the kindergarten program.



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

## Supporting Your Child's Learning

Parents are the first teachers for their children, and educators appreciate your involvement in your child's growth and learning at school. Here are some ways you can help:

- Give your child time and opportunity to explore at home and in your community. Children use all of their senses to discover the world around them.
- Ask your child questions about the things they are interested in.
- Find out what your child is exploring at school and look for ways to build on their curiosity.
- Share information with the educators about your child's interests.

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

### ...at home

- Give your child tasks that encourage them to make discoveries or solve simple problems. For instance, a laundry basket of socks lets your child explore ways to organize, sort, match, count and practice folding and rolling up socks. This helps your child to accomplish a task by giving them the opportunity to problem solve and learn about their own abilities.
- Encourage your child to try new things and make choices.

### ...in the community

- Pay attention to what captures your child's interest and attention. Ask questions or offer comments about their discoveries.
- Be aware of the sensory information your child is receiving through noises, smells, sights and textures. Use this sensory information to talk with your child, e.g., "Did you notice that smell? What do you think it is?"

### ...in conversations with your child

- Ask open-ended questions rather than questions with a "yes" or "no" answer:
  - "what would happen if..." encourages predicting
  - "how might we find out..." encourages analyzing
  - "I wonder why or how..." encourages asking more questions.
- Ask about school in a way that encourages your child to describe what they are doing there:
  - "What kinds of things were you doing today in kindergarten?"
  - "Where were you and who was with you?"
  - "What area or space was the best area for your exploring and research today?"
  - "Did you make any discoveries or run into any challenges/problems?"
  - "Were you inside or outside? What things did you use to play with to help you when you were exploring?"
  - "Do you have any plans that you want to work on? Is there anything we can do at home to help you?"

## More Information for parents

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

- 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)
- Promoting and Supporting Student Well-Being in Ontario – [www.ontario.ca/studentwellbeing](http://www.ontario.ca/studentwellbeing)