



Welcome to Kindergarten™
THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Family Activities for Early Learners

Resource Book



thelearningpartnership.ca

#WTKathome

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**Tell us what you think of
Welcome to Kindergarten!**

www.

You could win a set of early reading
books to share with your child.

thelearningpartnership.ca/WTK-survey

Survey closes June 30, 2017



You are your child's first and best teacher!

Parent engagement is consistently associated with higher student achievement across grades, standardized test scores, and overall educational outcomes¹. You can help your child succeed and the Welcome to Kindergarten program is designed to help you.






The Learning Partnership's Welcome to Kindergarten program brings together families, schools and community agencies to support children in making a successful transition to school.

During Welcome to Kindergarten orientation sessions, fun play-based activities offer families opportunities to engage in active learning with their children, with support from school staff and community agencies.

Over 117,000 families in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Quebec participated last year in the Welcome to Kindergarten program. The program offers strategies and resources in French and English, including this resource book and a Welcome to Kindergarten bag filled with items to engage your child in play-based learning. Parent information is also available in 12 other languages.

¹Jeynes, W. (2005). "Parental Involvement and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis".
Harvard Family Research Project





Talk, Read, Sing, Play Everyday!

-  Follow your child's lead as you play and discover together.
-  Talk and read with your child in your first language.
-  Help your child to share and take turns.
-  Encourage your child to make choices and decisions.
-  Celebrate your child's learning.



Talk





Talking supports communication and relationship-building skills. Strengthen your child's vocabulary by listening and speaking to your child regularly. Share stories that are interesting to your child and encourage their imagination.

-  Look at and talk about the pictures in your books. Make connections to your child's world.
-  Count items in the home (pairs of socks, numbers of forks, knives, spoons needed for a family meal).
-  Discover what materials the magnetic letters and numbers in your Welcome to Kindergarten bag will attach to.
-  Create patterns and sequences of colours, letters, shapes and numbers (ababa 123 123).



Read

Reading daily to your child will help develop vocabulary and foster an interest in stories and pursuing knowledge. Strengthen your child's abilities to recognize print, letter and number relationships by linking letters and numbers in the bag to books, objects in the home and in the environment.

-  Read different types of stories that are of interest to your child.
-  Visit your local library and participate in library programs.
-  Match the magnetic letters and numbers in your Welcome to Kindergarten bag to the template; sing the ABC song; and build your child's name on the fridge, cookie sheet or placemat.
-  Match the letters and numbers to those in a book, on a cereal box or to any form of large print.



Cook, learn and enjoy eating together!

Download the free *Welcome to Kindergarten Family Cookbook* from our website!

Family cooking will support children in learning early math and science concepts such as the difference between liquids and solids, the concepts of more and less, and the concept of sequence and order of numbers.

thelearningpartnership.ca/WTK-resources



Sing and Move

Children love music and physical movement. Music teaches children to recognize rhythm, rhyme and patterning. It stimulates learning and helps young children develop communication and thinking skills. As children engage in singing songs, poems and chants, they are exposed to many concepts about language. Movement and being active develop habits to support healthy choices and long-term health.



Sing and dance together!

Children's songs are available for free download through our Welcome to Kindergarten app or website.

thelearningpartnership.ca/WTK-music

- Sing, dance, clap and count as you listen to the Welcome to Kindergarten music.
- Bounce, kick and catch the ball to the rhythm of the songs.
- Explore with your child how you can play with the ball: squeeze, throw, bounce, pass, catch, roll, kick using one hand, two hands, one foot and two feet. Use words to describe the ball and what it can do: "Let's roll the ball fast / slow / through the legs / with two hands / with one hand / with our feet. Let's bounce the ball three times."
- Encourage taking turns and expand ball activity time to include others.



Play

Playing strengthens decision making and cooperation skills. Playing with objects, such as a ball, helps children develop muscle control, spatial awareness and hand-eye coordination. Use the items in your bag to encourage your child's curiosity, creativity and imagination!

- Encourage your child to draw and paint pictures with crayons, markers, finger paint or other fun materials, such as sand and shaving cream.
- Search for and cut out pictures your child finds interesting from old magazines and newspapers.
- Explore different ways of attaching favourite pictures to paper or other items, such as a shoe box.
- Praise your child's art and post it for everyone to see.

Tactile Play

Playdough helps children develop their imagination as well as finger control, coordination and measurement skills. Encourage your child to create objects, shapes, animals or letters in different colours.

Playdough recipe:

600 ml of flour (2 1/2 cups), 120 ml of salt (1/2 cup), 10 ml cream of tartar or alum (2 teaspoons), 480 ml boiling water (2 cups), 30 ml of oil (2-3 tablespoons), 2 packages unsweetened kool-aid.

1. Combine the ingredients together and stir well.
2. Knead the dough and it is ready to use.
3. Store it in a covered plastic container or zip-lock bag.



📷 Take pictures of your creations and post them online with other Canadian families on Twitter: #WTKathome

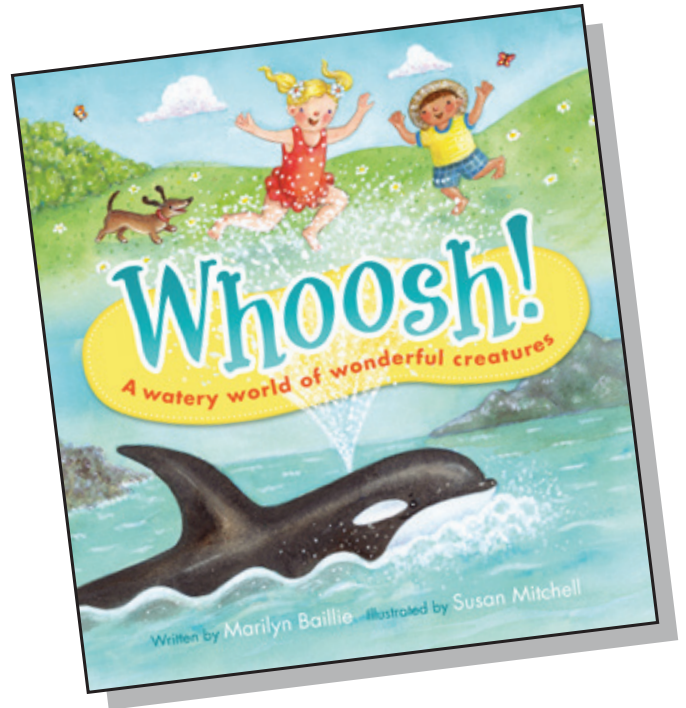
Dive into Kindergarten: *Whoosh!*

Use the books in your Welcome to Kindergarten resource bag to engage your child in many ways. Here are some suggested family activities to supplement the picture book *Whoosh!*



Talk

- Go through the pages. Do you see any animals you recognize?
- Count all the animals in the book. How many have a trunk? How many have feathers? How many have a tail? Which one has the brightest colours? Which one is the largest of all the animals?
- Talk about the skin of water animals. Do you think that the skin is smooth, nubby, rough, wrinkled?
- Find the animals that live near water, on water or on both land and water.
- Compare and contrast: How is an elephant different from an alligator?
- Think of a water animal you would like to be. Why do you like this water animal? Talk about some characteristics of the animal, such as size and what covers its body. Does it live and breathe under the water? How does it move in the water?



Read

- While sitting side by side with your child, hold the book up and read each page. Now and then, stop reading to look at the pictures and discuss what the child sees.
- Line up all of the lowercase letters from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag.
 - Turn the pages of the book and name each animal while you find the letter that begins each animal's name.
 - Find the letters that begin your first and last names. Do you share any starting letters with any of the animals?
 - Now find all the letters for your first name.
- Look at the animal pictures at the end of the book and if your child is ready read some interesting facts about the animals.
- Point to a mini picture and see how fast the child can find that animal within the book. You can add some fun by counting slowly to three.





Sing and Move

- Play *Listen to The Water* from the Welcome to Kindergarten songs list and pretend you are a bird, a fish, or a duck. Crouch down and paddle your duck feet or flap your feathery arms to fly in the sky. Show how each creature moves about.
- Sing the *Hokey Pokey* song. Sing it as you pretend to pull your bathing suit and swim gear on.
 - Put each part of you into the water: “Put your right foot in, put your right foot out, put your right foot in and turn yourself about...” The river water is cold! Now put your left foot in and sing the “Hokey Pokey” until your whole body is in the water.
- Read the puzzle on the last page of the book and do the actions:
 - Reach way up high, now crouch down low... Now you are ready to start...
 - Play some music and try it again!
 - When you need to take a rest, go back within the book pages and find each animal you just pretended to be.



Play

- With the crayons from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag, draw a picture of a water animal you like best in the book, or you can draw an animal you would like to be. It can even be a pet, imagined or real!
- With the playdough, make a water animal or something you like to play with in the water.
- Cut with the scissors or tear shapes from the coloured paper. Glue some shapes onto the paper and make a fantastic sea monster. Can your water monster swim as well as fly and run? Tell a story about your amazing water creature creation.
- Visit a local zoo, pet shop or an aquarium and see how many animals you can find that are mentioned in the book.



Water science activities:

A variety of water science concepts help to develop the scientific skills of observing, sorting, organizing, measuring, examining, predicting and evaluating.

- **Water density:** Choose a variety of objects and have your child predict which objects will float or sink. Test it out.
- **Changing state:** Make jello, freeze popsicles, leave water out on a saucer overnight during the winter.
- **Water temperature:** Boil an egg for lunch. See what hot water temperature can do.
- **Water changing shape:** Provide your child with water and containers of different shapes and sizes.
- **Soluble vs. insoluble:** Add the following to water and see what happens: salt, sugar, oil, sand, food colouring, vinegar.
- **Water as a basic need:** Have your child water plants. Measure their growth.

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Family activities with the Chirp magazine

You'll find a special Welcome to Kindergarten edition of Chirp magazine inside your Welcome to Kindergarten resource bag. As you and your child complete the fun activities in the magazine, here are additional ways to engage your child to talk, read, sing, move and play!



Pria's First Day: Page 12

Talk

Talk about your child's first day of school in September. Have your child show his/her Welcome to Kindergarten bag to family and friends. Use it to talk about school and what going to school will be like. Have other friends and family use the materials with your child.

Read

Read *Pria's First Day* many times. Find a time each day to sit and read with your child. Make reading a special time to share. Practice the three Cs of reading: Cuddle, Conversation and Choice.

Sing and Move

Learn the *Welcome to Kindergarten* song and all of the actions. Make up some of your own.

Play

Check out the Chirp video series on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation website. Provide a place and materials that allow your child to copy the Chirp adventures or create his/her own pretend stories.

Super School Bus: Page 19

Talk Talk about the school bus as a way to get to school. What are the bus safety rules? How do other kids get to school? What direction do we go to get to school? Walk the school route and talk about all of the landmarks on the way to school. Play a simple game such as I Spy: "I spy something with my little eye that is tall." Possible answers could be a tree or a telephone pole.

Read Read other books about going to school. Visit the library and ask the librarian to help. When you read stories with your child, talk about the pictures. Ask questions about what they see on each page: "Have you ever felt that way? What do you think will happen next?"



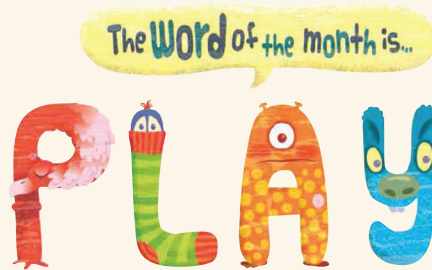
Sing and Move Download the Welcome to Kindergarten songs and learn the lyrics and actions to *Welcome to Kindergarten*, *The Kindergarten Class is Going to the Zoo*, and *In the Morning*. (thelearningpartnership.ca/MTK-music)

Play Create your own super school bus. What other super vehicles could you create: a fire truck, sports car, ambulance, dump truck, a hydro truck? Share your creations on social media. At home, collect magazines and flyers that include images of cars, trucks and other vehicles. Let your child practice cutting and pasting the pictures on coloured paper.

Word of the Month: Page 10

Talk Help your child notice letters in places that are familiar: street signs, family names, the grocery store. Use the magnetic letters in the Welcome to Kindergarten bag to match family names.

Read Visit the public library and read alphabet books. Re-read your favourite books and pick out favourite words to print, colour and create in funny and interesting ways.



Sing and Move Learn the Welcome to Kindergarten song *Jump Up Jump Down*, and have fun following the actions and making up your own actions.

Play Use playdough to roll and shape letters of the alphabet. Put the letters together to make favourite words.








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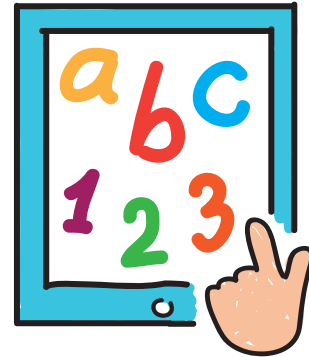
Welcome to Kindergarten app

We encourage you to explore the Welcome to Kindergarten app and learn many new things with your child. The app is free and can be used on an iPad (2 or higher) or an Android-supported tablet.

To download and install, visit: thelearningpartnership.ca/WTK-app

Use the Welcome to Kindergarten app to:

-  Talk about and play with letters and numbers
-  Use fingers to paint and create
-  Make choices, share and take turns
-  Identify letters and numbers
-  Discover shapes and colours
-  Sing along with the music player
-  Play and learn together



We welcome your feedback on the Welcome to Kindergarten app. Tap the "Information" button and type in the numbers listed at the top of the page. Tap "Take Our Survey" and then tap "Yes" to leave the app. Tap "Submit" when you have responded to the four questions. Thank you!







Media use and the family




Through digital media we communicate with each other freely and entertain ourselves endlessly. Any type of information we want is just a click away. Computers, tablets, cell phones, video games and television are all around us, and the influence of media is everywhere.

Raising children in this digital age is filled with opportunity and also with challenges. The early years are a critical time in making healthy media choices and developing good habits that nurture positive growth. How can families successfully structure and navigate the virtual world on behalf of their young children?

Healthy media activities

-  Engage with your child in their media experience to help your child develop socially, promote language development and enrich learning.
-  Be selective about your child's media experiences and look for open-ended, creative opportunities that generate conversation.
-  Balance media time with playtime. Make unplugged playtime a daily priority. Keep family mealtimes and other social gatherings tech-free.
-  Use parental control settings that keep your child safe from inappropriate Internet content. Check out the excellent parent resources at: commonsensemedia.org

Unhealthy media activities

-  Passive viewing, content with adult or violent themes, fast-paced frenetic imagery and repetitive click-and-swipe game experiences.
-  Using technology to manage behaviour: Media can be very effective in keeping kids calm and quiet, but it should not be the only way they learn to calm down. Children need to be taught how to identify and handle strong emotions, come up with activities to manage boredom, calm down through breathing, talking about ways to solve a problem, and finding other strategies for channeling emotions.
-  Allowing children to access media whenever and wherever they please: Tech use is often sedentary. Kids need to be active to be healthy.



“Screen time in the preschool years should be limited. Instead of screen time, children can be encouraged to engage in unstructured free play (especially outdoors and in nature), physical activity (e.g., playing at the park, dancing to music), pretend play, dress-up, exploring, imagining, building, looking at and listening to books, playing with other children, creating (e.g., create a craft box) and fine motor skill activities (e.g., puzzles, beading).”

— **Dr. Joelene Huber**, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, and medical journalist.



“Video gaming before bed creates stress that leads to poor sleep; reading a book before bed creates relaxation that leads to restorative sleep.”

— **Dr. Stuart Shanker**, The MEHRIT Centre

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Welcome to Kindergarten is a program of The Learning Partnership, a national charitable organization dedicated to building stakeholder partnerships to support, promote and advance publicly funded education in Canada. We do this through five key deliverables: innovative student programs, executive leadership for educators, knowledge mobilization and policy, tribute celebrations of excellence and ongoing collaborations across Canada. Since 1993, more than 6.5 million students have participated in The Learning Partnership's programs. For more information on The Learning Partnership, visit thelearningpartnership.ca.



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