

Learning Circle Preschool

The mission of Learning Circle Preschool, Inc. is to create child-centered, individualized, developmentally appropriate programs serving preschool children and their families.



Important Dates

March 25	Bubbleology (Invite Friends!)
March 31	Multicultural Lunch 11:30 am
April 12	Membership Meeting 7:30 pm (mandatory)
April 14-21	No School—Spring Recess
May 25	Museum Night
May 29	No School – Memorial Day
June 1 & 2	End of Year Picnics
June 6 & 7	Last Day of School

Thanks for Your Generosity

LCP Board members and staff would like to thank all the parents for their generosity during the annual auction. We raised over \$6300 for our school! The auction would not have been such a success without the meticulous organizing of Nicole Solimini, the hard work of the board volunteers, or the creativity of the teachers and children. Thank you for giving items for the baskets and getting gift cards. The money raised in the auction is used:

- to fund “extra curricular” activities that enhance children’s learning,
- to make improvements to the school, and
- to purchase learning supplies and materials.

Your generosity improves our child’s educational experience. We are so grateful to be part of a school community that is as generous and dedicated to making LCP the best learning environment. *THANK YOU!* 😊



Exploring Science & Nature

LCP is dedicated to enhancing children’s knowledge about science and nature. The teachers accomplish this by providing numerous opportunities for children to get “up close and personal” with animals, gardening, and science experiments. These opportunities peak children’s curiosity and build their core knowledge about science and nature. You can tell from the pictures that children LOVE these activities!





“Roots & Wings”

In this section of the newsletter, we describe what the research says about key aspects of child development and provide everyday tips to help your child thrive.

Transitioning to kindergarten (or 1st grade) can be a scary time for children and families. You might be wondering whether your child is “ready” for the academic demands of formal school. As parents, we have been talking about this at board meetings, play dates, and birthday parties. Most parents are wondering, “What will the kindergarten teacher expect my child to know and be able to do academically? And how can I get them ready to meet these expectations.”

Here’s a brief summary of what the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework (2011) says children should have mastered by the end kindergarten year.

- Be able to count and recognize numbers from 1-20
- Be able to sit quietly in a group and listen to an entire story
- Be able to recognize all 26 letters of the alphabet
- Be able to hold a writing utensil and make a meaningful mark (like a circle, X, and some letters)
- Be able to recognize and write their name
- Be able to verbally express their thoughts and feelings
- Be able to categorize and compare objects/patterns that are the same or different
- Be able to recognize the beginning sounds of words (like “h” sound at the beginning of hat)
- Be able to recognize rhyming words
- Be able to recognize common environmental print (like street signs) and symbol/icons
- Be able to recognize “sight” words (that your teacher will provide a list of once your child is in school)
- Be able to walk quietly in a line down the hallway
- Be able to raise their hand before speaking

Chances are your child can do most of these things already, and they will master the rest by the end of kindergarten. For more information, I have also included a handout from the National Parent Teacher Association that talks more about how to help your child succeed during their kindergarten year. We hope you find this information helpful as your family transitions to formal school.





Teacher Spotlight

In this newsletter, we highlight the work of our Nuthatch teachers. We want to thank Kayla and Stacey for their great work!

How Can I Help My Child Get “Ready” for Kindergarten?

Enjoy Reading Together

Reading books together (aka “shared reading”) is one of the most important things parents can do to ensure their children are ready for kindergarten. Shared reading strengthens their vocabulary, shows them examples of print, builds their knowledge about the world, enhances their imagination, and exposes them to the rhythm and sound of written language read aloud. My advice is to aim to enjoy at least 2-3 books throughout the day. Be flexible with how you do this: Sometimes you can read the book and sometimes let the child “pretend to read” by describing the pictures in the book and retelling the story. Fostering a genuine enjoyment of reading is one of the most important things you can do to get your child ready for school.

What If Your Child Does Not Like Reading?

If your child does not like reading, then “playfully coax” them into reading by offering them the chance to enjoy books or magazines about things they do enjoy—maybe spiders, sports, or super heroes. First, let them fully engage in the activity they enjoy doing. Then, casually--without any pressure--present a book about a character or activity the child just enjoyed. In these cases, be satisfied with just reading one book per day and know that you might have to read little sections of the same book throughout the day. When you are reading together, let the child take the lead by talking about what they think is happening in the story or by

letting them ask *lots* of questions. Don’t set the expectation that they have to “sit quietly and listen” because they might become disinterested. The goal is to build their *enjoyment* of reading. If the shared reading is fun and low-key, you will eventually coax them into enjoying more and more books.

Build their Social-Emotional Skills

Remember, the most important thing kindergarten teachers want to see in children is strong social-emotional skills. Your child will be successful if they know how to handle their emotions, listen to the teacher, get along with their peers, verbally express their thoughts and feelings, and manage self-care tasks independently. Rest assured that your child received a solid foundation in these social-emotional skills at LCP. LCP’s philosophy and curriculum is aligned with all the knowledge in developmental psychology and early education that emphasizes how strong social-emotional skills are the foundation for academic learning. Everything your child does at LCP, including pretend play, joint storytelling, storybook reading, art work, and group projects, provide the foundation for those social-emotional skills that will help children succeed in kindergarten. Our last board newsletter talked about this in detail, and suggested games and activities to foster these skills.





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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

KINDERGARTEN

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of kindergarten in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K–12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 1st grade.

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents, and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students.

Of course, high standards are not the only thing needed for our children's success. But standards provide an important first step — a clear roadmap for learning for teachers, parents, and students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed. Standards help parents and teachers know when students need extra assistance or when they need to be challenged even more. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

You should use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. You can do this by talking to his or her teacher regularly about how your child is doing — beyond parent-teacher conferences.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in kindergarten
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

Learning new language skills is a hallmark of kindergarten. Your child will learn about the alphabet and its role in reading. Your child will practice rhyming, matching words with beginning sounds, and blending sounds into words. Practice with these types of activities is a powerful step toward learning to read and spell correctly. The size of your child's vocabulary is another key factor in his or her ability to read and comprehend books and stories. Your child also will begin to experiment with writing and will be encouraged to use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing letters to share information, ideas, and feelings.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in Kindergarten

- Naming upper- and lower-case letters, matching those letters with their sounds, and printing them
- Comparing the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories, such as fairy tales and folktales
- Retelling familiar stories and talking about stories read to them using details from the text
- Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to describe an event, including his or her reaction to what happened
- Stating an opinion or preference about a topic or book in writing (e.g., "My favorite book is . . .")
- Taking part in classroom conversations and following rules for discussions (e.g., learning to listen to others and taking turns when speaking)
- Speaking clearly to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, including descriptions of familiar people, places, things, and events
- Asking and answering questions about key details in stories or other information read aloud
- Understanding and using question words (e.g., *who, what, where, when, why, how*) in discussions
- Learning to recognize, spell, and properly use those little grammatical words that hold the language together (e.g., *a, the, to, of, from, I, is, are*)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In kindergarten, these include:

- Using knowledge of letters and letter-sound correspondences to figure out how to spell words as they sound
- Reading and understanding a story designed for early readers

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

Mathematics

Young children arrive in kindergarten with widely varying knowledge in math. By the end of the year, your child must have some important foundations in place. One of the most important skills your child should develop is the ability to add and subtract small numbers and use addition and subtraction to solve word problems. This will rely on gaining some fundamentals early in the year, such as counting objects to tell how many there are. Addition and subtraction will continue to be a very strong focus in math through 2nd grade.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in Kindergarten

- Counting objects to tell how many there are
- Comparing two groups of objects to tell which group, if either, has more; comparing two written numbers to tell which is greater
- Acting out addition and subtraction word problems and drawing diagrams to represent them
- Adding with a sum of 10 or less; subtracting from a number 10 or less; and solving addition and subtraction word problems
- Adding and subtracting very small numbers quickly and accurately (e.g., $3 + 1$)
- Correctly naming shapes regardless of orientation or size (e.g., a square oriented as a “diamond” is still a square)

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In kindergarten, these include:

- Counting to tell the number of objects (this will not be written work; ask the teacher for his or her observations of your child’s progress in this area)
- Solving addition and subtraction word problems

Ask to see a sample of your child’s work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

**Talking to
Your Child’s
Teacher**

Help Your Child Learn at Home

Learning does not end in the classroom. Children need help and support at home to succeed in their studies. Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and carve out time *every day* when your child can concentrate on reading, writing, and math uninterrupted by friends, brothers or sisters, or other distractions.

You should also try and sit down with your child at least once a week for 15 to 30 minutes while he or she works on homework. This will keep you informed about what your child is working on, and it will help you be the first to know if your child needs help with specific topics. By taking these small steps, you will be helping your child become successful both in and outside the classroom.

Additionally, here are some activities you can do with your child to support learning at home:

English Language Arts & Literacy

- Read with your child every day, books like *Are You My Mother* by P.D. Eastman or *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss. Ask your child to explain his or her favorite parts of the story. Share your own ideas. To find more books for your child to read, visit www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf.
- Encourage your child to tell you about his or her day at school. Keep paper, markers, or crayons around the house for your child to write letters or words or draw a picture about his or her day. Have your child describe the picture to you.
- Play word games like *I Spy*, sing songs like *Itsy Bitsy Spider*, and make silly rhymes together.

Mathematics

Look for “word problems” in real life. Some kindergarten examples might include:

- Play “Write the next number.” You write a number, and your child writes the next number.
- Ask your child questions that require counting as many as 20 things. For example, ask, “How many books do you have about wild animals?”
- Ask your child questions that require comparing numbers. “Who is wearing more bracelets, you or your sister?” (Your child might use matching or counting to find the answer.)

For more information, the full standards are available at www.corestandards.org.



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There is still time to donate to the LCP annual campaign!

Only 36% of LCP families have made contributions to the annual giving campaign. We would like to have *all* families participate. Funds are used to supplement operation costs and provide tuition discounts and scholarships. Even small amounts help and are very much appreciated. Please donate!

Learning Circle Preschool

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