

# Putnam Public Schools

A Parent's Guide to

# TRANSITIONING TO PRESCHOOL



## THINKING & LEARNING

### Ways to encourage your child's cognitive skills

- ★ Collect real objects that go together: shoe/sock, hammer/nail.
- ★ Involve your child in putting pictures in order. You can use photos of your child at different ages or pictures cut from a magazine.
- ★ Let your child help you fold laundry. Your child can match socks and other clothes by color or size.
- ★ Ask open-ended questions that allow your child to make their own discoveries, problem-solve and make corrections  
*What would happen if ...? Tell me about ...? What could you do about it?*
- ★ Have simple puzzles available for your child to play with. Make puzzles by cutting up greeting cards or the front of a cereal box into puzzle-shaped pieces.
- ★ Help your child attend to an activity for longer periods of time.



## BEGINNING READING

### Ways to encourage your child's beginning reading skills

- ★ Set aside a special time each day to read with your child. Read your child's favorite books and rhymes over and over. Read some of your favorites from childhood too. Talk with your child about the story and the characters.
- ★ Involve your child in putting pictures in order. You can use photos of your child at different ages or pictures cut from a magazine.
- ★ Get a set of letter magnets and put them on the refrigerator or a cookie sheet for your child to play with.
- ★ Make a name card for your child. Display the name card in a special place and talk to your child about the names of the letters.
- ★ Using pictures from a magazine or real objects and magnetic letters help your child match pictures to their beginning letter sound.
- ★ Point out and say the names of familiar words or symbols that you see.



## BEGINNING WRITING

### Ways to encourage your child's beginning writing skills

- ★ Let your child use school tools such as pencils, washable markers, crayons and blunt-tipped scissors. Gather and organize these materials, along with some paper, in a box that your child can decorate and have access to.
- ★ Encourage your child to explore with drawing materials and to use drawing to express his or her ideas.
- ★ Let your child see that written words are a part of daily life. Make grocery lists together or write notes to relatives and friends. Point out the different ways that you use writing in your daily routine.
- ★ Label your child's belongings with his or her name. Let your child label some of his or her own things such as, a notebook or crayon box.
- ★ Provide plenty of experiences with scribbling, drawing and making lines with pencils, crayons, markers, paints and chalk. In preschool, children will learn to write their names, capitalizing only the first letter.



## SPEECH & LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### Ways to encourage your child's language development

- ★ Take time each day to listen to and talk with your child. Some good times for conversation are while traveling, at mealtimes and at bedtime.
- ★ Encourage your child to listen to and use language to express ideas.
- ★ Model simple language during play.
- ★ Involve your child in activities and games that require listening and following directions.
- ★ Read and tell stories that have interesting characters and easy-to-follow plots. Talk with your child about the stories after you read or tell them. Encourage them to point to and label pictures as you are reading the story.
- ★ Read and sing nursery rhymes and rhyming stories with your child.
- ★ Ask open-ended questions to encourage your child's vocabulary.  
*Tell me about ...? Why do you think that happened?*
- ★ Model appropriate speech sounds for your child.





## NUMBERS & COUNTING

### Ways to encourage your child's skills with numbers & counting

- ★ Collect a variety of materials your child can use for counting and learning about numbers. Old keys, plastic bottle caps, thread spools, and pictures from magazines all work well.
- ★ Use materials from around the house to experiment with addition, subtraction and focus on activities involving “more” and “less”.
- ★ Use number words, point out numbers, and involve your child in counting activities as you go through your day.
- ★ Read, tell stories, sing songs, and say poems about numbers and counting with your child. Try to include books in which characters are added or subtracted as the story progresses. Good books include: *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*, by Eileen Christelow and *Roll Over! A Counting Song* by Merle Peek.



## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

### Ways to encourage your child's physical development

#### GROSS MOTOR:

- ★ Collect safe toys and equipment to help your child develop his or her muscles. Some examples are hula hoops, bean bags, tricycle, large beach balls and a child-sized basketball hoop.
- ★ Give your child the space and freedom to use large muscles, both indoors and outdoors. You can set up empty water bottles like bowling pins and let your child use a soft ball to “bowl.” Invite your child to toss rolled up socks into a basket or a masking tape circle on the floor.
- ★ Join your child in active play: dancing, marching, hopping, skipping or playing ball.



#### FINE MOTOR:

- ★ Allow your child opportunities to develop hand muscles using squirt/spray bottles, tongs, eye droppers, wind-up toys, legos, peg boards, bubble wrap, finger painting, stringing beads and clothespins.
- ★ Give your child opportunities to cut with scissors while you watch. Your child can start by cutting playdough snakes, straws and thick paper. Encourage your child to use the appropriate “thumbs-up” grasp.
- ★ Provide your child plenty of experiences with scribbling, drawing and making lines with pencils, crayons, markers, paints and chalk.



## SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Ways to encourage your child's social & emotional development

- ★ Create with your child an “All About Me And My Family” book. Staple or tie a few sheets of paper together to make the book. Involve your child in adding personal information, such as first and last name, parents’ names, child’s gender, age, address, likes and dislikes. Your child can make a cover and decorate the book.
- ★ Support and celebrate your child’s independence. Give lots of praise for things your child has learned to do on his or her own, such as brushing teeth, washing hands, picking up toys, putting on shoes, zipping jackets, riding a tricycle, and buttoning shirts.
- ★ Help prepare your child for preschool by pretending to go to school and practicing how you will say goodbye. Visit the new school to meet the teacher and explore the classroom.
- ★ Provide lots of opportunities for your child to play and participate in group play such as, story hours and play and learn groups. Help your child practice sharing, taking turns and using appropriate greetings.
- ★ Establish regular daily routines such as, bedtime, reading time and quiet time. Have children practice following simple directions such as, “Get your shoes please.”
- ★ Help your child express their feelings appropriately and encourage your child to solve problems with friends by using words or asking for adult help, as needed.

