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# COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

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## Family Engagement Calendar

Welcome! Did you know your child is ready to learn anywhere and any time? It's true! Even before starting school, your child is learning every day. Whenever your family is talking or playing together, you are helping your child grow. You are their first and most important teacher!

There are suggestions in this calendar for ways to help your child learn during the year. Use linked activities for more ways you can play and learn at home. This calendar uses colors to help you know which activities may be easier for **3 to 5 year olds**. Some may be too difficult for younger children and are best for the year **before kindergarten**. It is also used to highlight the **kindergarten transition process**.

Soon your child will be going to kindergarten. This is an exciting time! Your family may have questions about signing up or getting ready for kindergarten. This calendar will help you. It has information about how to register your child for school. The focus is on [Jefferson County Public Schools](#) (JCPS). However, if you are choosing another school option for your child, the process may be similar.

You may have heard people talk about "Kindergarten Readiness." Some families worry that their children are not ready and will not be able to attend kindergarten. That's not true! Children learn and grow at their own pace. School staff will get to know your child. They will learn what they know and what they are ready to do. Schools will meet children where they are and help them succeed.



**If your family is choosing JCPS and has questions, contact the JCPS Call Center at 502-313-HELP (4357). Team members will connect you to the appropriate JCPS department or staff member. You can also email at [jcps.help@jefferson.kyschools.us](mailto:jcps.help@jefferson.kyschools.us).**

Finally, if your family is interested in additional kindergarten options, this [resource](#) has information about other kindergarten programs in the community.

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# ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT TRANSITION AT ANYTIME

## 3 to 5 Years

- Consider enrolling in Metro United Way's [Ages and Stages Questionnaire](#) Hub. You can sign up for this free screening program anytime between birth and kindergarten entry to learn more about your child's strengths and to learn more about activities that will help your child learn.
- Talk with your child. The back-and-forth of conversation is important for building your child's brain. Talking to your child in any language helps their brain to make important connections. Use the languages that are most comfortable for you and your child at home: [Speaks in Five to Six Word Sentences Family Activity](#).
- Say nursery rhymes or sing songs with your children: [Sing Simple Songs Family Activity](#).
- Look at books together. You do not have to read words to read with your child. Talk with them about what they see in books. Ask questions such as "What are they doing?" or "Where are they?" Let your child ask questions, too.
- Make sure there are books in your home. These resources can help you read with your child and have access to books.
  - The Louisville Free Public Library sponsors a [1000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge](#).
  - Families with children age 0 to 5 in eligible zip codes can sign up for [Imagination Library of Louisville](#).
  - Additionally, all families can access the [Louisville Growing Readers digital library](#) including special Louisville books.



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# ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT TRANSITION AT ANYTIME

## Kindergarten Transition Process

- Make sure you know when your child will be old enough to start kindergarten. In Kentucky, children must turn five by August 1 to enroll for that school year. If children turn 5 between August 2 and October 1, families can apply for [early kindergarten admission](#) and screening between December 1 and March 1. Children must begin kindergarten by the time they are six.
- If your family speaks languages outside of English, you may request interpretation when interacting with JCPS staff. The school district is required to give families access to an interpreter to promote communication with school staff. JCPS has created [I Speak Cards](#) to support families in requesting interpreters.
- If you have concerns about your child's development, talk to your doctor. There are programs in the community such as [First Steps](#) or [JCPS Early Childhood](#) that can help. Additionally, you can contact [JCPS Exceptional Child Education \(ECE\) Services](#) if you believe your child needs extra support for kindergarten.
- Explore JCPS [Ready4K resources](#). The [JCPS Checklist](#) is another resource which families can review to understand how all children are ready to grow and learn in kindergarten.



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This calendar will guide you through the process of choosing a school and enrolling your child for kindergarten. It also has activities to help your child grow and learn!



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**SEPTEMBER**

**11 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN**



### 3 to 5 Years

- Routines are important! Create routines around meals, bath time, or bedtime. It helps your child to feel safe and independent when they know what comes next: [Simple Rules and Routines Family Activity](#).

### Kindergarten Transition Process

- Begin exploring your family's options for kindergarten. The [JCPS School Finder website](#) is a good place to start. JCPS also offers [School Choice guides](#) in Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Nepali, and Somali. Families can also visit school websites and talk to friends and co-workers.
- What type of school is the best fit for your child and family? The [Elementary School Choice guides](#) explain school clusters, magnet schools, and magnet programs in JCPS. Find the best school for your child. Your family might also explore other kindergarten options in our community.
- Watch for special events in the community! The [JCPS Office of School Choice](#) has team members at events to support families with school choice, registration, and application. (Registration is setting up an online account with JCPS and showing proof of address. Application is requesting your school choices.)



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**OCTOBER**

10 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



### 3 to 5 Years

- Count and talk about numbers with your child. You can use your fingers to count. Have your child practice counting items when you go for a walk or visit a store: [Counts in Sequence up to 30 Family Activity](#).

### Kindergarten Transition Process

- Attend the [JCPS Showcase of Schools](#). You can talk to staff from every elementary school and learn more about school choices available to your family. You can also learn about the processes for registering and applying to JCPS. Interpreters will be available to help your family communicate in your preferred language.
- If your family is choosing JCPS, [register your child](#) for kindergarten online. Even if you have other children attending JCPS, you must register your 5-year-old for kindergarten. Registration requires two steps:
  - Complete the online form. You need your and your child's name, date of birth, gender, phone number, and email address.
  - Submit proof of address: LGE or water bill, paycheck stub, signed lease or deed, or government agency correspondence. If your family does not have a fixed address, you can contact the Office of Access and Opportunity at 502-485-3650. They may be able to help you.
- If you need help, you can [schedule a registration appointment](#) with JCPS. You can also request an interpreter. Remember, registration is setting up an online account with JCPS and showing proof of address.



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**NOVEMBER**

9 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



### Year Prior to Kindergarten

- Talk to your child about words and letters they see around them. Start with the letters in your child's name. Then keep adding new letters a few at a time. Talking about letters and words helps children learn that these symbols carry messages:  
[Uses Scribbling and Drawing to Express Ideas Family Activity](#).

### Kindergarten Transition Process

- Most schools have open houses or offer tours. You can see the school and meet staff. This is a great way to learn more about your school choices. Call the school to ask about open houses and tours. JCPS has a [list of events](#) for families interested in their schools. Families can request interpreters for JCPS events.
- If you are choosing JCPS, your family can apply in November. Applying is when you select your top school choices for your child. Make sure to do this by December, so your child has the best chance to attend schools that are a good fit for them.



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# DECEMBER

8 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



## 3 to 5 Years

- Your child can sign their name to cards or gift tags. Help them practice writing their name. You can show your child how to hold a pencil or marker when writing: [Reads and Writes Own Name Family Activity](#).
- Give your child chances to draw! They can create art. Their drawings may look like scribbles, but they mean something to your child. Ask your child to tell you about their drawings: [Uses Pictures to Tell a Story Family Activity](#).

## Kindergarten Transition Process

- The application deadline for [JCPS](#) is in December. Make sure your family has applied for the schools that best fit your child's needs!



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# JANUARY

7 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



## 3 to 5 Years

- Winter means coats and hats! Help your child learn how to dress themselves. It may take a little longer, but it encourages them to be more independent. Knowing how to button, zip, and put on clothing are helpful skills for life: [Fastens and Unfastens Clothing on Own Family Activity](#).
- Talk to your child about colors and shapes. You can find colors and shapes where you live, at the store, or walking outside. Try playing a game of “I Spy” with your child: I spy with my little eye something that is \_\_\_\_\_. You can also ask your child to find three things that are the same color: [Recognizes, Names, and Copies Basic Shapes Family Activity](#).



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**FEBRUARY**

6 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



### 3 to 5 Years

- Use feeling words like happy, sad, mad, scared, and excited with your child. Children need words to talk about how they are feeling. You can also use feeling words for yourself when you are with your child. You might be excited to go somewhere or sad when it rains: [Expresses Own Needs and Wants Family Activity](#).
- Visit the library with your child. It is a great way to learn in the winter when it is cold. Storytime and other library activities are a great place to meet and talk to other children and families, too! All families can enjoy library programming. Your family may be able to get a library card at the [Louisville Free Public Library](#).
- Talk to your child about sounds. Tune in to everything: music, sounds of birds or insects, clapping, and even laughter. Help your child listen and talk about how sounds are alike and different.



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# MARCH

5 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



## 3 to 5 Years

- Go outside to hop, skip, and jump with your child. Trips to the playground are fun and your child can climb steps and play on balance beams. These activities build muscles while improving coordination and balance: [Run, Jump, and Climb Family Activity](#).

## Kindergarten Transition Process

- Children need to have [immunizations](#), [physical examinations](#), dental checkups, and eye examinations as they begin kindergarten. The spring is a great time to make appointments with doctors and dentists. You can visit [Family Health Centers](#) for providers, services, and information in your preferred language.
- If your family speaks additional languages at home, your child may be able to receive English Learner services from JCPS. You can request screening up to six months before kindergarten starts. Reach out to the [English as a Second Language](#) (ESL) department for support.



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APRIL

4 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



### 3 to 5 Years

- Encourage your child to eat independently. Let them practice using a fork or spoon. Families can also teach their children to open packages. This motor work will help your child's hands grow stronger, so they can do more things on their own: [Feeds Self by Using Utensils Family Activity](#).

### Kindergarten Transition Process

- If you applied to JCPS, this is the month when you will learn your family's school assignment! Follow the school's social media accounts to begin connecting to your school community.
- Many schools host spring family activities and will welcome their incoming kindergarten families. Check the school's website for events and dates. The more time your child and family can spend in your new school, the more comfortable you will feel.



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**MAY**

**3 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN**



### Year Prior to Kindergarten

- Practice answering questions like, “Where do you live?” and “What is your phone number?” Your child needs to know this information if there is an emergency: [Knows Personal Information Family Activity](#).
- Look at books about school. You can talk about how the characters are making friends and learning at school: [Plays and Shares with Other Children Family Activity](#).

### Kindergarten Transition Process

- See if your child is eligible for the JCPS Camp Ready4K—a summer camp to help welcome children into kindergarten. Registration typically occurs in early May. This program fills up quickly, so sign up early!
- Watch for information from your school about welcome events during the summer and early fall. Many schools will send mail or email to your family.



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# SUMMER

2 MONTHS 'TIL  
KINDERGARTEN



## 3 to 5 Years

- Many community organizations offer summer programming for families. Sign up for the library's Summer Reading Program or the [Louisville Cultural Pass](#).

## Kindergarten Transition Process

- Your child will need back-to-school supplies such as a backpack and clothing. Find out what your child needs for their school. Look for the list on the school's website. Make a plan to get as much of it ready as possible. Many community partners host supply give-aways.
- If your family needs help, reach out to the [Family Resource Center \(FRC\) coordinator](#) at your school. The FRC can help your family access the JCPS Clothing Assistance Program (CAP) which can provide free uniforms and other clothing. They can also help with supplies and appointments for health screenings.
- Walk, ride, or drive by your child's school if possible this summer. Point the building out to your child and talk about how much they are going to learn at school. This helps your child know that school is a safe place where learning happens.



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**AUGUST**

**KINDERGARTEN  
IS HERE!**



### Year Prior to Kindergarten

- Two weeks before school starts, talk to your child about their first day of school. Help them make a plan for routines such as laying out clothes the night before and packing their backpack: [Keeps Track of Personal Belongings Family Activity](#).
- Discuss how your child will get to school. Will they walk? [Ride a bus](#)? Or be driven by a friend or family member? See the [Separates Easily from Parents and Family Activity](#).

### Kindergarten Transition Process

- Try to attend events such as kindergarten camp, open house, and meet the teacher that will allow your family to visit the school. As your child becomes familiar with their school, they will feel safer and more excited about starting kindergarten.
- Your family may qualify for free or reduced price meals at school. [Find out if your school provides free meals to all students or if you need to complete a form](#). If you have questions, your child's office staff will be able to help.



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# SEPTEMBER

## KINDERGARTEN IS HERE!



### Year Prior to Kindergarten

- The first month of kindergarten may be fun and exciting. Celebrate your child as they do and learn new things. Don't worry if your child takes a few weeks to get used to waking up, getting ready for school, and going to school. You can help them by having set routines, getting plenty of sleep, and spending time together reading or playing.
- The start of school is different for every child. Your child may love school from the start or may take some time to adjust to new routines. One of the most important things you can do as a family is connect with your child's teacher early and often. Learn how best to talk to your child's teacher about questions you may have or information you want to share about your child.



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