

countdown to **KINDERGARTEN**



★ 2026 ★



A calendar of activities to
help prepare your little
one for kindergarten

PageAfterPage.org/kindergarten

Kindergarten Readiness Skills

Learning starts before kindergarten! To help your child have a successful kindergarten experience, work on these skills at home. Your child will enter the classroom ready for kindergarten success.

MOTOR SKILLS

- Runs
- Walks in a straight line
- Jumps
- Stands on one foot
- Throws a ball
- Buttons, snaps and zips independently
- Builds with blocks
- Draws and colors using three-finger grip
- Uses scissors
- Beginning to tie shoes

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL

- Shares
- Sits and listens for up to 5 minutes
- Expresses self verbally
- Cares for belongings
- Uses manners - please, thank you
- Takes care of toileting needs
- Respects peers during structured play
- Waits for short amounts of time

READING READINESS

- Identifies their name
- Prints name using proper uppercase/lowercase letters
- Understands reading left to right
- Recites alphabet
- Demonstrates familiarity with letter names and sounds
- Knows address/phone number
- Knows age/birthday
- Understands rhyming words

LISTENING & SEQUENCING

- Follows simple two-step directions
- Retells a simple story in sequence
- Listens and responds to simple questions

MATH READINESS

- Identifies eight basic colors (red, yellow, blue, orange, green, purple, black, brown)
- Names shapes - triangle, rectangle, square and circle
- Counts at least ten objects
- Identifies numbers 1-10
- Sorts by color, size or type
- Understands basic patterns (ABAB, AABAAB, etc.)



1000 Books Before Kindergarten

encourages all families and caregivers to read at least 1,000 books (any book) to their child before they enter kindergarten.

Who Can Participate? Children age 0-5.

How do I register? Visit any JCPL Branch.

Or visit PageAfterPage.org/1000bbk to register online and download your free Reading Log.

Does my child need to read certain books?

No. All books count!

How do we keep track of what we read?

Use the free reading log to keep track.

When does my child earn a reward?

Each time you and your child reach a milestone, bring in your Reading Log to a Branch to collect your prize. When you have read 1,000 books, your child receives a free book.



SCAN ME!

Ask a librarian at any JCPL Branch for book suggestions to help you on your journey to 1000 Books Before Kindergarten.

PageAfterPage.org/1000bbk

**1000
BOOKS
BEFORE
KINDERGARTEN
READ IT AND REAP!**

Talking and Singing



Talking with your child is about more than communication, just as singing is about more than music. By encouraging your child to talk with you, you help them explore sounds, understand vocabulary and learn how to share information. It's much easier to learn to read when you know how the words sound and what they mean!

Singing also helps children learn by breaking down the sounds and rhythms of language. Songs provide a different note or beat for each syllable and slow down the individual sounds that make up a word. Many songs introduce new vocabulary by incorporating words that are not commonly used in everyday conversation. How often do you use the words "fetch" and "pail" outside of Jack and Jill?

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

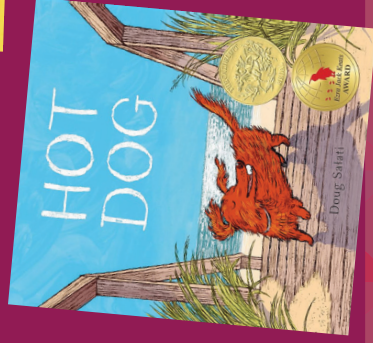
Hot Dog
by Doug Salati

Du Iz Tak?
by Carson Ellis

Bing! Bang! Chugga! Beep!
by Bill Martin Jr. and
Michael Sampson

The Seals on the Bus
by Lenny Hort

***Pete the Cat: I Love
My White Shoes***
by James Dean and
Eric Litwin



February

2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Talk about what you plan to do today, give your day a beginning, middle and end, like a story.		World Read Aloud Day: Read a story aloud at home and then discuss your favorite parts and characters.		Discuss shapes you see around you. Say the name of the shape and how many sides it has.	Take Your Child to the Library Day: Visit a JCPL Branch for fun activities.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
February 8-14: Kindergarten Ready Week. Stop by a Branch and pick up a Kindergarten Readiness Bag						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Listen to music while you draw or paint. Try drawing along with the beat of the song.	Make a song out of your child's name. Sing slowly to break apart syllables or add rhyming words to focus on sounds.	Read a book together, then have your child retell the story in their own way.	Create a nonsense word for a common item, then have your child guess what it means.	Create a shaker out of a plastic bottle and some dry beans. Shake it to the beat of your favorite song.	Sing the alphabet song. Clap for each letter.	Narrate what you are doing while cooking or doing other chores and explain any new words.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Read a wordless picture book together. Have your child tell you the story based on the illustrations.		Read a book that can be sung to a familiar tune, like <i>The Seals on the Bus</i> .		Ask your child, "What happens next?" while reading a story.	Sing a song with finger actions, like <i>Two Little Blackbirds</i> or <i>Itsy Bitsy Spider</i> .	Snuggle Up with a Book Ball Snuggle up, read a book and support the JCPL Foundation. JCPLF.org/bookball
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Playing



Play is essential in early childhood development. Play helps strengthen language and literacy skills because children learn new words by talking and playing with other children. Hearing words in different situations helps them understand words and remember them. Play also gives children a chance to use the words they know and build their vocabulary. Talking with adults and other kids also helps them improve how they say words by listening to how others speak.

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

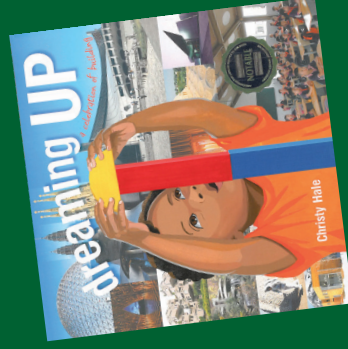
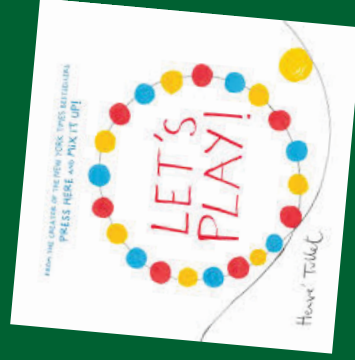
Busy Feet
by Marcia Berneger

The Think-Ups
by Claire Alexander

Let's Play!
by Hervé Tullet

Playtime for Restless Rascals
by Nikki Grimes

Dreaming Up
by Christy Hale



March

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	Set up a play store with your child's toys. Take turns being the check-out clerk and the shopper.	3	4	5	6	7
8	Happy Daylight Savings! Remember to set your clocks ahead an hour and spend more time playing outside today.	9	10	11	12	13
15		16	17	18	19	20
22	Play hide and seek! The one with the best hiding place wins.	23	24	25	26	27
29	Play with playdough. What can you create? Try making the letters in your name.	30	31	1	2	3
						4

Gross Motor Skills



Gross motor skills are movements that use the large muscles in the arms, legs and torso, such as walking, running, jumping, climbing, throwing, and catching. They also include balancing, riding a bike, dancing, and kicking a ball. These whole-body movements are essential for developing coordination, strength, and confidence as children explore their environment.

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

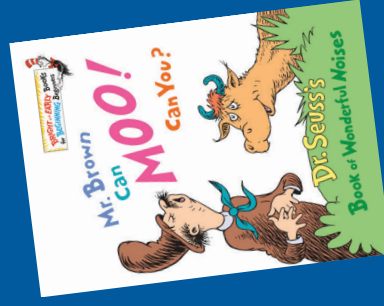
Bounce
by Doreen Cronin

Can You Do This?
by Megan Roy

Dancing Feet
by Lindsey Craig

From Head to Toe
by Eric Carle

Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?
by Dr. Seuss



April

2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

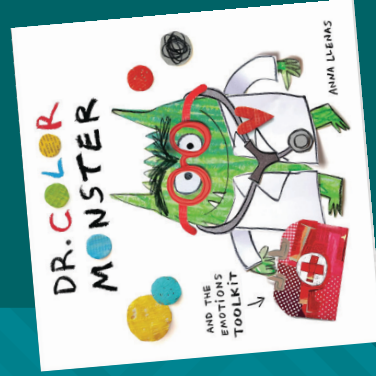
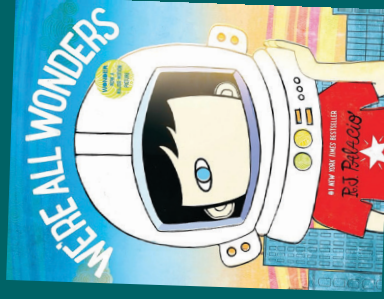
SAT

29		30	31	April Fool's Day Play a not-so-mean trick on a family member.	1	2	3	4
Easter All JCPL locations closed		Draw a picture with your child for a close friend or neighbor.		Play with blocks and build a tall tower.			Have an egg race with your child. Balance a plastic egg or small ball on a spoon and race to the other side of the room.	
5		6	7	8		9	10	11
Play with sidewalk chalk and decorate your sidewalk with art. Play hopscotch.				Make dinner together and let your child help by adding the ingredients and mixing the food.			Go to a park or playground and use the play equipment.	Put a puzzle together.
12		13	14	15		16	17	18
Build a fort with blankets and sheets, then snuggle up and read a book.				Celebrate Earth Day! Go outside and explore the new flowers. What kind of bugs can you find?				Visit a JCPL StoryWalk! Find them here: PageAfter- Page.org/ storywalks
19		20	21	22		23	24	25
	Play I Spy with my little eye while riding the car.			Play some music and have a dance party with the whole family.				
26		27	28	29		30	1	2

Social-Emotional Skills



Social-emotional development provides the foundation for a child's ability to focus, regulate their emotions, and increase resilience and self-awareness. These are crucial skills for children to develop as they grow older, enabling them to build friendships and confidence in themselves as they learn and mature. This month, we focus on activities you can do with your child to foster their social-emotional development.



BOOK SUGGESTIONS

*Dr. Color Monster
and the Emotions Toolkit*
by Anna Llenas

How Are You Feeling?
by Marie-Therese Miller

All Are Welcome
by Alexandra Penfold

We're All Wonders
by R.J. Palacio

ABC of Feelings
by Bonnie Lui



May

2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

26	27	28	29	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
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Science



Children are natural scientists, constantly developing theories and drawing conclusions about the world around them through observation, exploration, and experimentation. This can look like mimicking animal sounds, collecting rocks, and splashing in puddles. This month, support your child's natural curiosity by reading books that feature new science terms and concepts, as well as providing them more opportunities for hands-on discovery.

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

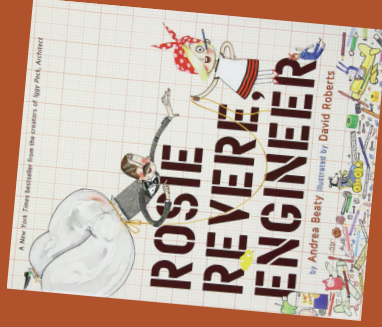
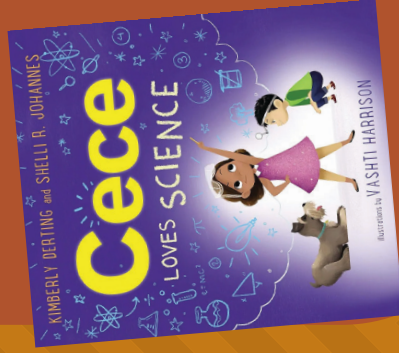
CeCe Loves Science
by Kimberly Derting

Frankenslime
by Joy Keller

Rosie Revere, Engineer
by Andrea Beaty

This is a Taco!
by Andrew Cangelose

Over and Under the Pond
by Kate Messner



June

2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

31	Sign up for Explore Summer! 	2	Go for a nature walk and discuss what you observe.	4	Put Mentos in Diet Coke. Test other sodas and record the results.	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	1	2	3	4

Safety



Heading to kindergarten is often a child's first taste of independence. Teaching them how to stay safe – from avoiding danger on the playground to knowing who they can ask for help – empowers them to make responsible decisions, builds their independence and fosters their confidence. Children who can respond appropriately to unsafe situations are less likely to be victimized. Take this month to talk about and practice safe behavior before your child heads off to school.

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

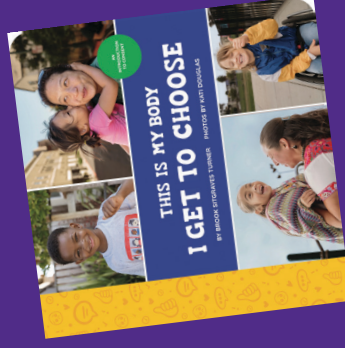
We Can Say No
by Lydia Bowers

We Check In With Each Other
by Lydia Bowers

Fire Safety
by Emma Bassier

Dial 911!
by Charles Ghigna

This Is My Body: I Get to Choose
by Brook Sitgraves Turner



July

2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

28		29		30	Practice names with your child, including your full name and other trusted adults for emergencies.	1	Most smartphones let you add emergency medical info. Ensure your child's details are included.	2	3	4	★ ★ ★ Independence Day ★ ★ ★ Celebrate America's 250th Anniversary! All JCPL locations closed
5		Practice a fire drill. What exits can your child use? Do they know how to open a window on their own?	6	7	Visit a playground to practice safe play: sit on swings, jump from safe heights and avoid climbing slides.	8	9	10	If your child rides the bus, talk about how they safely get on and off the bus.	All JCPL locations closed	
12	Discuss what to do if your child comes home to an empty house, including phone use or a trusted neighbor.	13		Bodily autonomy means we control our own bodies. Teach your child about consent and how to say no.	14	15	Teach your child to protect personal details and only share with safe adults, like police and medical personnel.	16	17	Walk together and discuss safe walking habits, like using sidewalks, looking both ways, and holding a caregiver's hand.	
19		Does your child know how to call 911? Practice by pretending to be the 911 operator and role-play with them.	20	21	Teach your child to make a scene: be loud, scream, fight and run if someone tries to take them.	22	23	24	Play stop, drop, and roll! Practice what to do if part of you catches on fire.	25	
26	We teach children not to trust strangers, yet 93% of victims knew their perpetrator. Talk about how to say no to anyone.	27		Talk with your child changing their mind. Even if they like a game, they can stop if it becomes uncomfortable.	28	29	Recite your address and phone number with your child – make up a song or a rhyme to help them remember it.	30	31	1	



Clark Pleasant Branch
350 Clearwater Blvd, Whiteland

Franklin Branch
401 State St, Franklin

Trafalgar Branch
424 S. Tower St, Trafalgar

White River Branch
1664 Library Blvd, Greenwood