

Kindergarten

Here I Am!

Activities to do with your kindergartener

December



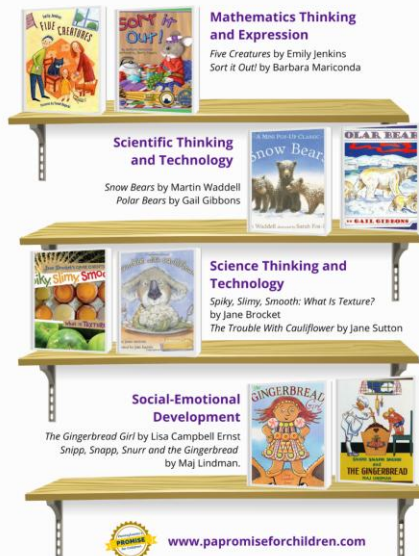
Now that your child is in kindergarten, there are new ways you can support their learning. Try these activities, then visit your library to find a book. [Click here to print this list.](#)

We are learning Mathematics, Thinking and Expression

Do it!

Get different sizes of bowls, spoons, pillows, toys, cups, plates, shoes, etc. Help your kindergartener sort them by size, categorizing them as small, medium, and large. You can also trace the objects being sorted on separate pieces of paper. To use the tracings as a matching activity, place the pictures in the correct order and then have your kindergartener match the items. For a self-check activity, let your kindergartener

DECEMBER BOOKS FOR KINDERGARTNERS



sort the objects and then put the photos in the correct sequence before the objects to see if they match.

Talk to your kindergartner as you manipulate objects using a variety of vocabulary, including synonyms for small and large, such as tall or short. Introduce the sign for those vocabulary words. Include their favorite toys to increase their desire to participate. Make sure the objects are easy enough for your child to manipulate. Enhance fine motor skills by using objects with handles that are easy to grasp.

Read it!

Five Creatures by Emily Jenkins. *Sort It Out!* by Barbara Mariconda.

We are learning Scientific Thinking and Technology

Do it!

Find the Arctic or Antarctic on a map or globe. Find Pennsylvania and then talk about how far away we are from those places and their weather. Try to find a 3D globe for your child to explore, allowing them to touch and interact with the continents, mountain ranges, and oceans. Show your child the name in print of the places you are exploring. Look for pictures of what it is like in the Arctic or Antarctic. Go outside and take photos of Pennsylvania, then compare the images. Allow your kindergartner to touch an ice cube or feel the steam over a cup of tea to give a tactile experience of the weather.

Read it!

Snow Bears by Martin Waddel. *Polar Bears* by Gail Gibbons.

We are learning Scientific Thinking and Technology

Do it!

Talk with your kindergartner about textures. Find pictures of items around your house that are smooth, rough, slippery, and bumpy. Ask your kindergartner to find objects that have the same texture. Create a feel box from a tissue box or

a baby wipe container. Gather items from your home that are identical in texture and composition. Place one item from each pair in the box. Keep those that match in a bag. Have your kindergartner choose an item from the bag, and then, without looking, have them try to find a matching item in the box.

This activity can increase your child's communication skills. Use many descriptive words to explain their feelings when they touch the textures. Introduce the signs for smooth, rough, slippery, and bumpy as you speak the words. You can try a similar activity during mealtime—for example, smooth yogurt, crunchy carrots, and rough cereal.

Read it!

Spiky, Slimy, Smooth: What Is Texture? by Jane Brocket. *The Trouble With Cauliflower* by Jane Sutton.

We are learning Social-Emotional Development

Do it!

Make a gingerbread person from clay, Play-Doh, or paper, like everyone in your family. Talk with your kindergartner about how they are different and the same. Expand their vocabulary by using descriptive words to describe each family member. Share descriptive words in signs to help increase your child's communication.

Read it!

The Gingerbread Girl by Lisa Campbell Ernst. *Snipp, Snapp, Snurr and the Gingerbread* by Maj Lindman.

Resources for You

Top Five Gifts for Your Kindergartner

Looking for the perfect gift to give your kindergartner this holiday season? PA's Promise has the perfect options! These gifts won't cost a cent but will last a lifetime.

[Click here to print the list in English or Spanish.](#)



School Success Starts at Home

Families who play with their kids and provide learning materials, such as books and craft supplies, help ensure their kids get started on the right foot.

[This quick video](#) from our friends at Child Trends offers ideas for low- or no-cost solutions to help your kindergartner succeed in school.



Whole Body Health

December Health Trends in Early Childhood Education: Nutrition Matters in Young Children

Approximately 47 million people in the U.S. face hunger, including 13 million children, according to Feeding America, a U.S. Hunger Relief Organization. There are well-established links between food insecurity and poor child health and behavioral outcomes at every age.



The [December Health Trends in Early Childhood](#) explores the impact of hunger on the rapid growth and development of young children, and how

understanding what and how to feed children in infancy through the early years can help establish healthy habits that will carry through into adulthood.

Each month, [Health Trends in ECE](#) shares information about a recent health trend, where readers can learn why it is important. Discover the impact it has on children, their families and caregivers, and the community, as well as actions to take to ensure the health and well-being of children in our communities.

Celebrate National Handwashing Week the First Week of December!



Winter is a wonderful season full of cozy moments, festive gatherings, and snowy adventures. It can also be a time when colds, flu, and other illnesses spread more easily. Luckily, one of the simplest and most effective ways to keep your family healthy is something we already do every day: handwashing!

National Handwashing Week is the perfect reminder that good handwashing habits help protect everyone—from babies and toddlers to teens and adults. With just a little practice, handwashing can become a fun and easy part of your daily routine.

Many of the [tips from the PA Department of Health](#) on how to prevent respiratory viruses (and other illnesses) in Early Childcare and Education programs can be used in your home. There are even fun coloring and song pages to print (available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)).

What You Should Know about RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)

You've probably heard that Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cases are rapidly increasing in Pennsylvania and nationwide. Levels of RSV are higher than usual for this time of year, so families need to know about RSV because some children can get very sick and need hospitalization.



RSV is a virus that usually causes common cold symptoms in most children and adults. Both children and adults can get it, but there's no vaccination available for RSV. While it usually causes mild illness, it is essential to know that younger children are at much higher risk of severe complications requiring urgent treatment and, in some cases, hospitalization.

Factors increasing children's risk for severe RSV infections include:

- 3 months of age or younger (due to difficulty clearing mucus from smaller airways)
- Being around other children in a school, childcare setting, or at home
- Living in crowded housing situations
- Exposure to secondhand smoke
- Children with a history of weakened immune systems, preterm birth, or heart or lung problems

[You can learn about the signs and symptoms of RSV and where to find additional resources.](#)



Discipline Without Spanking

Spanking a child may increase aggression in a child and may do long-term harm to a child, says a [study by the American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#). The use of spanking is also ineffective in teaching a child responsibility and self-control. Evidence shows it may cause harm by impacting a child's normal brain development.

Research has shown that striking a child and yelling at or shaming them can increase stress hormones and lead to changes in a child's brain. Harsh verbal abuse is also linked to mental health problems as children get older.

Other methods teach children right from wrong and are safer and more effective. Depending on the age and development of a child, various approaches may include redirecting their attention, distraction, changing the subject, positive reinforcement, time-out, and natural consequences. Visit the [PA Promise for Children website](#) and watch the short video below for resources related to parenting and discipline.

Contact your [Early Learning Resource Center](#) for more information about programs to support families in your community.



Mindfulness with Kindergartners

Children of all ages can benefit from mindfulness, a simple practice of bringing a gentle and accepting attitude to the present moment. It can also help families and caregivers by promoting happiness and relieving stress. [This article from The New York Times](#) offers basic tips for children and adults of all ages, as well as several activities that help develop compassion, focus, curiosity, and empathy. And remember, mindfulness can be fun.



Winter Safety Tips

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings, or just cold temperatures, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has [valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm.](#)



Calendar of Activities for Early Learning Providers

Start the new year with ways to help children learn and engage their families in their learning, with suggestions in the January Calendar of Activities for Early Learning Professionals. [Click here](#) to print the January Calendar of Activities for Early Learning Professionals.

