



**HAMILTON**  
COUNTY  
SCHOOLS



# *Ready, Set,* **KINDERGARTEN!**



**DRAFT**



Special thanks to our friends at the Creative Discovery Museum for their collaboration on this book and their continued commitment to early childhood learning.

[www.cdmfun.org](http://www.cdmfun.org)

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## Message from the Superintendent



Hamilton County Schools welcomes you and your student as you both embark upon the adventurous journey that lies ahead in Kindergarten. Hamilton County Schools is proud to have \_\_\_ elementary schools across the district. Our Kindergarten teachers take pride in having the opportunity to be the first teachers that your students will encounter. The instruction that our teachers have in store for your students will focus on advancing their development academically, emotionally, and socially. Within the first few weeks of school, you will notice an increase in independence in your child and the

windows of their minds open up as they are filled with various types of learning. Your kindergartner will start to get ready for their future and wonder about all that they can be and do when they grow up. Hamilton County Schools believes in the success of all of our students and are dedicated to helping them reach their highest potential. We are committed to and invested in your student's future. Our teachers will strive daily to prepare your students to be future ready each day of school by encouraging their academic, social, and personal development. Every effort that you make and that we make together invests in the future of our children, our community and our future. Welcome to Hamilton County Schools and welcome to Kindergarten!

Dr. Bryan Johnson  
Superintendent



Hamilton County Schools creates  
**pathways to bright futures for all**  
**students** in our community by equipping  
them with the **skills, knowledge and**  
**supports** required to realize their **full**  
**potential!**



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# How to Use the *Ready, Set, KINDERGARTEN!* Booklet

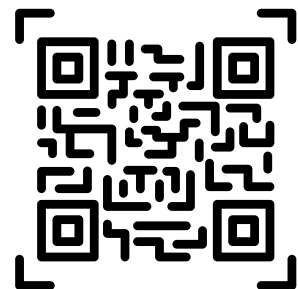
Preparing for kindergarten is an important task, but it doesn't have to be stressful. The tips in this book are designed to be included in your everyday conversation and quality time with your student. This booklet will cover 8 learning areas (listed on page \_\_) to help you both be prepared for the first day of school and beyond. Make it a fun opportunity to spend time together and help children feel competent and confident as they start their new adventure.

Each learning area contains an activity, instructions, and helpful information for parents and caregivers. Look for the "*Ready, set, INSTRUCTIONS*" in each section to understand the activity.

## ***Parent Pit Stop***

For each activity, you'll find information about why the activity is important for your student's development and preparation for Kindergarten. You'll also find examples of additional ways to practice the skill at home.

**Once you're done with the booklet, scan this QR code using your smart phone's camera to tell us what you think!**





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# What Does It Mean To Be Kindergarten Ready?

Kindergarten is a critical time in building a foundation for your child to become a successful reader, critical thinker, and independent student. There are eight areas of learning and development that kindergarteners will focus on during their first year of school, and having an introduction to these skills before the first day will help set students up for success. Kindergarten readiness looks different for every child, so it's important to use these tips as a guide to help meet your child's unique needs.

## Kindergarten Readiness Skills:

1

### **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Learning to express feelings helps young students manage their emotions.

2

### **SHAPES**

Knowing shapes helps kindergartners identify and organize information.

3

### **COLORS & PATTERNS**

Recognizing colors and patterns helps kindergartners identify, create, and learn math concepts.

4

### **LETTERS & WRITING**

Knowing the alphabet and learning to write helps kindergartners further develop language skills, key to reading and communicating.

5

### **COUNTING**

Basic counting is fundamental in developing more detail math skills.

6

### **FINE MOTOR SKILLS**

Fine motor skills involve the coordination of hands muscles and help kindergartners develop writing skills.

7

### **GROSS MOTOR SKILLS**

Gross motor skills involve the use of muscles throughout the body and help kindergartners strengthen their body.

8

### **INDEPENDENCE**

Developing independence helps kindergartners grow in confidence and self-esteem.

# *READY, SET,* **KINDERGARTEN!**

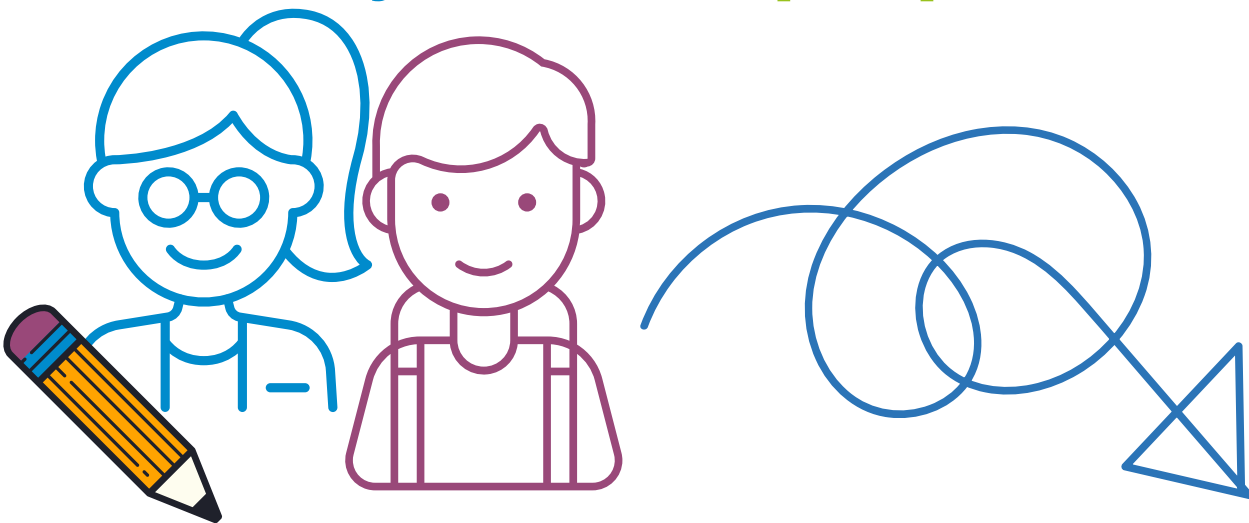
You're going to **kindergarten!**

You'll have *so much fun!*

The **adventure** starts  
long before **school has begun.**

Some children get **nervous,**  
*some excited,* **some scared.**

Let's **get ready** together  
so you'll feel **prepared!**



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# I am Ready for Kindergarten!

Check off a circle for each activity that you do.

## Kindergarten Readiness Skills:

**I CAN SAY  
HOW I FEEL**

**I CAN COUNT  
TO 30**

**I CAN NAME  
MY SHAPES**

**I CAN WRITE  
MY NAME  
AND CUT**

**I KNOW MY  
COLORS**

**I CAN  
EXERCISE  
MY BODY**

**I CAN WRITE  
LETTERS**

**I CAN  
DO THINGS  
MYSELF**

# Social Emotional Learning

1

We all have **feelings**,  
(yes, *even you!*).

Sometimes they **make us feel good**,  
and sometimes they make us feel **blue**.

*It's okay to feel sad,*  
or **frustrated and mad**,  
but learning how to **breathe**  
can **help put us at ease**.



## **Parent Pit Stop**

Self-Regulation is the ability to recognize and manage your emotions and behaviors in different settings and activities. Children who learn to regulate their emotions have an easier time making friends, handle disappointment better, relate more successfully with peers and adults, and are less impulsive. Here are some other ways you can help your child learn to self-regulate:

- Have your child lie on their back on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on their stomach. When they inhale and exhale rapidly have them notice what happens to the stuffed animal. Then have the child slow their breathing and notice what happens to the stuffed animal.
- Use a flower and a pinwheel as another visual for how to take a deep breath. Take a big breath through the nose to smell the flower, and a release that breath to blow the pinwheel.
- While your child is calm, teach them about how a thermometer works. Using the thermometer as a visual, show them how emotions can effect changes and can intensify (heat up) or relax (cool down) based on the level of emotion they are feeling. Remind them of this visual when they need help self-regulating.

**Ready, set, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING:**

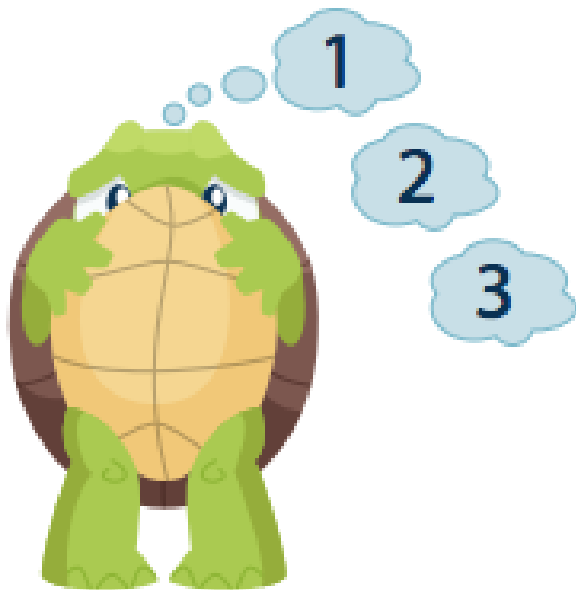
1. Pretend you're a turtle who's feeling frustrated or upset!
2. Follow the steps below to practice helping yourself calm down and feel better.
3. Remember this strategy the next time you're feeling a strong emotion.



**Step 1.** Recognize your feelings.



**Step 2.** Stop your body.



**Step 3.** Tuck inside your shell and take three deep breaths.



**Step 4.** Come out when you are calm and think of a solution.

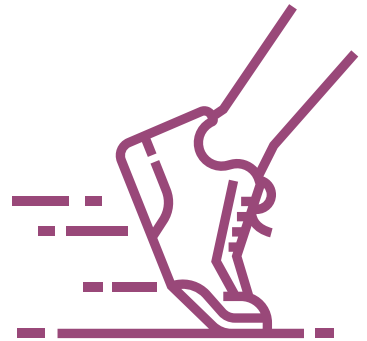


# Shapes

2

Get in **position**,  
for **shape-finding fun**.

Can you **name the shapes**  
as you **point to each one**?



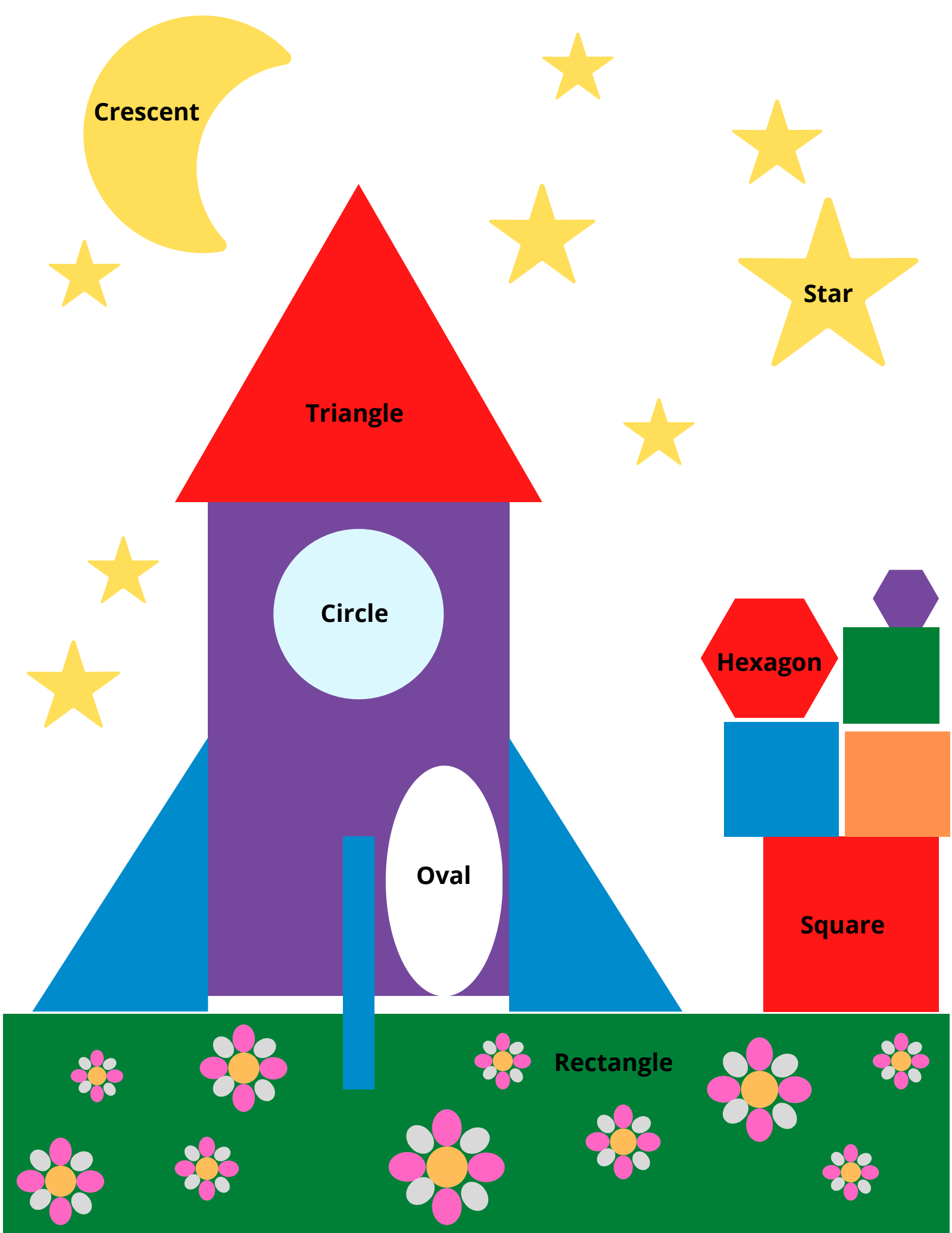
## Ready, set, SHAPES:

1. Point at each different shape on the next page.
2. Name each shape as you go! They could be: triangles, circles, squares, rectangles, stars, or ovals, and there's even a hexagon and a crescent! Can you find them all?

## **Parent Pit Stop**

Recognizing, naming, and sorting shapes are important geometry skills that will help children become successful with math and special engineering concepts throughout their school years. Here are some other ways to explore shapes:

- Practice finding shapes at home and around the community. Point out and describe shapes in the environment, such as a rectangular door with two long sides and two short sides or round circle wheels.
- Build with simple blocks and discuss the shapes, number of sides, and how they fit together. Use directional words like 'behind', 'beside', 'above', and 'below.'
- Make sandwiches, JELL-O jigglers, or cookies in different shapes. Ask your child which shape he or she would like to eat.
- Cut shapes and encourage your child to create pictures and patterns of their own.



Crescent

Triangle

Circle

Oval

Rectangle

Hexagon

Square

Star

# Colors and Patterns

3

So many *buttons*:

Red, yellow, green, purple, blue!

Can you **press each color**?

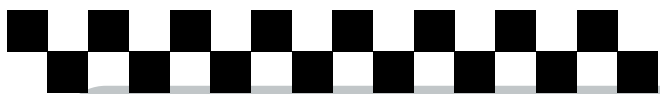
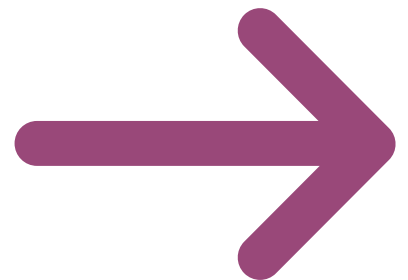
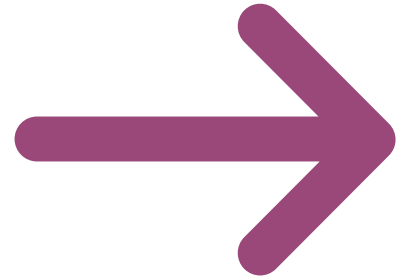
what could **each button** do?

These **buttons** *make patterns*,

and **patterns** are *fun*!

See the **colors repeating**?

Can you guess the **next one**?



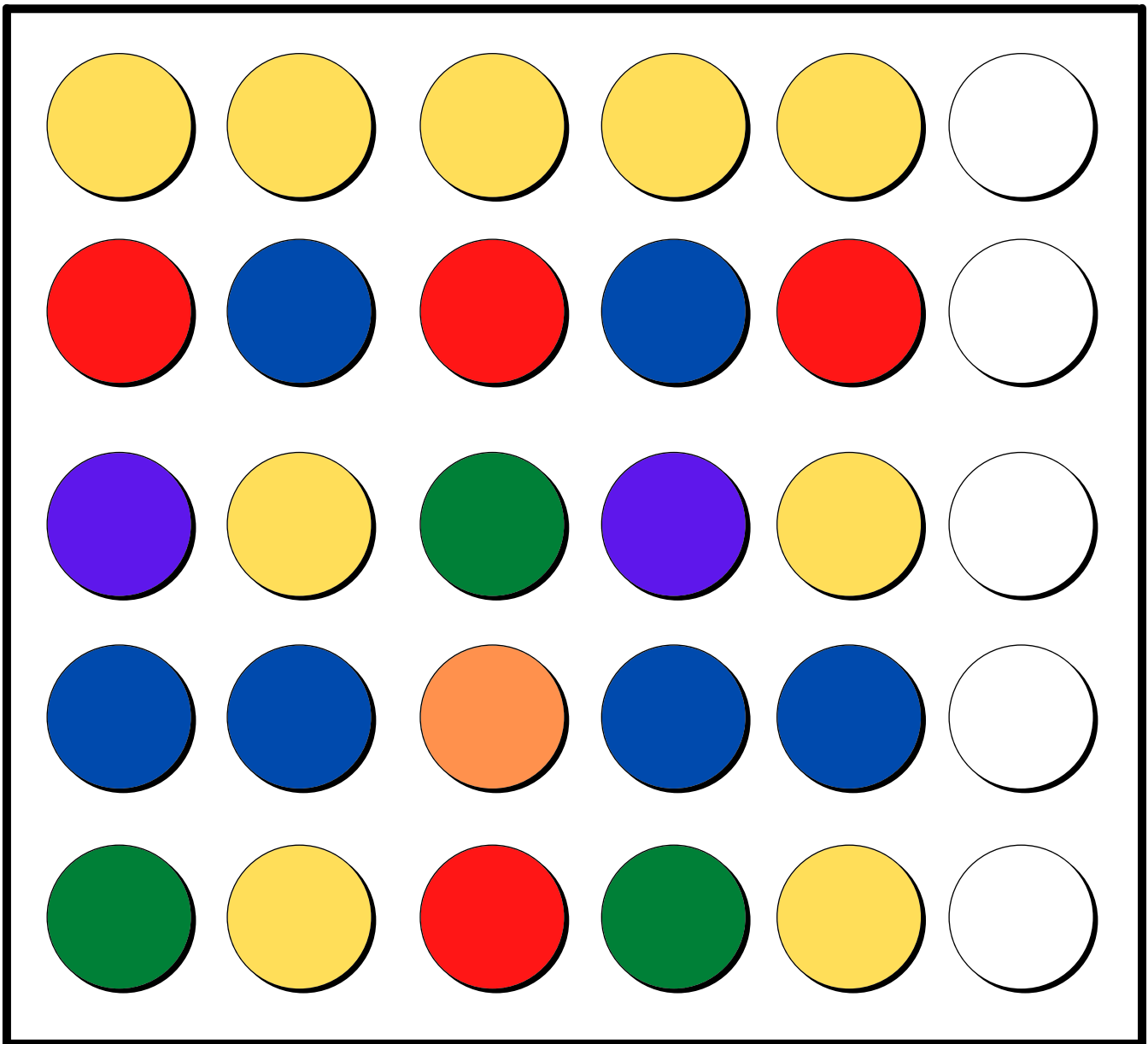
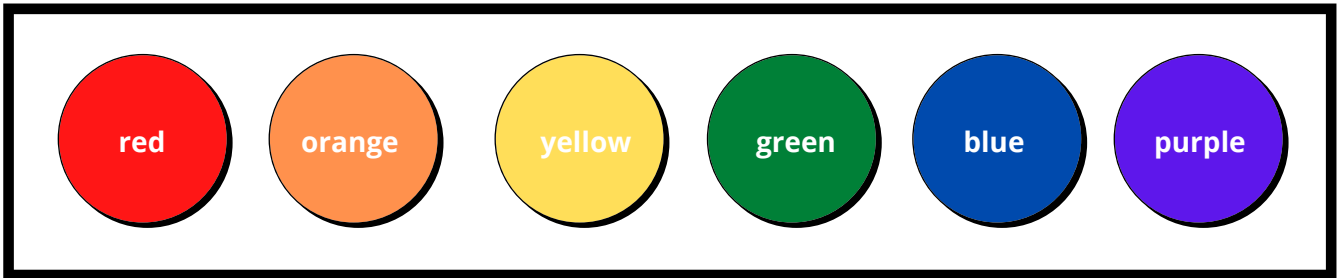
## ***Parent Pit Stop***

Color recognition is an important basic skill which will help children learn about and describe the world around them. They can also learn to sort and classify things using colors. Understanding patterns (with colors, but also with shapes, letters, even sounds) is valuable for the development of predicting skills, problem solving, number sense and more.

- Use different art supplies (watercolors, finger paint, play dough) to create with your child. Discuss the colors used, and provide opportunities to experiment with mixing colors.
- Pour a box of baking soda into a tray, then mix vinegar with food coloring and use eye droppers to drip into the dry baking soda. Watch the colors fizz.
- Let your child make a multicolor tissue paper or construction paper collage.
- String beads of different colors and show your child how to make a pattern with colors.

**Ready, set, COLORS & PATTERNS:**

1. In the first box, press each color button and name them as you go.
2. In the second box, figure out what color button should be in the white circle by following the pattern in each line.



# Letters and Writing

4

In school you'll be **learning**  
**to write** and **to read**,  
and these are the  
*26 letters you'll need.*

Sing the **ABC song**  
and **follow along!**

Touch each **letter**  
and **say its name.**  
Can you find any  
*that look the same?*



## **Parent Pit Stop**

Learning to read begins long before children start sounding out words on a page. It begins with developing language and vocabulary through conversation and reading to children. Understanding letters as symbols for words and sounds is an important first concept, as well. Here are some ways to help children get ready to read:





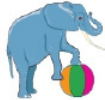
























- Read to and with your child for at least 20 minutes a day. Ask your child questions about who is in the story, what happened, and where it took place; or ask your child to tell you about the story in their own words.
- Look for easily recognizable symbols (brands, restaurant signs, etc.) and play "I Spy" or matching games to help your child understand that visual images can symbolize the names of places and things.
- Look for letters all around. Start with the letters in your child's name, then move on to others. As your child begins recognizing and naming them, begin to talk about the sounds the letters make.
- Work on literacy skills by playing a rhyming game. Start with a word, such as hat or mop, and take turns saying rhyming words until neither of you can think of any more!



**Ready, set, LETTERS:**

1. Follow along the alphabet with your finger.
2. Say each letter out loud as you touch it. Use the pictures to help you!

# The Alphabet

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <br>Aa   | <br>Bb   | <br>Cc   | <br>Dd   | <br>Ee   |
| <br>Ff   | <br>Gg   | <br>Hh   | <br>Ii   | <br>Jj   |
| <br>Kk   | <br>Ll   | <br>Mm   | <br>Nn  | <br>Oo   |
| <br>Pp | <br>Qq | <br>Rr | <br>Ss | <br>Tt |
| <br>Uu | <br>Vv | <br>Ww | <br>Xx | <br>Yy |
| <br>Zz | <br>sh | <br>ch | <br>th |   |

# Letters and Writing

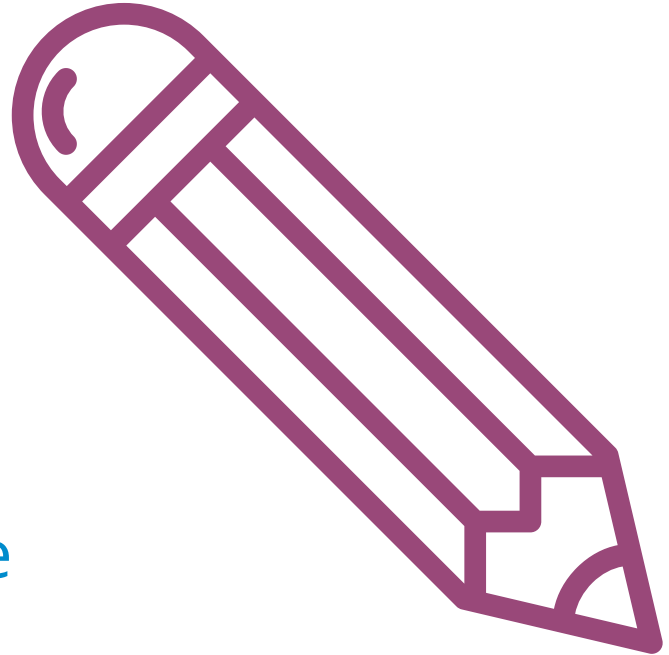
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You know your **letters!**

**Hooray for you!**

Now you can start to *make them* too!

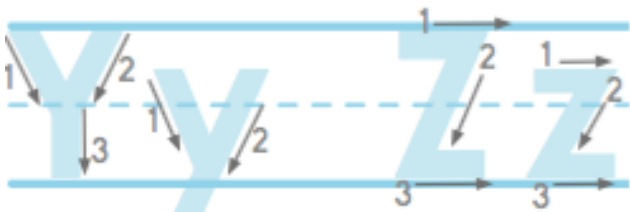
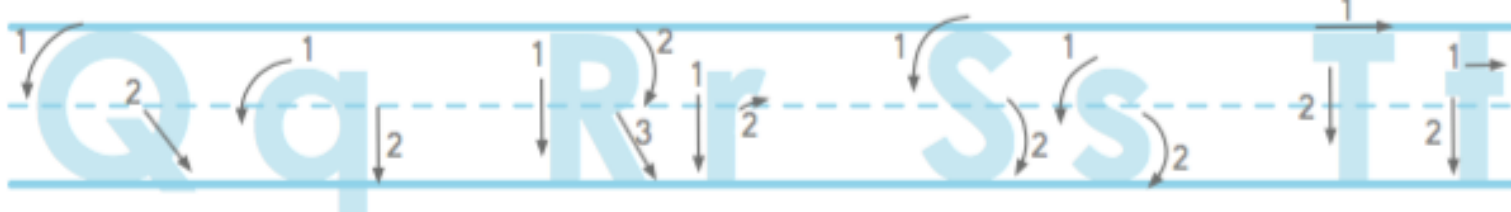
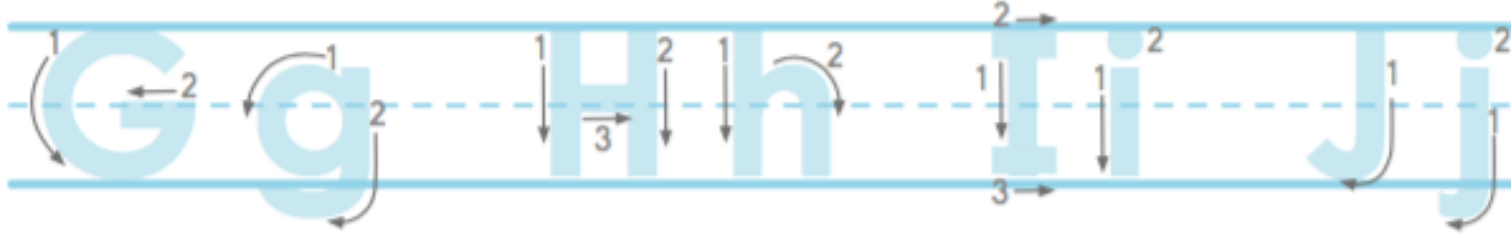
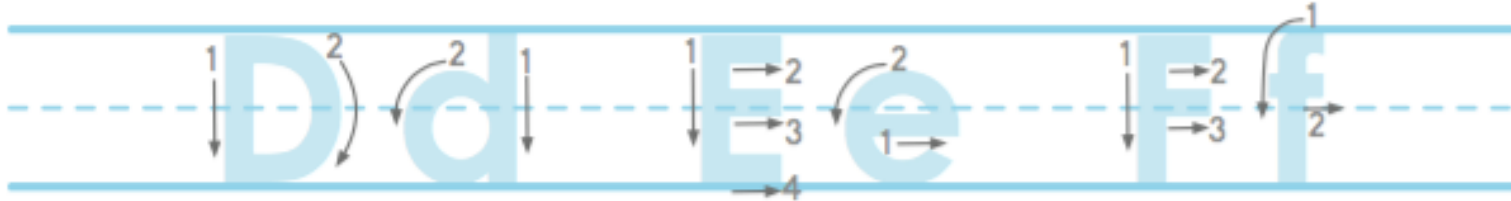
From **top to bottom** and **left to right**, the letters you create are a *wonderful sight!*



## **Parent Pit Stop**

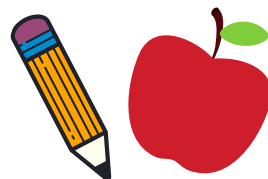
Even before children start writing, there are things they can do to build the fine motor skills they will need to control a pencil in kindergarten. Here are ways to encourage your young writer every step of the way!

- Provide tongs, tweezers, chopsticks and scissors to work the same muscles used for writing. Give your child small items such as beans and ask them to pick up the item using the provided tool and move to another location.
- Give your child fun, sensory-rich ways to practice writing letters, like finger painting, molding play dough or shaping pipe cleaners.
- Write a letter on a piece of paper, slip it inside a plastic bag, and let your child trace over it with dry erase markers. Try putting your child's name to trace too.
- Put hair gel, paint or pudding inside of a plastic bag, seal it closed, and encourage your child to write letters or words with his or her fingers.



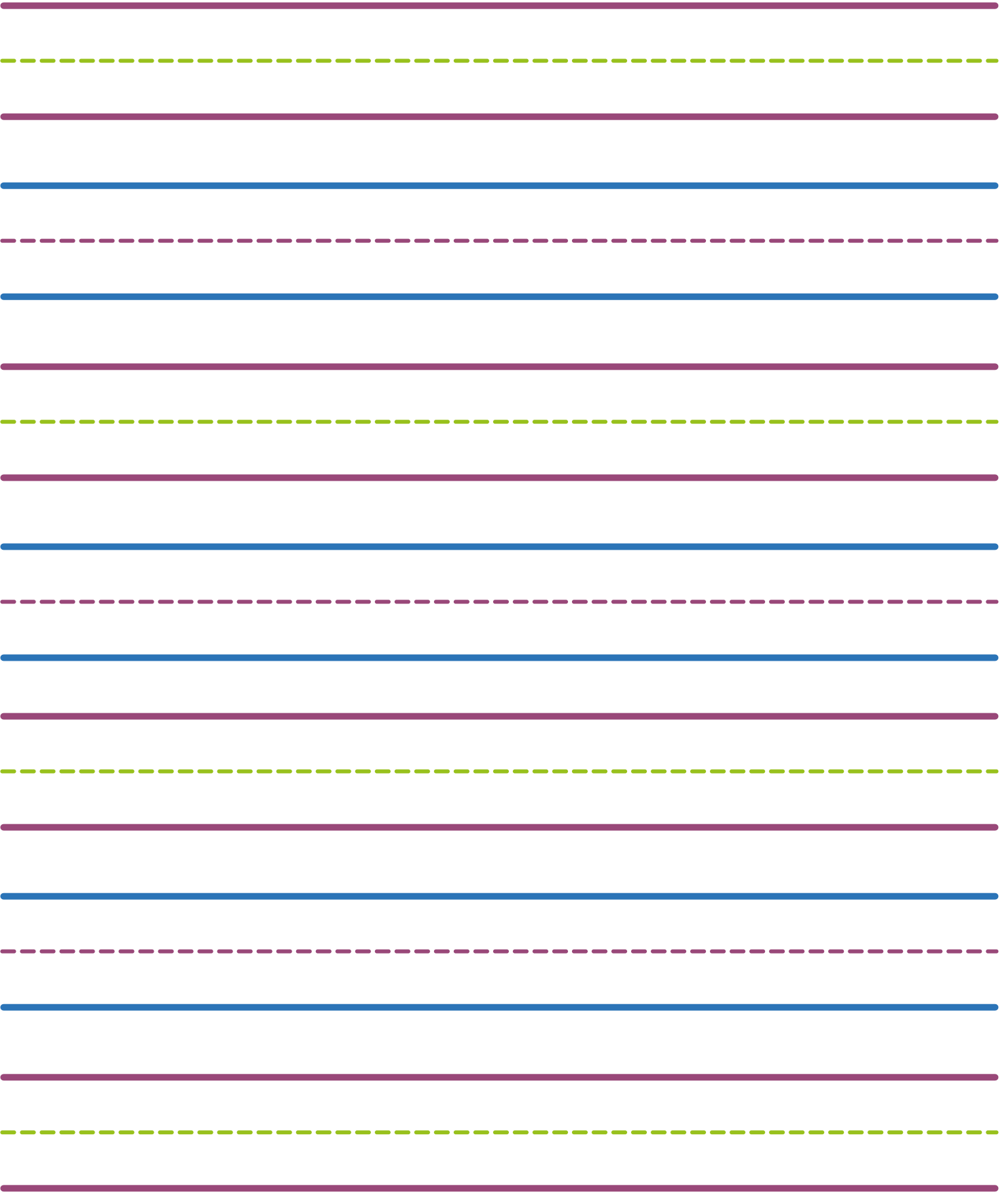
**Ready, set, WRITING:**

1. Follow the arrows and use your pencil to trace each letter.
2. Use the blank pages to practice writing letters all on your own!



Practice writing your name

The page contains ten sets of horizontal lines for handwriting practice. Each set consists of three lines: a solid purple line at the top, a dashed green line in the middle, and a solid blue line at the bottom. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.



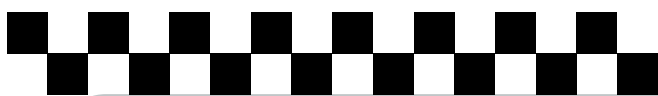


Can you **count down the days** until *school begins*?

Or **count up the things** you might **see with your friends**?

Use **your fingers** to count, just start with *one*.

Point to **each number**; **isn't this fun**?



## ***Parent Pit Stop***

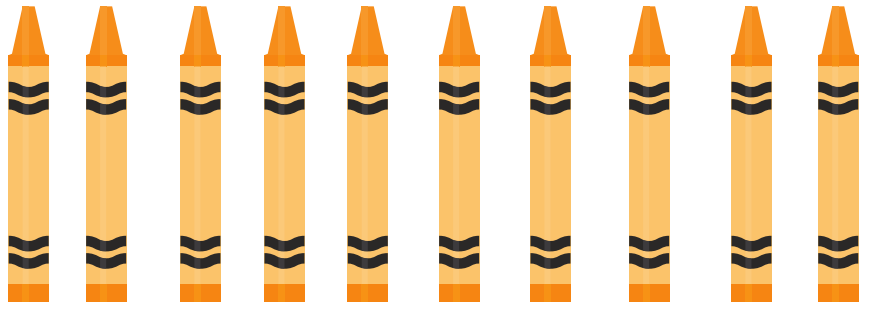
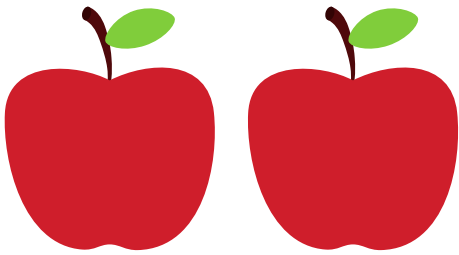
Being able to sort objects, solve puzzles, count to 30, and recognize numbers 1-10 will give children a foundation for "Big School" math. Here are fun ways to build these skills:

- Help your child "touch count" items by counting while touching each item.
- Ask your child to make small groups of objects (2 blocks, 4 cookies, 3 buttons, etc.). Create simple problems by adding or taking away from the groups, asking "How many are left?" or "How many all together?"
- Challenge your child to a jumping (or other fun activity) contest. Count how many times he or she can jump.
- Ask your child to help sort things into groups by type, size, color, or shape. They can separate the silverware or laundry, or put their toys into groups by size.

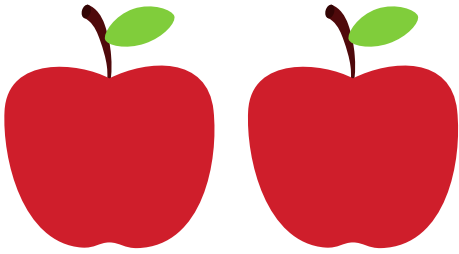
**Ready, set, COUNTING:**

1. Use your fingers to follow along the chart and count to thirty.
2. On the next page, count the items that look the same. How many soccer balls? How many apples? Can you count the total number of items on the page? (Hint: It equals 30!)

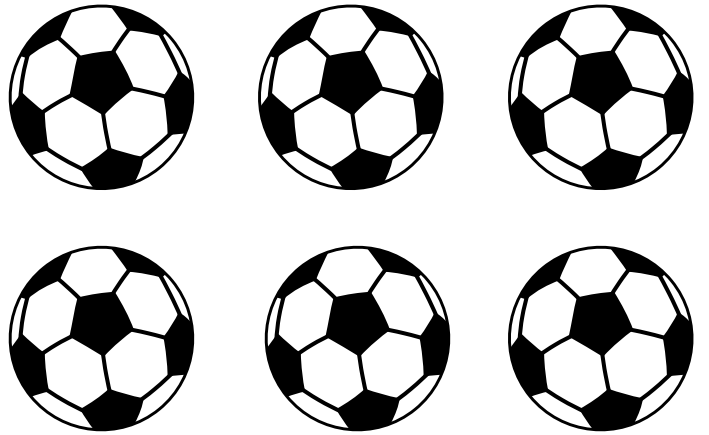
|    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |



10



4



6



7

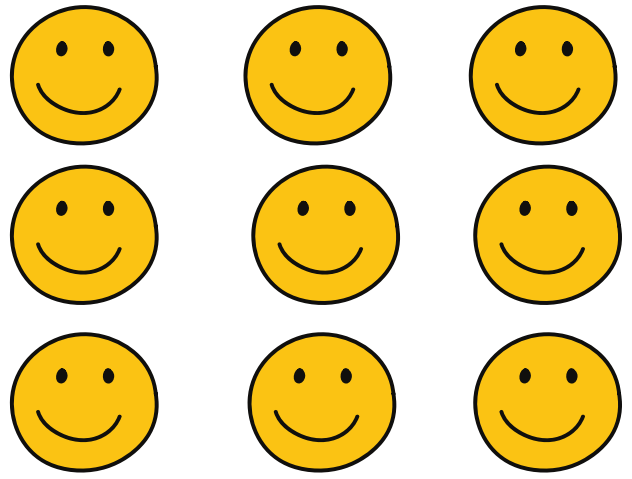


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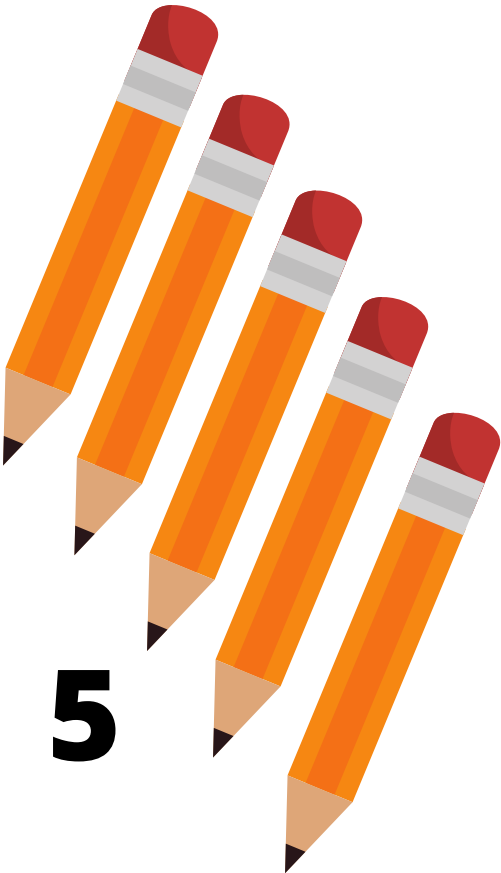


**1**

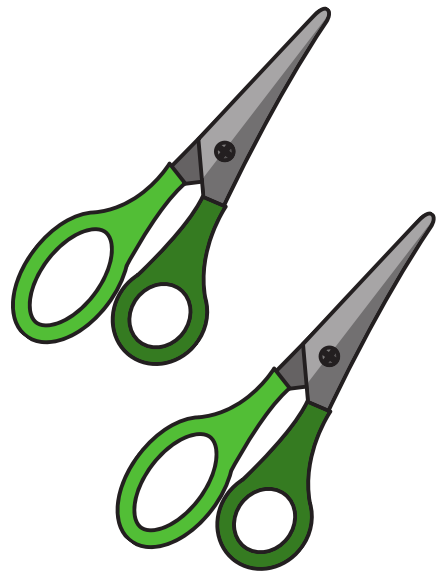
**9**



**8**



**5**



**2**

**Open, shut, open, shut.**

That's the way we **cut, cut, cut.**

**Tuck your elbows** nice and tight,  
Make sure you hold your scissors right.

Fingers on the bottom, thumb on the top,  
*Do not let the paper drop!*

**Hold your scissors straight,** not down,  
*Turn your paper round* and round.

**Open, shut, open, shut.**

That's the way we **cut, cut, cut.**

## **Parent Pit Stop**

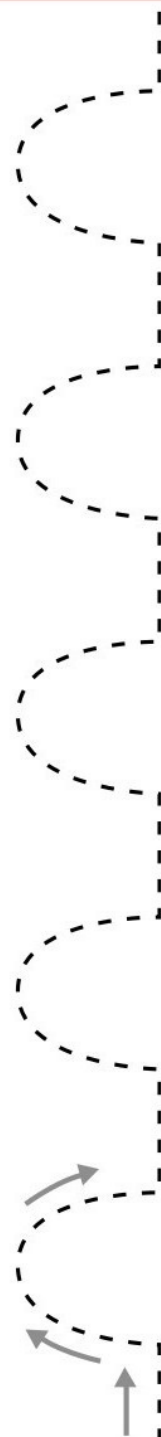
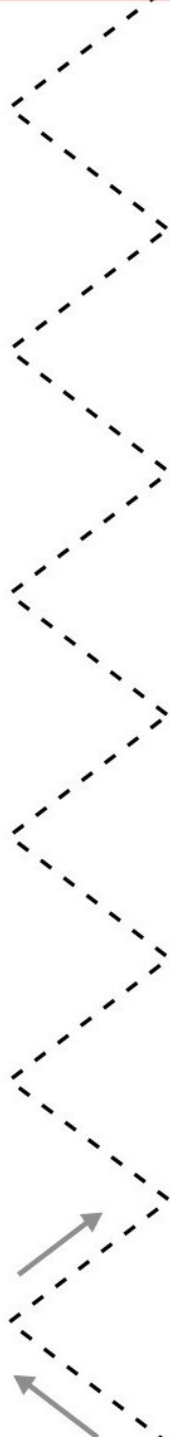
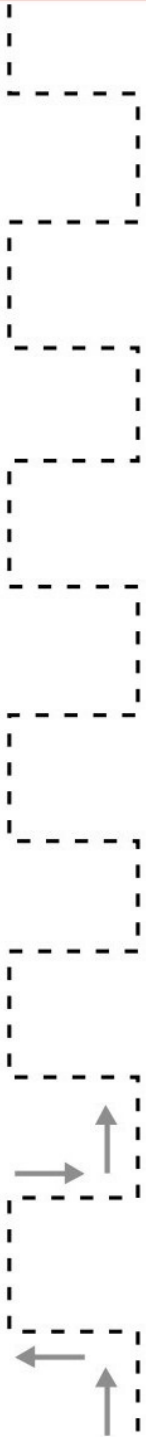
Fine Motor Skills involve the use of smaller muscles of the hands. Fine Motor Skills are essential for performing everyday skills. Strengthening Fine Motor development helps with student independence and confidence. Practice these skills to strengthen little hands:

- Academic Skills include scribbling, coloring, drawing writing with pencils or crayons and cutting with scissors
- Play Skills include constructing with legos or blocks, puzzles, dressing dolls, and making crafts
- Self Care Skills include tying shoes, zipping and buttoning, using eating utensils, opening food packages, dressing and changing cloths and hygiene care such as handing the toilet and washing hands.



# Practice Tracing

F H Z S I



# Gross Motor Skills

7

You're **growing your brain**  
with all that you do!

Your **muscles need growing**  
*to be ready too!*

Go **outside** and *get moving!*  
Climb the stairs. Gallop! HOP!  
Can you **run very fast**  
And then **make a quick stop?**

Draw a **line on the ground**;  
Test your balance—*don't fall!*  
Practice throwing, or catching,  
Or **kicking a ball!**

## **Parent Pit Stop**

Gross motor movement also helps young developing brains grow. When children move, they build their large muscles, gain coordination, and help both sides of their brain work together. Large muscle movement and play also positively impact attention and mood. Other movement activities to try together include:

- Toss balls or beanbags into a basket or bucket
- Practice throwing scarves up into the air and catching them. Try throwing two at a time, or back and forth.
- Visit the playground and spend time climbing, sliding, swinging, and using the seesaws.
- Make a game in which you and your child touch the right hand to the left foot and the left hand to the right foot without moving feet or losing balance.

**Ready, set, GROSS MOTOR SKILLS:**

1. Pick your favorite activity (or choose to do both!).
2. Find a fun, safe place to practice.

## SKIPPING

Skipping helps improve hand eye coordination and balance, and it's really fun! You can use skipping by itself, playing hopscotch, or using a jump rope. To start, try skipping with one leg in the front in the beginning and later on advance to skipping with both feet.

Just like this!



## DANCING



Imitating dance steps from music videos or your favorite shows is super fun teaches large motor skills. Turn on your favorite music and move your body to the beat!

# Independence

8

Some things *at school*  
will be *up to you!*

Like **going through lunch lines**  
and **bathroom breaks** *too!*

Try **dressing yourself;**  
**picking clothes?** *Easy enough!*  
Next help **pick out a place**  
for your *special school stuff.*



## **Parent Pit Stop**

Independence is the primary source of self-esteem, but bustling hallways, crowded buses, and cafeterias can be intimidating. Help children become independent at school by discussing and practicing some basic skills that will allow them to say, "I did it myself!"

- Make sure your child can manipulate the buttons, snaps, laces and zippers on their clothes and shoes. Pick out tomorrow's clothes the night before and make sure all the clothing items are manageable by the child.
- Find a special place in your house to keep your child's backpack and lunch box, display school work, collect important papers, etc.
- Make sure your child can independently manage in the bathroom including handwashing.
- Prepare for lunchtime. Make sure your child can eat independently in a given time period (20-25 minutes). Encourage your child to try new foods and practice opening milk cartons, squeeze pouches, and anything else brought from home.

# Independence

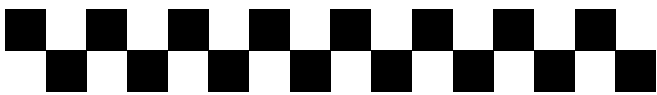
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When you go to school,  
some things will be new.  
To get used to the changes  
there are things you can do:

Some kids ride a bus,  
some go in a car,  
some might even walk  
if it isn't too far.



Talk to your grown up  
So you'll know what to do.  
Your teachers and drivers  
will take care of you!



## **Parent Pit Stop**

One of the more worrisome things for children at the start of school is being unsure about how they will get home. Each school will have their own information to help with this process, but here are some general ways to ease this fear:

- Be at the bus stop early so your child won't get anxious if they don't see you. A parent/adult must meet their kindergartener at the bus stop or the bus driver will return the student to school.
- Reassure your child that the teacher and bus driver want to get everyone home safely.
- Help your child memorize their full name, phone number, and your full name.
- Take walks around the neighborhood and practice spotting your house as you get close. Point out special features that will help your child distinguish it from any other house when the bus stops.

# Ready, Set, Kindergarten!

---

Your **teachers will help** as you start your **new** school. Try to follow directions and listen to rules.

You'll be part of a class with other girls and boys. You'll have so many chances to **be kind** and share toys.

No one in your classroom will be quite the same, Though they may have the same lunchbox, same shoes or same name!

You'll bring pencils and paper, things you buy on a shelf, but the best thing you can bring is your **OWN SPECIAL** self!



A group of diverse young children are smiling and looking towards the camera. They are standing in front of a yellow school bus. The words "SCHOOL BUS" are visible on the side of the bus. The text "first day ready" is overlaid in large white letters at the bottom of the image.

# first day ready

**Kindergarten can be a big change for both children and parents. Below are some helpful tips for families to navigate the transition.**

### **Registration:**

- Make sure you have all the necessary documents on hand before you get started
  - 2 proofs of residence
  - Student's birth certificate
  - Student's TN Immunization Form and physical documentation
- Register your student online at [www.hcde.org](http://www.hcde.org):
  - Go to Families & Students then Registration Information.

### **Will my child need to take a test?**

Kindergarten screenings ensure a child is developmentally ready to start kindergarten and to determine whether any additional classroom support may be needed. They also provide an opportunity for you and your student to become familiar with the school and for the school to meet your child. A prospective kindergartner will typically meet with a teacher alone or in a group for about 20 to 30 minutes and will be assessed for basic kindergarten readiness skills

### **What will my child learn?**

Kindergarten is a critical time to lay the foundation for becoming a successful learner. Your child will learn:

- Recognizing and name upper and lower case letters
- Beginning reading skills
- Early writing skills
- Beginning mathematics (counting to 100, identifying and writing numbers and shapes, etc)
- Introduction to science and social studies
- Strengthening oral skills
- Involvement in Art and music



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## What can I expect the first week?

Your student will participate in a phase-in process scheduled by your school. This means your student will not start school full time right away. This allows your student a chance to acclimate to a new environment and/or reacquaint themselves. It offers each child an opportunity to feel a sense of security and build trust within the classroom. Contact your school for the phase-in schedule.

It's going to be hard to say goodbye to your child on the first day of school, and that is okay! Your child will experience lots of emotions about the first week of school, too.

Don't be surprised if there aren't a lot of academics going on the first week. The first week is about building relationships and learning classroom expectations.

Expect important communications from your school about the school year, so make sure they have your most current contact information. Follow the school's social media page and website for the most current information.

## What do teachers want you to know?

- Teachers are excited to be partners in your child's education!
- Keeping lines of communication open throughout the school year will be key to the teacher-family partnership.
- This is a great time to start having conversations with your child about what they did during the day. Ask specific questions and encourage your child to share their curiosity and learning with you.
- Learning at home is critical. Read to your child for 20 minutes a day and encourage writing exploration.
- The more self-control your child has, the more successful they will be in school. Children need practice in deciding how and when to express their feelings. Help develop and practice those skills at home.



# District Resources

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## School Nutrition

Nutritious meals are available to all students, and some families may be able to receive free or discounted breakfast and lunch meals. Call (423) 498-7275

\*This summer, free meals are available at designated pickup sites for all children ages 0-18 thanks to funding from the USDA.

## Transportation

Safe and efficient transportation is available to students to and from school each day. Call (423) 498-5555 or check our bus stop locator.

## School Age Childcare

Low-cost before and after school care is available to families. Call (423) 893-3530

## Family Resource Center

Our Family Resource Center serves as a hub for high-quality services that empower families. Follow us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HCSFRC](http://www.facebook.com/HCSFRC)

## HCS EdConnect

Free high-speed internet is available to qualifying Hamilton County School families. Ask your school about enrolling!

## Exceptional Education

Eligible students have access to services such as small group instruction, special classes, vocational training, enrichment classes, and home-bound schooling. Call (423)498-7113

## Social Emotional Learning and Support

Students have access to direct and indirect SEL services such as lessons through PureEdge, career exploration, counseling, and mental health referrals.

**HCS offers rich engagement opportunities that empower families to be full partners in their child's education such as:**

## Parent University

Information and resources for families to support their student's social emotional and academic well-being.

## Back to School Bash

An annual event held on the Saturday before the first day of school providing school supplies for families.

## Our Learning Communities

Each school is part of a Learning Community, building collaboration and stronger relationships around schools. Visit [https://www.hcde.org/academics/our\\_learning\\_communities](https://www.hcde.org/academics/our_learning_communities) to learn more about schools in your learning community or send an email to:

[harrisonbay@hcde.org](mailto:harrisonbay@hcde.org)  
[midtown@hcde.org](mailto:midtown@hcde.org)  
[missionaryridge@hcde.org](mailto:missionaryridge@hcde.org)  
[northriver@hcde.org](mailto:northriver@hcde.org)  
[rockpoint@hcde.org](mailto:rockpoint@hcde.org)

## District Communications

Important communications are sent regularly to families by phone, text, and email. Make sure to keep your information current in PowerSchool!

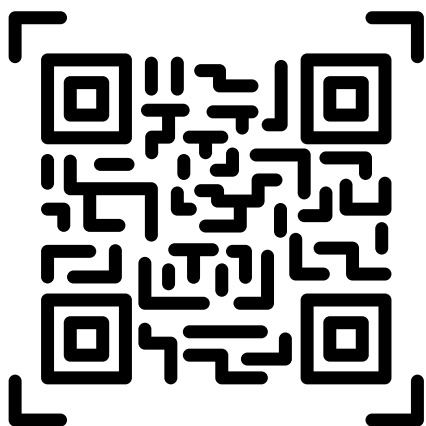
## HCS Mobile App

Access to HCS resources on your phone! Search for "Hamilton County Schools" in Google Play or iTunes.

## PowerSchool Mobile App

Parents can log in and see all of their student information in one place. Search for "PowerSchool Mobile" in Google Play or iTunes.

Find all of these resources at: [www.hcde.org](http://www.hcde.org)





***Ready, Set,***  
**KINDERGARTEN!**

## Stay in Touch:



@HAMILTONCOUNTYSCHOOLS

@HAMCOSCHOOLS

@HAMILTONCOUNTYSCHOOLS



[www.hcde.org](http://www.hcde.org)