


COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

★ 2025 ★



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

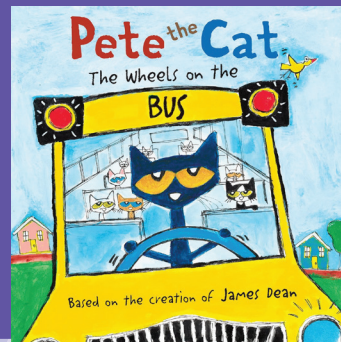
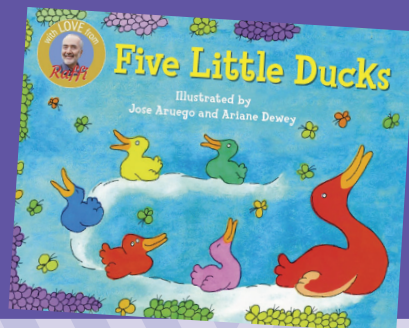
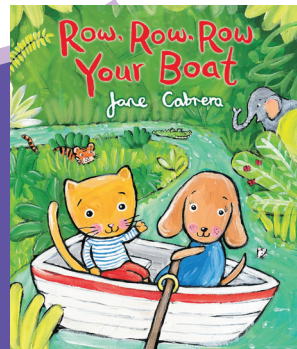
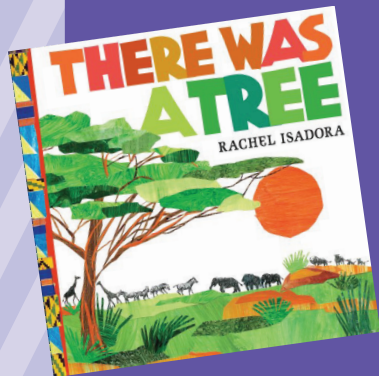
PageAfterPage.org/kindergarten

 **JCPL**
Johnson County
Public Library

SINGING

When singing a song, your child is able to break words into syllables. This provides the foundation for them to sound out words when they begin reading. When you stretch a word to the beats of a song, your child will start distinguishing between the beginning, middle and ending sounds of a word and recognize when words rhyme.

- Singing with your child introduces new vocabulary. Repetition helps to strengthen their vocabulary, so it's actually a great thing to sing their new favorite song multiple times.
- By signing finger-play songs (Where is Thumbkin?, Itsy Bitsy Spider), your child will gain fine motor skills needed for self-care and learning to write.
- Pick up a "My Little Rhyme Book" at a JCPL Branch and sing them with your child.
- Did you know you can have a dance party or learn a new song by listening to children's music on hoopla?



BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

There Was a Tree
by Rachel Isadora

5 Little Ducks
by Raffi

*Pete the Cat: The
Wheels on the Bus*
by James Dean

*If You're a Monster and
You Know It*
by Rebecca Emberley

Row, Row, Row Your Boat
by Jane Cabrera

JANUARY

2025

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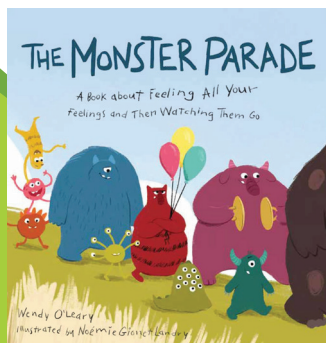
FRI

SAT

			<p>New Year's Day <i>JCPL Branches are closed.</i></p>	<p>Get your child their first library card or use the card you have.</p>		<p>Play Freeze Dance! Play music and pause it, then call "freeze!"</p>
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
	<p>Go "ice skating" in your socks at the Franklin Branch!</p>		<p>Sing through the days of the week. Make up the melody or search for one online.</p>		<p>Make up silly songs about everyday activities as you do them. ("This is the way we brush our teeth, ...")</p>	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>Sing as you read books that are also nursery rhymes. There are many choices - ask us to find some.</p>		<p>Bundle up and take a walk around our Exploration Walk after Preschool Storytime at the Clark Pleasant Branch.</p>		<p>Sing <i>The Wheels on the Bus</i>, add new verses to what you already sing.</p>		<p>Make music with things in the house (pots, wooden spoons, silverware) and have a dance party.</p>
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	<p>Martin Luther King Jr. Day. <i>JCPL is open!</i> Help your child think of something kind to do.</p>		<p>Play a game: "I see something you don't see, and the color is _____."</p>		<p>Make practicing your phone number a fun memory exercise by singing the numbers in different voices.</p>	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<p>Sing a favorite song in a loud voice and then in a whisper.</p>		<p>Sing <i>The Itsy Bitsy Spider</i>, then <i>Great Big Spider</i> and <i>Tiny Baby Spider</i>. Use different voices.</p>		<p>Have your child make up a song about what they did yesterday.</p>		
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Emotional literacy is the ability to identify, understand, and respond to one's own emotions and the emotions of others in a healthy way. Children who understand their emotions are better able to control them. Even just being able to name one's emotions improves future outcomes, especially in school.



BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

Too Much! An Overwhelming Day
by Jolene Gutierrez

The Color Monster: a Story about Emotions
by Anna Lenas

My Monster and Me
by Nadiya Hussain

The Monster Parade: A Book about Feeling All Your Feelings and Then Watching Them Go
by Wendy O'Leary

The Worry Balloon
by Mónica Mancillas

FEBRUARY

2025

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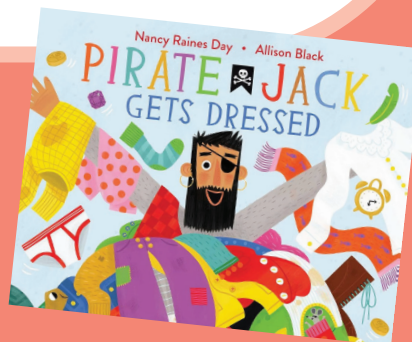
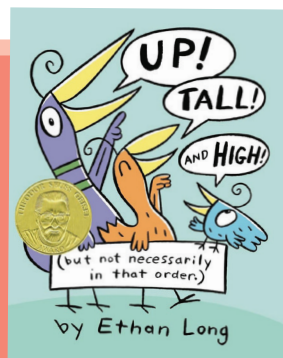
FRI

SAT

26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Play feelings charades! Act out emotions and have your child guess what they are.		After dinner, have your child draw how they felt about the day.		Read a book and discuss the characters' emotions. Ask questions like, "How do you think they feel?"		Practice belly breathing! Belly breaths expand the belly. They're an easy way to calm the mind and body.
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Role-play a situation in which your child might be upset, and talk them through their emotions.		With your family, sit in a circle and take turns giving everyone compliments.		Write a "love letter" to someone. Work with your child to create a card thanking them for their work.	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Role-play where you and your child need to apologize for something. Talk about how it feels to receive an apology.		Find and read a book with pictures of real people - talk about how they feel.		Check in with your child throughout the day and ask about their feelings and why they feel that way.		Do an act of kindness today - talk about why we do nice things for other people.
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Create a puppet show where you and your child can act out a scenario.		Explain more complex emotions to your child: embarrassment, jealousy, pride, etc.		Play music and dance. Stop the music and call out an emotion. Everyone will freeze in that emotion's pose.	
23	24	25	26	27	28	1

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Fine motor skills involve using the arms and hands in smaller movements, like reaching, grasping and manipulating objects. Practicing fine motor activities helps develop strength in the tiny hand muscles, which leads to success in tasks like buttoning clothing, using writing tools, and eating cleanly. Simple activities like ripping paper and stringing beads are great ways to build fine motor skills, but they can also be developed by doing other delicate tasks, like using tongs or even playing video games.



BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

The Big Book of Nature Art
by Yuval Zommer

I Can't Draw
by Stephen Martin

Can I Be Your Dog?
by Troy Cummings

Pirate Jack Gets Dressed
by Nancy Raines Day

Up, Tall and High
by Ethan Long

MARCH

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23	24	25	26	27	28	1
Use your imagination to build something silly with small blocks, like LEGO® bricks.		Hide treasures in a variety of reusable containers so your child can practice opening them.		Set the table with forks, spoons and knives for a fancy meal. Practice using utensils and manners.		Let your child pour their own drink today. Practice with water first if you are worried about spills!
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Play with Play-Doh or clay. Use your hands and fingers to roll, squeeze, pat and pound it.		Make a puppet out of an old sock or a paper bag. Decorate it, then put on a show.		Read <i>I Can't Draw</i> by Stephen Martin and use the instructions to draw a cat.	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Pick out an outfit with lots of buttons or snaps. Practice buttoning and unbuttoning the clothes.		Get messy with finger paint! Make pictures and practice letters with your fingers.		Have your child draw shapes and lines, then have them use child-safe scissors to cut out the drawings.		Get some spring cleaning in! Have your child wipe with a sponge or scrub with a brush.
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Go for a nature walk. Use a stick to write letters and numbers in the dirt.		Put together a puzzle. Try to find a child-sized puzzle that doesn't have huge pieces.		Let your child rip colored paper into pieces. Then paste the pieces into shapes or letters on paper.	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Let your child help in the kitchen, stir, whisk, chop and mix to strengthen their hands.						
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

PLAY

Play is one of the primary ways young children learn. Early play tends to involve exploration, experimentation, and observation - all of which help provide the foundation for early literacy. It can be as simple as giving them a rattle to explore or making funny faces for them to react to or imitate. As children grow and their play develops, it tends to support their language development and understanding of symbolism, as well as fostering a strong imagination. It allows for the introduction of new vocabulary and the exploration of complex ideas and concepts. Play at this age can look like throwing or rolling a ball, jumping in puddles, or engaging in imaginative play, such as pretending to be dinosaurs.

BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

This Beautiful Day
by Richard Jackson

Let's Play!
by Herve Tullet

The Weather Girls
by Aki

Grace and Box
by Kim Howard

*Goodbye Winter,
Hello Spring*
by Kenard Pak



APRIL

2025

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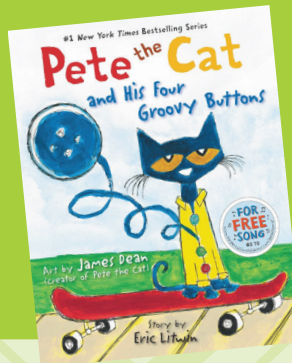
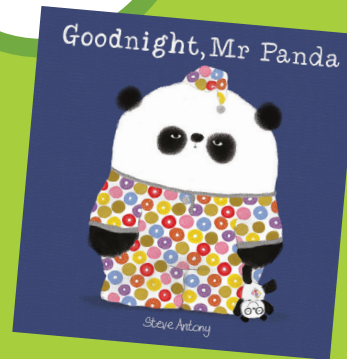
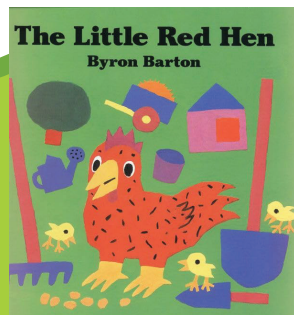
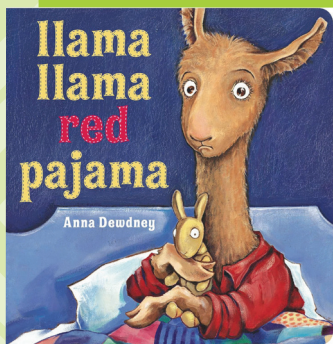
SAT

30	31	April Fool's Day Tell a funny joke.	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	1	2	3

READING

It's never too early to start reading to your child. When children are exposed to books often, they learn how to act like readers: how to hold the books, how to turn pages, and how to read words from left to right. Reading to your child with expression and fun voices encourages excitement. By making reading together a part of your daily routine, it can create a time that you can both look forward to.

- While reading to your child, take a moment to ask questions about the story. ("What do you think will happen next?" "What was your favorite part? And why?")
- Read your child's favorite book over and over to help them learn through repetition.
- Ask your child to "read" a story, guessing what the story is about by looking at the pictures.
- Set an example. Let your child see you reading and enjoying books to foster their love of reading.



May 12 - July 31

Visit any JCPL Branch to register or go to PageAfterPage.org/ExploreSummer

BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

Llama Llama Red Pajama
by Anna Dewdney

The Little Red Hen
by Byron Barton

Dragons Love Tacos
by Adam Rubin

Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons
by Eric Litwin

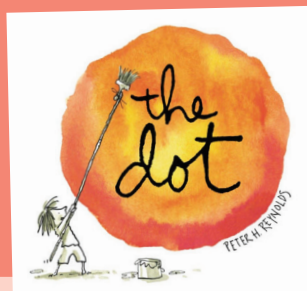
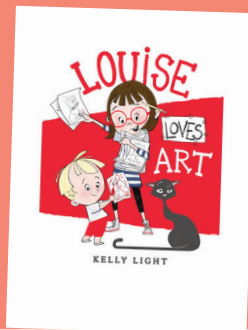
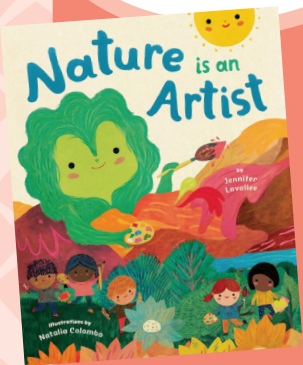
Good Night, Mr. Panda
by Steve Antony

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				Write your phone number and ask your child to practice tracing and reading the numbers aloud.		As you read a favorite book, pause every now and then and ask your child what happens next.
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
	Ask if they can find items that color in a book.		Select a subject your child enjoys. Then, visit the Library and borrow a nonfiction book about it to read together.		Take a walk around one of our JCPL StoryWalks®.	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mother's Day Read a book about moms and talk about all the ways they help families.	Explore Summer starts! Sign up online or at your Branch. 	Attend a preschool program at the Library this week.		Read a book about your child's favorite animal. See if you learn something new!		Point out words that start with the same letter as their first initial.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Play in the dirt! Write simple words in the dirt with sticks and help your child sound them out.		Point out signs everywhere. Explain what they say and how they help.		Make up a new ending to a favorite story.	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Read a book together. After you are finished, act out what happened.	Memorial Day JCPL Branches are closed.	Read a book about shapes and colors.		Go hunt a variety of flowers. Visit the Library, and find a book about flowers to see if you recognize any of them.		Read a bedtime story together.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

ART

Arts and crafts activities play a vital role in the development of many important skills in young children while also encouraging their creativity and sense of self-expression. Creating and looking at art has a positive influence on many different areas of your child's intellectual, emotional, and social development.

- Art activities such as drawing, painting, and coloring require children to simultaneously use their hands and eyes. Regularly doing these activities will improve children's hand-eye coordination.
- Cutting with scissors, using paintbrushes, and manipulating small materials like beads or buttons helps children develop and refine fine motor skills, especially those in the hands and fingers.
- Art and crafts projects that include cutting shapes, and gluing small pieces together help children cultivate precision and attention to detail. They learn to focus on details, which fosters their ability to concentrate and pay attention to intricate tasks.
- Through painting, drawing, and crafting, preschoolers are encouraged to explore their imagination, make choices, and express themselves in unique ways, boosting their creativity and self-expression skills.



BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

The Dot
by Peter Reynolds

Louise Loves Art
by Kelly Light

My Monsterpiece
by Amalia Hoffman

Nature is an Artist
by Jennifer Lavallee

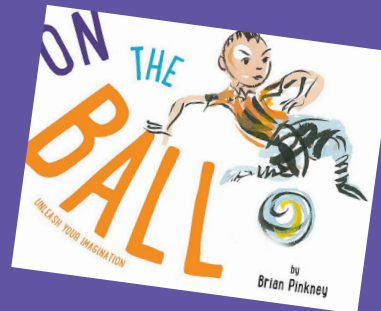
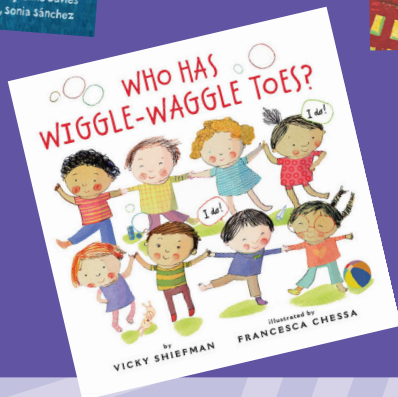
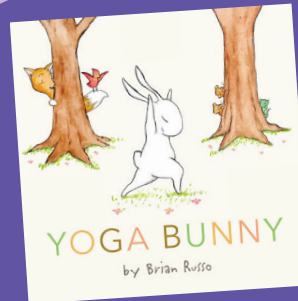
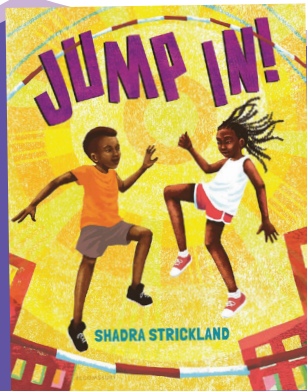
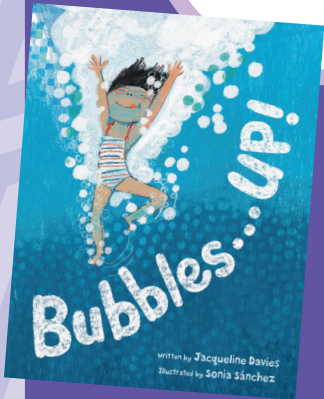
I Ain't Gonna Paint No More!
by Karen Beaumont

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

	Go for a walk and look for rocks. Take them home and paint or decorate them.		Make a list of your child's favorite animals and draw pictures of them.			Visit a JCPL StoryWalk® and discuss the illustrations. What did you like about the art style used?
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Go outside and gather some sticks. Wrap yarn or string around the sticks to create something new.		Make bubbles outside. Add paint and blow bubbles onto paper to create bubble art!		Get out the paint and try mixing the colors together to see what new colors you can make.		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Father's Day Get out some paper, crayons, and glue to create something special.		Write your child's name and have them trace it.	Look through a picture book with your child and make up new stories using just the pictures.		First Day of Summer Go outside with water and paintbrushes to draw pictures on the sidewalk with water.	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Practice cutting paper with scissors. Can you make a circle? Can you make a square?	Write down the first letter of your child's name. Have them turn that letter into a new picture.		Gather leaves and flowers outside to make a nature collage.		Use leftover sidewalk chalk to make sidewalk paint! Paint some pretty pictures on the sidewalk.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Go outside and look at the clouds. What shapes can you see?						
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Summer is a great time to practice gross motor skills! Gross motor skills use the large muscles in the body, as opposed to fine motor skills, which use the smaller muscles. We use the muscles in our arms, legs and torso for balance and coordination. Developing gross motor skills is important for everyday activities like walking, running, throwing and lifting. By the time a child reaches kindergarten, they should be able to run, skip, jump, and climb well. They may be learning how to swim or ride a bike. Every child is unique, and their skills may develop at different rates. Help build your child's confidence by encouraging them to be curious and take on new challenges.



BOOK SUGGESTIONS:

Yoga Bunny
by Brian Russo

Who has Wiggle-Waggle Toes?
by Vickie Shiefman

On the Ball
by Brian J. Pinkney

Bubbles... up!
by Jacqueline Davies

Jump In!
by Shadra Strickland

SUN

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		Create an obstacle course inside or outside to run around.		Find a line and practice walking on it. For an extra challenge, walk toe-to-heel.	Independence Day JCPL Branches are closed.	Have a balance challenge. See who can balance on one foot the longest.
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
	Go to the park and build some confidence by using a slide independently.		Play a game of catch. Practice throwing underhand and overhand.		Bounce a ball. Start with a larger playground ball, then move to a smaller ball.	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Hop forward like a bunny! See if you can make it 10 jumps without falling.		Gallop like a horse. Ask your child how other animals move.		Play "Simon Says." Have your child jump, squat and balance.	Get some friends together to play soccer or kickball.	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Go for a bicycle or tricycle ride.		Take the stairs. Encourage your child to climb independently and with alternating feet.		Build a track or ramp for wheeled toys, like trucks or cars.	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Jump rope together. Try to get your child to jump with both feet over the rope.		Practice yoga together. Deep breathing exercises are great for emotional regulation.		Explore Summer ends! If you haven't already, go to your JCPL branch to pick up your finisher's prize.		
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

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

LISTENING & SEQUENCING

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

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

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.)