



Training Guide



Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit

Table of Contents

A. Introduction	2
B. Purpose	2
C. Learning Objectives	3
D. What is Kindergarten Readiness?	3
E. Key Learning Areas	5
F. Tips	5
G. Event Set-up	6
<u>Additional Resources:</u>	
H. My child is ready for kindergarten. How do I enroll him or her?	11
I. Sample Contact Sheet, Toddler and Preschool Pre and Post Survey	12

Pullout Resources

- **Event Outline**
- **Training Flyer**
- **Key Learning Area Posters**

Erie Together is a county-wide initiative to prevent and reduce poverty, elevate prosperity, and make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive. The community has set specific goals and outcomes for each of the learn, work and thrive focus areas and the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit is just one of the resources envisioned to help children become successful adults.

The tool kit was created by a team of volunteers from local organizations, including United Way Success By 6 and Union City Family Support Center, and a number of individuals collaborating through Erie Together.

Thank you for helping to get this resource into the hands of parents and caregivers throughout our community.

A. Introduction

Parents and other adults in the home are a child’s first and most important teacher, but keep in mind that all children develop skills at their own pace. Encourage families to choose a variety of activities that will allow their child to develop skills while having fun. Every interaction adults have with their child has the potential to be a learning experience.

This is a guide to develop family engagement events to introduce the Erie Together Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kits. Remember you can make adaptations to meet the interests of your specific group of families. A family engagement activity can be held in a variety of settings, such as:

- Parent education workshops
- Parent-teacher conferences in preschool or childcare settings
- School tours or open houses for families
- Any parent-child interaction groups

Please be conscious that many children are now being cared for by someone other than a parent. This could be a grandparent, aunt or uncle, foster parent, or some other caring adult. Throughout this guide we use “**adults in the home**” instead of parents to be respectful and reflect the recognition of various family structures.

B. Purpose

The goal of the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit is to help adults in the home prepare their children for successful transition into kindergarten. Using this tool kit in coordination with Erie Together’s “Ready, Set, Go” progress chart, adults can track their child’s progress as he or she learns new skills. The activities included in the Erie Together Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit cover the following key learning areas:

- **Language and Literacy Development**
- **Mathematical Thinking and Expression**
- **Scientific Thinking and Technology**
- **Social Studies Thinking**
- **Creative Thinking and Expression**
- **Health, Wellness, & Physical Development**
- **Social and Emotional Development**

The key learning areas also align with Pennsylvania’s Early Learning Standards. The materials in the tool kit and the activities in the guide were carefully selected to help families become familiar with learning standards and comfortable with related educational terminology.

C. Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives for Trainers:

As a result of reviewing this training guide, family educators will be prepared to:

- Emphasize the value of adults' involvement in their children's education as the child's first and most important teacher;
- Use the Erie Together Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit as family education tool;
- Discuss the basic building blocks of school readiness and the importance and value of balance in all key learning areas;
- Conduct engaging and interactive family engagement activities;
- Direct families to local schools for on-time kindergarten registration.

Learning Objectives for Adults in the Home:

As a result of participating in a family engagement activity, adults will:

- Understand the value of adults in the home as the child's first and most important teacher
- Understand the importance of early learning activities and the variety of ways in which they can be engaged in their child's education;
- Have a basic understanding of the key learning areas for kindergarten readiness and an understanding of the importance of balance in all areas;
- Learn practical ideas for school readiness activities they can do with their children.

D. What is Kindergarten Readiness?

This introduction is included in the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit. Read this so you are familiar with the message for adults in the home. Some important points are listed as talking points on the next page and can be used as part of your introduction.

Most parents don't think about getting a child ready for kindergarten when he/she is a newborn. After all, what can a newborn do to get ready for the "big school?" Research now shows us that children start learning even prior to being born. They recognize voices, enjoy music and rhythm, suck their thumb, etc., before they are born. In the early years, the parent is the primary teacher, and the "lessons" the child(ren) learn from their parents will have a major impact on their learning, relationships, and values throughout their life. Every time you cuddle your infant, talk and sing to him/her, respond to his/her needs for food, change his/her diaper and comfort them, you are teaching important skills necessary for kindergarten readiness.

There are many ways you can help your child learn skills in the years before he/she is old enough to begin school. **Modeling** is one very important way to help them. This is simply demonstrating appropriate language, ways to solve problems, counting, etc. Since your young child copies almost everything they see you do and hear you say, this is a very important tool for helping your child.

Talk to your child, teaching them names for everything they see. Use fun language such as rhyming and nonsense words. Sing to them and dance with them. Talk about what you are doing and what they are doing. Talk, talk, talk. When your child is learning a new skill such as walking, stay close. Help them to stand up by hanging on to furniture. Show them how to do something if they have not discovered how to do it on their own (for example stacking 2 or 3 blocks).

Give children plenty of practice time when learning a new skill. Not all children learn skills at the same time, so it is not always a concern if your child has not yet mastered a skill that other children have already mastered. Skills are built on earlier skills, so children should not wait until they reach preschool to begin learning and practicing new skills. Make yourself knowledgeable about what can be expected at each stage of development and ways you can help your child progress according to his abilities. More information about stages of development can be found at <http://papromiseforchildren.com/help-your-child-grow/watch-me-grow/>

Just remember

- Your child needs **YOU** and other caring adults to learn the most important things they need to know for success in school.
- Yes, the progression for school readiness begins at birth and continues throughout your young child's life.
- **A parent is the first and most influential teacher a child will ever have!**

*Contributed by and in memory of Elsie Diduch,
Program Director at Union City Family Support Center*

Talking Points

- Every interaction with a child is a learning moment
- Modeling is the adult in the home showing a child how something is done, children will copy what they see
- Talking to your child every day builds vocabulary (talk about what you are doing and what they are doing)
- Studies show that some children are exposed to more than 2,000 words each hour and every word helps to build vocabulary and prepare children for school.
- Encourage and support your child as they learn new skills – everything takes practice!
- Every child learns at his or her own pace – keep practicing!
- Skills are built on earlier skills (listening comes before talking; talking comes before reading and writing, etc.)
- **Adults in the home are the first and most influential teacher a child will ever have!**

E. Key Learning Areas

The key learning areas noted in the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit booklet align with Kindergarten Readiness Skills and Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. Each activity found in the kit addresses one or more of the key learning areas. These learning areas **include Language and Literacy Development, Mathematical Thinking and Expression, Scientific Thinking and Technology, Social Studies Thinking, Creative Thinking and Expression, Health, Wellness, & Physical Development, and Social and Emotional Development.**

As you work through the following event plan, you will be selecting activities for parents and children to do together. This event should provide an opportunity for volunteers to model activities for parents and parents to model activities for children. Page 8 of this booklet provides sample activities but you can choose any activity from the resources provided in the kit including the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit Guide, Building Blocks for Babies, and the Learning is Everywhere Calendar. The activities in each of these resources indicate at least one of the key learning areas. The Building Blocks for Babies cards use a symbol to indicate the learning area. See the examples on page 8 for more information.

Use the kindergarten readiness skills list on the back of progress chart to help you identify additional key learning areas for your selected activities.

F. Tips

- Use the Parent Training Flyer to invite families
 - The event is intended to be a time for adult and child interaction – remind families to bring their children under age 5.
- Pre-registration is advised so you know how many families to expect and the ages of the children attending.
 - Plan activities for the ages of the children in the group
 - Plan a variety if there are mixed ages (avoid choking hazards with younger children)
- Providing food increases participation in family engagement activities
 - This could be a snack or meal depending on your program
 - The outline provides the flexibility of having the food before or after the program
 - Make it nutritious! Remember modeling is the way most human behavior is learned.
- If you have space available, set up a resource tables with information relevant to your program and families.
 - Example: Programs offered at your organizations, United Way Family Wiz cards and Erie Free Taxes information, Early Intervention brochures, home visit information, Watch Me Grow brochure, Community Calendar, etc.

For more information about Erie Together or additional resources please go to:

www.erietogether.org

G. Event Set-up and Agenda

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome

Thank participants for attending. Let them know who you are and why you are hosting this event. Let them know that everyone will go home with a free kit and briefly show the kit.

Contact Information & Pre-survey

Have adults fill out the contact information sheet (used for tracking number of kits & follow up if necessary) and the Kindergarten Readiness Training Pre-survey.

- The contact information will be used for tracking the number of kits and collecting post-survey data. Information is requested to fulfill grant requirements so that we can continue to provide this free resource to parents and caregivers. The information will not be shared and is only used for reporting.
- The survey is used to assess skills that children already possess.

Collect completed surveys. (**Note: You may want to record the adult's name and survey number in case they lose the post survey document.*)

Introduction to Activities

Ground rules

As with any group activity it is best to start off with the “ground rules.” This sets the tone for the event and helps to keep everyone on task. Below is a suggested list of ground rules, but remember you can change or add any as needed.

- Be respectful to each other
- Cell phones off
- Use the materials with your child (this is a time to interact with your child)
- Others (location of restrooms, etc.)

Ice Breaker

The icebreaker is the opportunity to reflect on what adults experienced as a child in kindergarten, gauge whether or not the family's expectations of kindergarten have evolved and they understand what kindergarten is like now.

Discussion Questions (**Note: make adaptations not everyone attends kindergarten*)

- What do the adults remember from kindergarten/their first educational experience?
 - What were you expected to know before kindergarten?
 - What activities did you do?
 - What did you learn?
- What do you think Kindergarten looks like now?
 - What do you think children are expected to know before kindergarten?
 - What activities do you think children are doing?
 - What do you think children are learning?
- Do you have children who are in or have recently completed kindergarten?
 - What was the difference from when you were in kindergarten?
 - What activities are children doing?
 - What are children learning?

Variations:

- Ask questions aloud in a group setting and have parents respond as they are comfortable.
- Gently toss a beach ball (or other soft object) to participants and ask them to answer a question before tossing the ball to another participant.

Key Points

- Children are now expected to have more skills when they enter kindergarten
- There is greater emphasis on literacy and math skills
- Teachers rate social and regulatory (emotional) skills as being critical for school readiness
- Kindergarten is no longer where children are introduced to learning

Introduction to Stations

Before sending participants to the hands-on stations, explain that children learn through play and the fun activities are actually interactive ways for parents to teach young children new skills. Discuss the following:

- Adults in the home are a child's first teacher.
 - (Ask participants) What do children already know before they enter kindergarten?
 - Walking, talking, potty training, etc.
 - (Ask participants) Who do they learn it from?
 - All learned from adults
 - (Ask participants) How do children and adults master (or get better) at something?
 - Lots of practice!
- Modeling is important – children learn by watching what adults and other children do, therefore,
 - Adults will be asked to participate in a hands-on activity **with** their child.
 - Show your child how
 - Help your child complete the activity
 - Talk about the activity with your child (Interaction is key)
- Introduce each activity set up at the stations so parents will know what to do.
- Point out the posters on the table which show the key learning areas for each activity. Discuss that each activity works on at least two skills from the “Ready, Set, Go” progress chart.

Stations – Set up prior to start of the event

Two to four activity stations should be set up depending on the size of group (2-3 families at each station). At the activity station, post the provided “Early Learning Standards Posters” highlighting the key learning areas each activity addresses and copies of the instructions for parents to take home. (Posters can be printed from www.erietogether.org/kreadytoolkit.)

- Give participants 15-20 minutes to explore the activity with their child (timing may vary depending on audience and activities)
 - Give transition warnings – “It’s almost time to switch, there are/is 5 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute left.”
- Ask adults to straighten up the station quickly before moving onto the next activity.
 - If possible, provide a volunteer for each station to assist families. If this is not possible have someone check to make sure there are enough materials for the next group.
- Switch stations until every group has visited each station.

Below are some suggestions for station activities. Remember to select activities to meet the needs of the participants in the group (infant activities, toddler activities, preschool activities or a mix based on ages of the children). Please use the resources in the toolkits for more activities and the checklist to identify additional key learning areas.

- Play dough (recipe is located in the toolkit) - Suggestions for participants:
 - Make letters or shapes (health/wellness/physical and language and literacy)
 - Ask your child to make something for you (creative thinking and expression)
 - Count the number of things (mathematical)*(*Note: make enough for each child to take home.)*
- Magnetic letters – Suggestions for participants:
 - Find letters from their name (mathematic and language/literacy skills)
 - Spell the child’s name with the letters (language/literacy skills)
 - Sort letters by color (mathematic skills)*(*Note: use with a cookie sheet or other magnetic surface)*
- Blocks - Suggestions for participants:
 - Ask your child to find specific letters (language/literacy skills)
 - Build towers (scientific thinking and technology skills)
 - Ask your child to hand you blocks using please and thank you. Have your child ask you for blocks using please and thank you. (social/emotional skills)
- Finger play/action song- print out finger play or use Building Blocks for Babies cards- (language/literacy skills and health/wellness/physical development)
 - “If Your Happy and You Know It”–act out the actions (clap, stomp, etc.)
 - “Itsy, Bitsy Spider”–act out the actions (spider climbing up, rain falling down, sun coming out, etc.)
- A Number Book! (Mathematical Thinking and Expression/Language and Literacy)
 - Fold one large piece of paper into 4 sections to make a book. Have adults label each section with a number 1–4. Help children cut or tear out pictures from magazines to glue onto book. Put one object on the first section (#1); two objects on the second section (#2), etc. Read and count!*(*Note: you can adapt this using stickers in place of cutting and pasting objects)*

Wrap-Up

“These activities came from the Erie Together Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit. Now that you have completed several activities with your child, use the tool kit to do even more at home!”

- Handout kits – you can have them hanging on back of chairs or set up at a table
(*Note: you could include this as part of the introduction)
 - The toolkits are designed to give adults ideas and activities which will help their children become ready for kindergarten.
 - The toolkits can be used with infants through kindergarten age children.
 - Try to choose a variety of activities that will allow your child to develop new skills and practice what they already know.
 - Remember to have fun!
- Review materials in the tool kit (let parents open them and take a look!)
 - Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit booklet
 - Research shows that rhyming provides a basic building block for literacy. Reading nursery rhymes is an easy way to introduce your child to rhyming. The beginning of the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit includes three nursery rhymes and activities for at home learning experiences from birth to the start of kindergarten. Little Boy Blue, Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, and Hickory, Dickory Dock are highlighted in the booklet.
 - Ideas for activities to do with children (separated by age groups)
 - Many of the activities will refer to the Learning is Everywhere Calendar or Building Blocks for Babies Cards included in the kit
 - The purpose of the activities is to help children develop skills in key learning areas (page 4). The “standards” are a guide to ensure children are able to build upon learned skills to reach goals in each category.
 - Kindergarten registration information is listed on page 7 of the booklet.
 - “Ready, Set, Go” progress chart – can be used to track your child’s progress (You can probably color in at least 1 skill from today)
 - Imagination Library brochure – send in to have a free book mailed to your home
 - Manipulatives, such as blocks, crayons, and magnets may not be appropriate for all ages so use caution and be sure to supervise your child. (See the pull out for a complete list.)
- **Ask the adults to use the kits for 4 weeks (1 month), periodically doing activities with their child. After one month you will ask them to complete the post-survey. (*Note: prior to the training, decide how your organization will collect post-survey data.)**
 - These will be compared to the pre-surveys to see if the tool kits are valuable to families – suggestions and comments are encouraged and can be written on the back.
 - Additional comments or questions can be sent to info@erietogether.org or via facebook (/ErieTogether) or twitter (@erietogether).

Closing Activities (pick one or do both)

These can be done by the presenter or an appropriate volunteer

- Read ‘The Seed Poem’ (page 6 of Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit booklet) – this poem was written by a HeadStart teacher in Erie.
- Read the *Kindergarten Here I Come* book from the tool kit (remember to emphasize literacy skills (e.g. author, illustrator, asking questions, etc.).
- Remind families to register their children for kindergarten early. More information is on page 7 of the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit booklet but registrations begin as early as March.

Contact Nicole Wethli at nicole@erietogether.org or 814-824-3357 to return the pre and post-survey questionnaires or for additional tool kits.

H. My child is ready for kindergarten, how do I enroll him or her?

Remind parents that each school district handles registration differently so it is important contact your district for information. The earlier a child is registered for kindergarten the better. This helps the schools know how many children to expect, how many classrooms and teachers will be needed, how many supplies to order, etc.

If there are families with children close to kindergarten please take a moment to remind them that many schools hold registration events between January and April each year. Contact your school for event dates and more information.

Page 7 of the Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit booklet contains information on kindergarten registration including school contact information and age cut-off dates. Each school district determines the kindergarten age cut-off so please check to see if your child is 5 by the date listed for your school.

Adults will need the following information to register their child for kindergarten

- Adult's ID (driver's license or other form of identification)
- Proof of address
- Child's birth certificate
- Immunization records

Some schools may request more information. Please contact your local school district at the number listed to know exactly what to bring and how to register.

For more information about Erie Together or additional resources please go to:

www.erietogether.org

Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kit

Dear Caregiver,

Erie Together has developed this survey along with a free tool kit for parents of young children. As you will learn from this brief training, parents are a child’s first and most important teachers. We encourage you to use the kit materials and the booklet to try a variety of interactive play with your child. It may seem like fun and games but each of the activities is providing valuable learning experiences for your child and preparing him/her for kindergarten and a lifetime of learning.

The purpose of this tool kit is to provide young children in Erie County with a strong foundation to ensure that they are ready to learn when they enter Kindergarten. In order to determine if these kits are a valuable resource, we would appreciate you completing the following contact information and the pre-survey. After 1 month (4 weeks), you will be asked to complete a post-survey to identify new skills that your child has learned. Remember, this is not an assessment of the child or you as a caregiver and every child learns at a different pace. No child is expected to learn all of the skills listed on the survey in just one month, but we have provided a variety of skills for you and your child to choose from. Very young children may take longer to learn a new skills but please complete the post survey even if your child is still working on new skills.

If you have any questions about the kit, please ask the host at this time or contact Erie Together at info@erietogether.org.

Parent Contact Information								
Name								
Email Address						Phone#		
Address								
City				State		Zip		
Family Size <i>(number of adults and children in your household)</i> _____				Ethnicity: <i>(circle one)</i>		Hispanic		Non-Hispanic
Race <i>(circle one)</i>	White		Black		Asian	Bi-Racial/ Multi-Racial		Other
Income Range	\$0 - \$14,999	\$15,000- \$19,999	\$20,000- \$24,999	\$25,000- \$29,000	\$30,000- \$34,999	\$35,000- \$39,999	\$40,000- \$44,999	\$45,000+

Please complete the following survey. This survey is NOT an assessment of the parent or individual children - it is solely to determine if the activities provided work, so your careful observation of your child(ren) before and after using the kit would be appreciated. Feel free to include comments on the back.

Age of Child: _____ (months)			
<i>*Note: a separate survey should be completed for each individual child.</i>			
My child can:	Always	Sometimes	Not Yet
1. Language and literacy skills			
Follow single step directions			
Listen and respond to conversation with others			
Hold books appropriately (right side up and turns pages)			
Understand that print contains a message			
Recognize some upper and lower case letters			
Recognize everyday print (traffic signs, cereal boxes, etc.)			
Attempt to write or draw			
Understand that words are connected to print			
2. Mathematical thinking and expression skills			
Understand the difference between letters and numbers			
Identify colors and shapes			
Count to ten			
Describe the position of objects (up, down, behind, in front)			
3. Scientific thinking and technology skills			
Identify basic needs of plants and animals (food, water, air)			
Make a prediction and investigate (make an educated guess and test it)			
Name technologies used at school and home (phone, computer, TV, etc.)			
4. Social studies thinking skills			
Awareness of rules and consequences			
Identify needs and wants			
Make a choice			
5. Creative thinking and expression skills			
Initiate music and movement activities			
Use a variety of art materials (crayons, pencils, markers, paint, etc.)			
6. Health, wellness and physical development skills			
Hop and jump			
Hold writing and eating utensils (pencil, crayon, fork, spoon)			
Participate in games and songs			
Point to body parts when asked			
Follow basic safety rules (hold hands crossing street, don't touch - hot)			
7. Social and emotional skills			
Greet others and say please, thank you and excuse me			
Share and take turns with others			
Share feelings, thoughts and needs			
Follow routines at home and in the classroom			

Please return this form to a staff member before beginning training.

Please complete the following survey. This survey is **NOT** an assessment of the parent or individual children - it is solely to determine if the activities provided work, so your careful observation of your child(ren) before and after using the kit would be appreciated. Feel free to include comments on the back.

Age of Child: _____ (months)			
<i>*Note: a separate survey should be completed for each individual child.</i>			
My child can:	Always	Sometimes	Not Yet
1. Language and literacy skills			
Follow multiple step directions			
Retell stories with some understanding of sequence (beginning, middle, end)			
Make personal connections and answer questions about stories			
Understand that print moves from left to right and top to bottom			
Understand that print contains a message			
Identify the front, back and title page of a book			
Recognize and write their name (upper case followed by lowercase)			
Name rhyming words			
Understand the difference between letters and words			
2. Mathematical thinking and expression skills			
Identify colors, shapes, and repeating patterns			
Match and sequence objects and pictures (what happened first, second, third...)			
Count to twenty			
Identify and write some numbers			
3. Scientific thinking and technology skills			
Identify needs of plants and animals (food, water, air, light)			
Make a prediction, investigate and explain what happened			
4. Social studies thinking skills			
Awareness of rules and consequences for breaking a rule			
Identify a problem and discuss possible solutions			
Make a choice and explain the reason			
5. Creative thinking and expression skills			
Initiate music and movement activities (sing, dance, drum, tap)			
Use a variety of art materials (pencils, markers, paint, scissors, etc.)			
6. Health, wellness and physical development skills			
Button, tie, snap and zip			
Dress independently (coat, shoes, boots, etc.)			
Identify healthy and non-healthy foods			
Practice basic hygiene routines with reminders (tooth brushing, hand washing)			
7. Social and emotional skills			
Share and take turns with others			
Show respect for self, others and authority			
Share feelings, thoughts and needs			
Follow routines at home and in the classroom			

Please return this form to a staff member before beginning training.