Parent Handbook: Preparing for Kindergarten (2025 Edition)

By First 5 Mono

Aligned with California Department of Education's updated **Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLF)**, this handbook supports families as they prepare children for kindergarten. The PTKLF highlights developmental milestones across **social-emotional**, **physical**, **language & literacy**, **mathematics**, **science**, **history–social science**, **visual & performing arts**, **and approaches to learning**. By combining tried-and-true checklists, engaging activities, and research-backed practices, this handbook helps your child feel confident, curious, and ready to thrive in school.

It is the goal of the Mono County Children and Families Commission (First 5 Mono County) and Mammoth Unified School District to inform and assist parents in preparing their child for kindergarten through the use of this handbook and activity book.

The funds for School Readiness programs were acquired through Proposition 10, the Children and Families Act, which directs the revenue from a tax on tobacco products to improving child health, strengthening families, and helping children to be ready to learn by the time they start kindergarten.

This handbook was originally developed by the First 5 San Joaquin County Children and Families Commission and is reprinted with their permission and has been updated in November of 2025 using internet resources. See links on page for sources.

Please use the activity calendars to help prepare your child for the first day of school and the schedule of kindergarten. As you complete each task, let your child put a sticker or draw a smiley face in the square. Try to complete as many activities as you can. Several activities are repeated in order to allow your child more practice with those skills. Feel free to repeat any activities your child enjoys or needs additional practice with. You may also wish to fill in dates once you know when the first day of school is. In addition to these activities, please be sure to read with your child 15 minutes daily.

Questions? We may have the answers!

- First 5 Mono County: 760-924-7626, <u>www.First5mono.org</u>
- Mammoth Unified School District: 760-934-6802, www.mammothusd.org
- Eastern Sierra Unified School District: 760-932-7443, www.esusd.org

Before School Starts: A Kindergarten Checklist for Parents

 their classroom, the library, and the gym. Use positive comments like "Won't it be fun to play on that playground?" At home, help your child know that starting school is a very special event, and calm any fears they may have. Make sure your child knows the teacher's name, the principal's name, and the school's name. You should also know the school's phone number and teacher's email address. 	During the spring, follow the recommended calendars in the back of this packet to help prepare your child for kindergarten.
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Getting Ready for Kindergarten: Skills That Will Make Kindergarten Less Stressful

Necessary

- Knowing how to say your full name
- Listening to a story without interrupting
- Sharing toys and taking turns
- Writing your first name
- Using the restroom independently (allowing enough time, toileting needs, handwashing)
- Unfastening and fastening pants and belt
- Cleaning up after yourself
- Cutting on a line with scissors
- Blowing/wiping your nose
- Putting on and taking off a coat

Helpful

- Raising your hand to ask a question
- Tying your shoes
- Waiting patiently
- Saying please and thank you
- Counting to 10 or 20 or higher; counting 4–10 objects one-to-one
- Saying the alphabet
- Knowing some letters and sounds
- Using glue appropriately
- Knowing colors
- Rhyming and chanting
- Opening a juice box or snack
- Fine-motor skills: holding a pencil correctly; picking up cereal with tweezers
- Large-motor skills: running, jumping, skipping or hopping, kicking a ball

Other things you can do

- Getting ~10 hours of sleep
- Eating a healthy breakfast
- Reading 10–15 minutes each day
- Limiting TV and video games
- Asking guestions to extend language (more than "yes/no" answers)

Readiness Domains: California Department of Education Preschool to Kindergarten Learning Foundations Aligned

(CDE PTKLF)

Physical Well-Being & Motor Skills

Healthy, active, and independent in self-care (toileting, handwashing, dressing). Gross motor (running, hopping, climbing) and fine motor (cutting, drawing) skills support classroom routines. **Parents can help by:** ensuring sleep and nutrition, scheduling checkups, encouraging outdoor play, providing art supplies, and practicing self-help skills.

Language & Literacy Development

Children understand and use words, stories, and songs to express ideas. Listening and speaking build the foundation for reading and writing.

Parents can help by: reading daily, asking open-ended questions, modeling new words, playing rhyming/storytelling games, and encouraging problem-solving with words.

Social & Emotional Development

Children feel safe, confident, and connected; they take turns, share, and follow directions. Self-control, curiosity, and resilience help them thrive.

Parents can help by: arranging playdates, praising cooperation, helping name feelings, setting routines, and modeling kindness.

Early Learning & Academics

Playful exposure to literacy and math helps. Children recognize letters, numbers, colors, and shapes; enjoy books; and show curiosity about how things work.

Parents can help by: pointing out letters and numbers, singing the alphabet, counting objects, encouraging drawing and writing, and exploring how things work.

Visit the School & Ride the Bus

Familiarity makes the first day easier. Children feel confident when they've seen the campus, met staff, and practiced the routine.

Parents can help by: visiting the playground and office, talking about what the first day will be like, practicing the walk or bus ride, and celebrating this milestone.

Quick Questions to Ask Your Child When Reading a Story

- Find the letter ___ on this page.
- Is this story real or make believe? How do you know?
- How do you think this character is feeling right now? Why?
- Find a capital letter on this page.
- What words on this page rhyme?
- Find a short word on this page. Find a long word on this page.
- How many words are on this page?
- Find a word that starts with the same letter as your name.
- Where is the front cover? Where is the back cover? Where is the spine?
- What does the author do? (Writes the words.) What does the illustrator do? (Creates the pictures/photographs.)
- Find a period. Find a question mark. Find an exclamation point.
- How many letters are in this word? What is the first letter? Last letter?
- What do you think will happen next? Were you right?
- Who is the main character? Where should I start reading? Which way do I go?
- What happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story?
- What would you do if ... ?

Book Lists (Classics + Inclusive + Series/Authors)

Classics

- Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner Amy Schwartz
- Awful Aardvarks Go to School Reeve Lindbergh
- Brown Bear, Brown Bear Bill Martin
- Countdown to Kindergarten Allison McGhee
- Don't Eat the Teacher Nick Ward
- First Day Jitters Julie Danneborg
- Good Job, Little Bear Martin Waddell
- Goodnight Moon Margaret Wise Brown
- I Started School Today Karen G. Frandsen
- If You Take a Mouse to School Laura Numeroff
- Kindergarten Rocks Katie Davis
- Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten Joseph Slate
- Mouse Paint Ellen Stoll Walsh
- My Kindergarten Rosemary Wells
- Rainbow Fish Marcus Pfister
- Runaway Bunny Margaret Wise Brown
- Swimmy Leo Lionni

- The Berenstain Bears Go to School Stan & Jan Berenstain
- The Kissing Hand Audrey Penn
- The Night Before Kindergarten Natasha Wing
- Tiptoe into Kindergarten Jacqueline Rogers
- Tom Goes to Kindergarten Margaret Wild
- Welcome to Kindergarten Anne Rockwell
- Where the Wild Things Are Maurice Sendak

New & Inclusive Titles

- The Day You Begin Jacqueline Woodson
- All Are Welcome Alexandra Penfold
- Eyes That Kiss in the Corners Joanna Ho
- Julian Is a Mermaid Jessica Love
- We Don't Eat Our Classmates Ryan T. Higgins

Series & Beloved Authors

- Arthur Marc Brown
- Clifford Norman Bridwell
- Corduroy Don Freeman
- Froggy Jonathan London
- Spot Eric Hill
- Dr. Seuss, Eric Carle, Leo Lionni, Kevin Henkes, Bill Martin, Rosemary Wells, Ezra Jack Keats, Don & Audrey Wood, Pat Hutchins, Jan Brett, Lois Ehlert, Mem Fox

Nursery Rhymes

Identifying and producing rhyming words is a California Standard for Kindergarten. Rhyming is a building block in the pre-reading foundation. When learning to read and write, it is very helpful for your child to be able to know when a rhyme is spoken and to be able to make words rhyme. There are many nursery rhymes. Frequent repetition will help your child to commit nursery rhymes to memory. Your child should be able to supply rhyming words. Listed below are some nursery rhymes that are used at the beginning of the kindergarten school year. Here are some other nursery rhymes: ABC Song, Mary Had a Little Lamb, Pat-a-Cake, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Wheels on the Bus, etc.

Three Little Kittens

Three little kittens lost their mittens;
And they began to cry,
O mother dear,
We very much fear
That we have lost our mittens.
Lost your mittens!
You naughty kittens!
Then you shall have no pie.
Mee-ow, mee-ow.

Hey Diddle Diddle

Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.
Up Jack got and home did trot,
As fast as he could caper.
He went to bed to mend his head
With vinegar and brown paper.
Jill came in and she did grin,
To see Jack's paper plaster.
Mother vexed did whip her next
For causing Jack's disaster.

Itsy, Bitsy Spider

The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the water spout.

Down came the rain and washed the spider out.

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain, And the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the spout again.

London Bridge is Falling Down

London Bridge is falling down, Falling down, falling down, London Bridge is falling down, My fair lady.

Hickory Dickory Dock

Hickory dickory dock.
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one, the mouse ran down.
Hickory dickory dock.

Little Miss Muffet

Little Miss Muffet,
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

What Your Child Will Learn During Kindergarten

California State Standards (PTKLF)

Reading

• Concepts About Print:

- We know the front of the book, the back of the book, and the title page of a book.
- We know that words go from left to right and top to bottom.
- · We know that the words tell us something.
- We know the difference between words and letters.
- We can tell you the names of all the letters in the alphabet, upper and lower case.

• Phonemic Awareness:

- We can say the word slowly and say the sounds of the letters we hear and put two or three of those sounds together.
- We can say the word slowly then change to a new word by adding a different letter at the beginning or end
- We can say words slowly and put vowels and consonants together to make words or syllables.
- We can tell you when words rhyme and even come up with our own with a prompt.
- We can tell you the beginning and ending sounds of a one syllable word.
- We can hear and follow words in a sentence and parts of a word.
- We can count the number of syllables in a word and sounds in a syllable.

• Decoding:

- We know the sounds of the consonants and short vowels.
- We can read simple one syllable words and high frequency words.
- We know that when you say the word slowly you can change the letter sound as you get to each new letter.

Vocabulary & Concept Development:

- We can read some of the words that we find in our environment.
- We can describe our experiences and include lots of details.

• Comprehension:

• We can show you where to find the title, table of contents, name of the author and illustrator of a book.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level Appropriate Text

- We know how to use the pictures and context clues to predict what the story is about.
- We talk about times when we did something that was like what happened in the story.
- We can tell you about a story we have heard in our own words.
- We can ask good questions and we can answer important questions about the story.

• Literary Response:

Narrative Analysis of Grade Level Appropriate Text

- We know the difference between fiction and non-fiction.
- We can tell you about all kinds of literature like storybooks, poems, newspaper, and signs.
- We can tell you about the important parts of a book like the characters, setting, and

Writing

Writing Strategies Organization and Focus

- We use letters and the sounds we know to write words about things we are doing.
- We can write simple consonant-vowel-consonant words.
- We know that we write from left to right, from top to bottom, and that we "return sweep" to get to the next line.

Penmanship

• We know the correct way to make our letters and can do it by ourselves. We know that we need to be neat and have good spacing.

• Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Sentence Structure

• We know how to say a sentence that makes sense. Spelling

We can spell some words by ourselves. Sometimes we write just scribbles, sometimes
we use the sounds of the letters and sometimes we use the names of the letters to write
words.

Listening & Speaking

Listening and Speaking Strategies

- We understand and can follow directions with two steps.
- We can tell each other good "stuff" in a clear voice and in sentences that make sense. Speaking Applications
- We can describe people, places, things, locations and actions with our words.
- We can say short poems, rhymes, and songs by heart.
- We can tell a story in logical order.

Mathematics

Number Sense:

Students understand the relationship between numbers and quantities.

- We can count, read, and write numbers to 100 and identify the place value for each digit.
- We can count, recognize, represent, name, and put our numbers in order from 1-30.
- We know that larger numbers have more pieces than smaller numbers.

Students understand and describe simple addition and subtractions

• We can use real "stuff" to solve and adding or subtracting problem (using numbers less than 10)

Students use estimation strategies in computation and problem solving that involve numbers that use ones and ten place.

We know when an estimate makes sense.

Algebra & Functions:

Students sort and classify objects.

• We can identify, sort, and classify "stuff" by how it looks, and we can tell what "stuff" doesn't belong in a group.

• Geometry:

Students understand the concept of time and units to measure it; they understand that objects have properties, such as length, weight, and capacity, and that comparisons may be made by referring to those properties.

- We can tell you which object is longer, shorter, heavier, taller, and holds more.
- We know about time. We know the days of the week, months of the year, yesterday, today and tomorrow. We know what a clock and calendar are for.
- We can name the days of the week.
- We can tell time by the hour.

Students identify common objects and their environment and describe the geometric features.

- We can name and describe circles, triangles, rectangles, squares, cubes, spheres, and cones.
- We can compare familiar planes and solid objects by shape, size, and number of corners. That's how we know the difference between a cube and a square.

Statistics & Probability:

Students collect information about objects and events in their environment.

- We can collect and record data using "stuff", pictures, and picture graphs. Then we can ask questions about the graph and give the answers using the graph
- We can recognize and describe simple patterns like ABAB, ABB, ABC and make them longer.

Mathematical Reasoning:

Students make decisions about how to set up a problem.

- We can figure out how to solve a problem.
- We can use lots of different "stuff" to show a problem.

Students solve problems in reasonable ways and justify reasoning.

- We can tell you how we used our "stuff".
- We can do our problems right and then check to see if we were right with our "stuff".

Kindergarten Readiness Resources

Webpages for Parents

- http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/readiness for k.html
- http://school.familyeducation.com/kindergarten/school-readiness/38491.html
- http://parent-education.com/
- http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/what-to-expect-grade/readykindergarten# recognition
- http://www.cmlibrarv.org/kids/getset4k/
- https://www.myf2b.com/register/MonoCOE
- https://www.First5mono.org/school-readiness/

Webpages for Kids

- http://www.edhelper.com/kindergarten/Kindergarten.htm
- http://www.janbrett.com/coloring-alphabet/alphabet-coloring-tracers-traditional.htm
- http://www.sesamestreet.org/games/art
- http://pbskids.org/
- http://www.starfall.com/n/level-a/learn-to-read/play.htm?f
- http://www.scholastic.com/kids/stacks/index.asp
- http://brainconnection.brainhq.com/brain-teasers/

Local Resources

- First 5 Mono Home Visiting: Home visits focused on Kindergarten Readiness for your TK or Kindergartner. Call 760-924-7626 or visit https://www.Firs5mono.org/home-visiting-sub/
- Mono County Library Raising A Reader: Weekly book bags for your child. Call 760-934-4777 or visit http://www.monocolibraries.org/programs/raising-a-reader

Updated State Resources

- California PTK Learning Foundations
- PTKLF At-a-Glance PDF
- Universal Transitional Kindergarten Expansion (PPIC)



'S MARCH ACTIVITY CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Draw or build your family using blocks or play dough — talk about what makes each person special.	Go outside and collect 5 different things from nature. Sort them by size or color.	Practice hopping on one foot 5 times, then switch.	Water a plant or spray the garden — this strengthens hand muscles for writing.	Visit the grocery store. Name as many fruits or vegetables as you can. What color are they?	
	Practice writing your name using sidewalk chalk or finger- painting.	Use kid-safe scissors to cut shapes from paper or magazines.	Count toys or snacks into groups of 5s or 10s.	Sing your ABCs while washing your hands.	Practice zipping or buttoning your jacket by yourself.	
	Tell someone about your day — what happened first, next, and last?	Name the shapes you see around your home. Can you find a circle, square, and triangle?	Play with playdough. Roll it into letters or shapes.	Stand on one foot for 10 seconds, then switch.	Draw a picture of something that makes you happy.	
	Read a bedtime story and talk about what happened at the end.	Walk backward for 10 steps. Try again without looking!	Count how many windows are in your home.	Practice writing your first name — remember one capital letter at the start.	Help set the table and count how many forks and cups you use.	



'S APRIL ACTIVITY CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Build a tall tower with blocks or recycled containers. How high can you go?	Use scissors to cut pictures from an old magazine.	Blow bubbles outside. Count how many you pop!	Tell someone your favorite part of the day and why.	Pretend to order pizza – say your full name and address clearly.	
	Sort laundry by color or type.	Read a story and find three rhyming words.	Draw a picture for a friend or neighbor and give it to them.	Count how many steps from your door to your mailbox or sidewalk.	Put together a puzzle with someone in your family.	
	Draw a birthday cake with the right number of candles for your age.	Count coins or buttons and sort them by size.	Practice tying your shoes or fastening Velcro straps.	Describe three things you see outside — use words like big, soft, or colorful.	Read a story about helping or sharing.	
	Carry a cup of water across the room without spilling.	Write or trace numbers 1–10. Try to say each number as you write.	Play a simple board game or card game. Practice waiting for your turn without interrupting.	Play catch and count each toss aloud.	Play the "Funny Name Game" — change the first letter of everyone's name (Mom becomes Nom!).	



'S MAY ACTIVITY CALENDAR



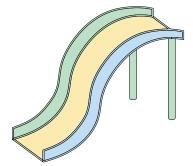
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Practice saying your first and last name. Try to spell it too!	Cut pictures from a magazine and glue them onto paper to make a collage.	Count down the days until school starts using a calendar.	Choose a nursery rhyme to sing. Can you find words that rhyme?	Draw or paint your favorite animal and share what it eats.	
	Write your name using different colors for each letter.	Build your name using magnetic letters, blocks, or playdough.	Draw your favorite playground activity.	Sing your ABCs slowly — point to each letter as you sing.	Visit the library or read an e-book together.	
	Draw a picture of your teacher or what you imagine your classroom looks like.	Practice zipping, buttoning, and putting on shoes by yourself.	Build something tall with blocks. How many pieces did you use?	Sort snacks by shape or color. Which kind do you have the most of?	Read a story — who was your favorite character?	
	Help make breakfast or lunch — count how many ingredients you used.	Practice saying and memorizing your home phone number or parent's phone number	Write numbers 1–10. Can you write them in order? Keep going!	Practice meeting someone new — say, "Hi, my name is!"	Play "I Spy" with colors or beginning letter sounds.	



'S JUNE ACTIVITY CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Practice saying your full name, birthday, and one thing you love about yourself.	Practice saying please, thank you, and excuse me throughout the day.	Count and sort your toys into groups of 10. Which group has the most?	Help pack your own snack. Practice opening each container on your own.	Trace your hand, then decorate each finger with a color pattern (red-blue-red-blue).	
	Go on a "color hunt" — find five things that are green!	Sing a nursery rhyme like "Five Little Ducks" and use your fingers to show the numbers.	Practice buttoning or zipping clothing by yourself.	Go outside and draw your shadow with chalk. What happens if you move?	Write or trace your name three times — one in pencil, one in crayon, one in chalk.	
	Pretend to be a teacher and "read" a book to your toys.	Balance a beanbag, washcloth, or small stuffed toy on your head while you walk.	Draw a picture of your favorite weather and talk about what you wear on that day.	Play "Simon Says" with two-step directions ("touch your nose, then jump").	Practice washing your face, brushing your teeth, and combing your hair all by yourself.	
	Go to the park and play on the swings and the slide.	Read a story and talk about how the people in the story feel (happy, angry, sad) and why they feel that way.	Get your flashcards with the numbers 1-5. Practice naming them and putting them in order. Add 6-10 and so on	Use tweezers to move beans or rice from one bowl to another. Use tongs to move cotton balls from one bowl to another	Draw a picture and write a note to a friend or relative.	



'S JULY ACTIVITY CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Learn your address, write it on a blank paper. Draw your home and color it in!	Count how many days until school starts. Write that number.	Put together a puzzle with someone in your family.	Draw and color a circle, square, rectangle, and triangle and other shapes. Name them.	Practice putting on your socks and shoes by yourself.	
	Play a matching game with cards or household items (spoons, lids, socks).	Pretend to go to school — practice raising your hand before speaking.	Write or trace letters A–Z on paper. Circle your favorite ones.	Play a board game or "Go Fish" and practice taking turns politely.	Draw a self-portrait. What color are your eyes and hair?	
	Tell a grown-up one new thing you want to learn in kindergarten.	Count as high as you can.	Read a story with someone and draw a picture of your favorite part of the story.	Help plan and cook dinner. Talk about what you are doing. Try using measuring cups or spoons.	Play catch with someone. Count each toss. Kick the ball. Move a step back with each kick.	
	Say and spell your first and last name aloud. Clap for each letter as you say it.	Count to 20 while jumping, clapping, or tapping your knees.	Look at a book and point to where the words start on the page. Can you read the first few words?	Draw a picture of something that makes you feel happy. Tell someone about it.	Practice putting on your backpack and taking it off by yourself.	



'S AUGUST ACTIVITY CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Say your ABCs backward as far as you can — how far did you get?	Draw a picture of your favorite animal and label it with its first letter.	Sing a nursery rhyme like "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Clap for each word.	Practice writing the numbers 1–10 and saying them aloud.	Practice opening lunch containers, juice boxes, or snack bags.	
	Practice your morning routine — get dressed, eat breakfast, brush teeth.	Sort crayons by color and count how many you have of each.	Pretend it's the first day of school — line up, hang up your "backpack," and sit for circle time.	Say your full name, parent's name, and phone number.	Play "Freeze Dance" to practice listening and stopping on cue.	
	Practice saying your teacher's name and your school's name.	Say something kind to each person in your family today.	Try tying your shoes or fastening Velcro straps.	Practice writing your name and one simple word like "cat" or "mom."	Walk around your home and name everything that starts with the letter "S."	
	Sing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" while pointing to each body part	Draw yourself smiling on your first day of kindergarten and write your name on top.	Read a story and name the characters, setting, and what happened.	Pack your backpack together and name what each item is for.	Look in a mirror and make a happy, sad, and silly face. Name each feeling.	