

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

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Introduction

Congratulations! You are beginning a very exciting and important time for your family. Your child's formal educational career is about to start and you are their first and most important teacher and advocate. Your role as a parent is more important than ever!

Most parents don't realize preparation at home **begins a full year or more** before their child walks through the school doors. This guide was written to support you with information and ideas as you begin this journey.

Parent involvement at school is important. Volunteering gives you an opportunity to know the principal and teachers, and in turn, bring their attention to your child. There are a number of ways you can become involved, such as volunteering in the library or classroom, attending field trips, or helping with special events. Also look for parent committees that support the running of the school.

Enjoy yourself, and enjoy your child during this special time. Don't be afraid to ask questions!

This guide is available in PDF format. The sample letters to teachers and other parents are also available in a Word document. Contact Alberta Hands & Voices to obtain these files by email at info@albertahandsandvoice.com.

**The term "FM" means frequency-modulated. Newer technology that is now available (and increasingly popular) is "DM" or digitally-modulated, such as the Phonak Roger system. In order to include both FM and DM, the newer correct term is Remote Microphone Hearing Assistance Technology (RM-HAT). However, since teachers are familiar with the term "FM system," this guide will use the more commonly known term.*

Adapted from:

[-British Columbia Family Hearing Resource Society's Kindergarten Transition Workbook](#) [Survive and Thrive: A Guide for Parents—School Readiness Hits and Tips](#) by Cochlear Corporation.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Follow the suggestions in this calendar **in the year prior to kindergarten** to make sure the resources your child will need are in place when he begins kindergarten.

Months: September through December

What I Need to Do

We are equal members of the IPP team. That right doesn't make us the leader of the team; it makes us an equal participant. How we come prepared to problem-solve at the meeting shows us as the experts on our own children. The others around the table are experts in their specialty. They are also constrained by forces beyond them (e.g., financial, political, etc.). Allow them their expertise, disagree in a respectful way and your child will benefit. Don't be that parent that the school dreads to see coming through the front door. It may work once but you will end up working harder and longer for everything your child needs from that point forward. Be a good model for your child. Start talking with your preschool program teachers and staff about Kindergarten transition.

- Think about what your child will need in terms of support. Consult the Alberta Education Parent Resource "[Kindergarten Overview](#)" to see what needs attention over the next year.
- See sections: "Vocabulary at School"; "School Readiness at Home" and "Going to School: A General Guide to Basic Skills" in this Guide.
- Ask about visiting and observing the different educational options for your child. Use the "Placement Checklist" in this Guide to help make the decision about where you'd like your child to go.
- Some school districts already have services in place; others will need to be informed about their role and responsibilities in serving your child's needs. Request that the preschool program submit a referral to [RCSD](#) (Regional Collaborative Service Delivery) to receive support from a TDHH (Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) and Educational Audiologist.

The TDHH and Educational Audiologist will become members of your transition team. Exception: if your child will attend a Calgary Board of Education school, the [Area Office](#) can make the referral.

Months: January through February

What I Need to Do

- Register your child in school.
- Introduce yourself and your child to the school's principal, the Student Support Facilitator and/or the resource staff at the school.
- Read sample letters to school personnel from parents with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. See section: "Letters from Parents to Teachers" in this Guide.
- Write a letter outlining specific supports and adaptations your child needs in order to succeed in a school setting.
- Let your community audiologist know that your child will be entering kindergarten and will need personal FM equipment, if your child doesn't already use it. Discuss the process for the acquisition of a personal FM system for school use.
- Let the school/school district audiologist know your child is entering school and ask that future audiograms be forwarded to the school/school district.
- Write down your questions about the transition process. Familiarize yourself with the "Kindergarten Transition Important Questions" in this Guide

Months: February through April

What I Need to Do

- Start a list of the people on your child's Kindergarten team, including email addresses and phone numbers.
- Ask the school's Student Support Facilitator if a TDHH and Educational Audiologist are available support to your child's learning team. If the school does not yet have access to these resources, contact your regional RCSD manager. For more information see RCSD or contact the Area Office for Calgary Board of Education schools.
- Make an appointment with the new school administration to have a transition meeting. This happens in May/June or August/September, depending on the school. Invite everyone on your child's team you feel should attend. Meetings can involve parents, preschool representatives, Special Education Teacher/Coordinator, Kindergarten Teacher, Principal, Educational Audiologist, TDHH and/or Speech-Language Pathologist.

Months: May through June

What I Need to Do

- Have the transition planning meeting. This may be scheduled for August/September with your school. Briefly introduce the FM/amplification technology with a promise to review it at the beginning of the school year (e.g., how to use the personal FM system, how to change batteries, etc.). The Educational Audiologist and/TDHH can be very helpful in this regard.
- If you're an outreach family, you can request a telephone conference from staff at the RCSD if a community visit cannot be arranged.
- **IMPORTANT:** Ask the new school administration to complete and submit RCSD referral forms for next year. This step must be done every year, so

you'll need to resubmit forms even if the preschool submitted a referral for the current year.

- Ask about the physical features of your child's classroom, and about the use of auxiliary audio equipment such as computers, listening centres and tablets, and the use of Smart or Promethean boards.

Months: September of Child's Entry to Kindergarten

What I Need to Do

- Welcome to the Wonderful World of Kindergarten!
- You and/or the educational audiologist/TDHH meet with your child's teacher to review the use of hearing technologies (e.g., how to use the personal FM system, how to change batteries, etc.). Links to short video clips (such as the tutorials within the [MDRL teacher toolkit](#)) can be forwarded to the teachers. See the Resources section for more information about in-service materials.
- Ask the Educational Audiologist and/or TDHH to attend IPP meetings for support, if desired.
- Contact the Educational Audiologist or TDHH with any questions, concerns or clarifications throughout the month.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Here are some suggestions to help prepare your child for Kindergarten (from www.cbe.ab.ca/kindergarten):

Before the school year begins, take your child to the school and playground so she becomes familiar with these places. Attend the school's kindergarten information session, or ask the school if there is another time you could visit the school with your child.

Encourage your child to:

- be independent,
- dress themselves,
- use the bathroom on their own, and
- put away toys and help out in small ways at home.

Take time to talk with your child about everyday activities. Share special activities together, such as walks in the park, and talk about what you are seeing and doing. Let your child make choices and solve problems. Working together and having fun is just as important as completing a task.

Read to your child every day. Read different types of books, such as picture books, information books, nursery rhymes, and poetry. Encourage your child to talk about the stories as you read together. Reading stories together will help your child to develop strong oral language skills, which will lead to success in school. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Your community library is a great resource for young children.

If your child is interested in letters and numbers and you would like to help your child learn more, work with your child in a playful way to make new discoveries in this area. It is helpful if your child is able to print his or her first name. For safety, your child should also know how to say their first and last name, telephone number, and/or address. Using scissors, pencils, crayons, and playdough helps prepare your child for drawing and writing.

Develop a good bedtime and morning routine. Five-year-old children need approximately 10 to 12 hours of sleep a night.

Important Questions

Your child's success in transitioning to kindergarten is based on how well parents, teachers, and other educational professionals work together. The following questions are important to ask to ensure your child's needs are addressed.

1. My child has a hearing loss. What kinds of services are available to her?
2. Who is on my child's school team? Will my child have access to an Educational Audiologist, a TDHH and/or a Speech-Language Pathologist (S-LP)? If so, how often?
3. My child uses a personal FM system. Are there any other students in your school with similar technology? How are the FM channels appropriately managed so there is no interference?
4. Who will be responsible for the daily monitoring of my child's hearing assistive technologies to make sure they are used consistently and working properly?
5. Who will help my child learn to become independent with his equipment?
6. Are my child's classmates given information about her hearing loss and hearing assistive technologies? Who does this and will I be advised of the plan?
7. How many children will be in the class?
8. How many different teachers will my child have this year?

9. Will the teacher and school administration have access to a consultant regarding the acoustical condition of the classroom? Who will that be?
10. Is the school willing to make acoustic accommodations in their classrooms and common areas? What might those be?
11. (If in a specialized program) Will my child have an opportunity to integrate into other classrooms?
12. Who will provide information about my child if my child needs support and assistance from a teacher's aide or educational interpreter?
13. My child uses sign language and requires an interpreter. How will you ensure the most appropriate person is hired into this position?
14. Will my child and I be able to visit the school and observe the class for a morning or afternoon before September?
15. What is a staggered Kindergarten entry and will this apply to my child?
16. Come September, will I be allowed to volunteer/observe my child in the classroom?
17. Will there be a transition placement meeting before September where the other team members and I can discuss my child's individual program plan (IPP) to cover topics such as discussing my child's strengths, challenges and need for support services in school, etc.?
18. How often will my child's IPP be updated and reviewed?
19. How will I be informed if my child's cochlear implants, hearing aid, or personal FM system malfunctions?
20. Can I bring someone along to attend team meetings with me for support?

Who to Contact

Concerns naturally arise when your child is in kindergarten. Always contact your child's teacher first. Most concerns can be resolved through ongoing communication, so establishing a relationship with the teachers who have the most contact with your child is important. Approach concerns with a positive attitude that encourages co-operation rather than one that is seen as adversarial. "How can we resolve this problem?" works better than "You are doing this wrong." In essence, all the people who work with your child, parents included, should work together as a team. This is the most effective way to support your child's learning!

1. If your concerns are specifically related to hearing loss (e.g., amplification, language or educational goals, etc.), contact the Educational Audiologist or TDHH.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved with the teachers, next contact the principal.
3. If your concern is not resolved at the school level, contact the Special Education Coordinator. They may also be called the District Principal or Assistant Superintendent.
4. The next person to contact is the Superintendent of the school district.
5. If you are still not satisfied, you could make an appeal to the Board of School Trustees or ask to make a presentation at a Board Meeting.
6. Remember to make records and keep copies of all communications.

Individualized Program Planning (IPP)

Individualized Program Planning (IPP) provides families and teams with an opportunity to meet and discuss a child's strengths and the best strategies to support her in reaching her maximum potential in the classroom.

As your child's parents, you are a key member of the team, contributing invaluable information to the process. You should be included in the meetings and given the opportunity to share your thoughts, concerns and ideas.

The following guide was adapted from:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iepssn/plantips.htm>

What is an IPP?

- a concise and usable document summarizing the plan for the student's education program
- a tool to assist teachers in monitoring and communicating student growth
- a plan developed, implemented, and monitored by school staff in consultation with others involved with the student
- a flexible, working document with meaning for all contributors
- an ongoing record/communication tool to ensure continuity in programming

The IPP is not:

- "written in stone"
- a daily plan, or a description of everything that will be taught to one student
- a means to monitor the effectiveness of teachers
- a report card; however, the report card should comment on progress towards IPP goals

The IPP is needed to document:

- what modifications or adaptations have been made to the provincial curriculum
- what the student is expected to learn
- what strategies and resources are used

Where the student is following the provincial curriculum, without any adaptations or modifications, those areas do not need to be included in the IPP. Done well, the IPP is often a helpful communication tool when transitioning from teacher to teacher throughout the years.

IPP Meeting Outline**01. Introduce**

- introduce people in attendance
- state the purpose and time frame for the meeting, indicate that minutes will be taken and present options for post-meeting follow-up
- encourage openness in information sharing, comments and questions

02. Review

- successes from previous year
- student's medical, social and school history as appropriate
- previous goals and services provided
- involvement from other agencies

03. Discuss

- the student's strengths, interests and talents
- the student's present level of performance
- any new assessment data, reports and observations

- technologies used (hearing aids, cochlear implants, personal FM system)
- the student's areas of need
- the parents' goals for their child
- the student's goals for self
- the educators' goals for the student
- any concerns

04. Establish

- prime areas for focus
- goals, objectives and strategies
- any special services required
- areas of responsibility
- review date

05. Plan meeting follow-up

- keep a record of planning meetings held and follow-up activities
- review key decisions of planning meetings
- formalize the IPP plans and share the information with team members

06. Summarize the meeting and end on a positive note

For more information about IPPs in Alberta please go to:

<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/diverselearning/ipp.aspx>

Vocabulary at School

In the year before starting school, introducing and practicing school-related vocabulary helps your child be comfortable in unfamiliar surroundings. Knowing basic instructions will help boost a child's self-esteem and make adjustments to a school environment more likely. Daily routines and playtime provide ample opportunities for practice.



Familiarity with basic instructions will make a big difference to a child's self-esteem.

Keep in mind that listening at home is in a calm, quiet environment. A classroom is a very noisy place, and both listening and understanding instructions is much more difficult. If your child does not understand

something, make sure she knows how to express herself.

When you encounter words at home your child doesn't know, create a learning moment. Teach the words and how you would apply them. Synonyms, antonyms, and metaphors should be used for language expansion. Also look for opportunities to apply colour and number concepts to daily situations.

Being familiar with the following vocabulary is beneficial for your child:

School

- name of the school
- name and function of different parts of the school
- play areas and names of equipment
- PA announcements (sounds and vocabulary)

Lunchtime

- bell or buzzer for lunchtime and other breaks
- lunch box items: which food is for lunch and/or snacks; names of typical food items in general
- instructions from teacher (for directions, auditory memory, and processing): *"It's lunchtime. Everybody put away your books, get your lunch boxes, and line up in pairs at the door."*

Play and Playground Equipment

- names of the different pieces of equipment (check on school-specific names)
- action words: swing, slide, climb, crawl, jump, push/pull, etc.
- position words: edge, centre, across, middle, left/right, top/ bottom, under/over
- descriptive words: round, curved/straight, horizontal, vertical, long/short, colours
- slang used by peers

Basic Manners

- polite language: *"Please," "Thank you," "May I?"*
- roll call and response to name. *"I'm here."*
- respect and independence: *"Please don't touch my hearing aids. They are not toys."*

Directions for Locations

- areas around school: *"Behind the cafeteria," "beside the library," "the benches under the tree,"* and *"in front of our classroom."*
- following directions: *"To the left or right,"* and *"the first, second or third classroom."*

Answering Questions about Hearing Aids/Cochlear Implants

- *"What is that in your ear?"*
- *"Why do you have to wear that?"*
- *"How does your hearing aid work?"*
- *"Are you Deaf?"*

Language for Instructions

- *"Finish what you are doing, then ___"*
- *"Line up."*
- *"Stand in a row."*
- *"Walk to the front/to the back/to the side."*
- *"Do not go down the stairs until I tell you."*
- *"You don't have to wait until everyone is finished."*

- "Don't forget your hats."

Multi-element Directions

- "Go back to your classroom in a line/in pairs."
- "Before second graders return to the classroom, they need to go to the cafeteria for a special announcement."
- "Group/team number 10, proceed to the left, behind the third grade class."
- "Wait at the door."
- "Wait just outside the door, line up in the hallway."
- "Before you eat your lunch, put your hat on because it is very hot outside."
- "After you eat your lunch, put your garbage in the garbage can."
- "Before you do ___ I want you all to ___"
- "After everybody has put their books away, can you ___?"
- "It's time to go. After you put all your things away, line up at the door with your bags and hats."

More Advanced Instructions (for ongoing learning)

- "Write your name on the cover/inside the front cover/on the back."
- "Get your books out. Show me your work."
- "Write in capitals/lower case/on the line."
- "Upper/lower, left/right hand corner."
- "On the edge. In the middle. In the lower half/upper half."
- "Fold the paper in half/diagonally/twice/three times."
- "Circle the correct answer."
- "Put a red cross on/next to/under/above the animal that lives in the water."
- "Put a line through/under/across/above/next to."
- "Draw a line from ___ to ___."
- "Leave a space between ____ and ____."
- "Put them in a row/in a circle/grouped according to category."
- "Put them together/move them apart/mix them up."
- "How many altogether? Who has less/more?"

- Math-related language: each, any, equal, few, more, less, add, total, sum, etc. Note: you may find abstract words may be more difficult.

School Readiness at Home

A. Language Level

At home, you can encourage language development and attention by using the following techniques.

Advanced Question Forms

How

- “How will we change the battery?”
- “How will we make a milkshake?” “What do I need?”
- “How will I reach the top cupboard?”
- “How do you feel?”
- “How do you feel about ___? Why?”

Why

- “Why do we need to change the battery?”
- “Why is the baby crying?”
- “Why do we put the milk in the refrigerator?”
- “What would you do if ___?”

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking Activities

- “What can we do now?”
- “What do we need?”
- “What is this used for?”
- “It’s broken. What do we do now?”

Book Sharing

- expand vocabulary by asking questions about what happened in a story
 - “Why is he so sad?”
 - “What do you think will happen next?”
 - “How will they get home again?”
- add comments
 - “Oh look, there’s a beautiful butterfly!”

- "I can see Spot!"
- "He's looking for his mother."

Story Retelling and Sequencing Activities

- "Then what happened?"
- "How did the story end?"
- "Before we do that, what do we need?"
- "Then what do we do?"

Role Reversal and Turn Taking

- Take turns asking questions and "being the teacher."
- Role-play nursery rhymes, routine scenarios, and stories.
- Sing songs and recite rhymes linked to actions to encourage language.

Involve Siblings, Family Members and Friends



- Practice group activities and games by involving as many people as possible. Your child gets more experience with different voices, contexts, and distance listening.

Involve siblings, family members and friends in group activities and games to get varied experiences with listening.

B. Expecting Independence

Children who wear hearing aids or cochlear implants need to be as independent as possible in managing their devices. Encouraging your child to communicate her needs is important for her to gain the independence she needs for a successful school experience.

Basic tasks for your child to work towards include being able to:

- turn the device on and off
- change the batteries
- remove and insert the device
- tell the teacher if there is a problem

Other areas of independence to encourage and practice at home are dressing herself and taking care of her own things (glasses, backpack, etc.). When your child asks you where her toys, shoes or socks are, ask the question:

- “Where did you leave it?”
- “Have you looked in the usual place?”
- “Did you put it back where it belongs?”

Then if she can’t find it, a good response might be: “Let me help you look for it” or “Where else could it be?” and then walk around with them, continuing the dialogue as you search.

C. Involvement in Daily Tasks

Daily tasks and routines provide ample opportunity for improving counting, sequencing, and memory skills. Preparing food, getting dressed, setting the



Use daily activities as an opportunity to build on auditory

table, and getting ready to go out are just a few of the chances to build on auditory memory. For example: *“To make a milkshake we need to go shopping. What do we need? Milk, ice cream,*

chocolate syrup. So what do we do now? How much? Is that enough?”

Building on auditory memory is a long-term strategy to reduce listening fatigue. See the article on *Listening Fatigue* elsewhere in the toolkit.

D. Advocating for Themselves

At school, your child should be encouraged to be their own best advocate. If he wears hearing aids or cochlear implants, he should use correct terminology rather than “bionic ear” or “ears.” He should feel comfortable alerting an adult about any malfunctioning equipment or other access needs. See the *Encouraging Your Child to Self-Advocate* article in this toolkit.

E. Social Skills

Social skills include all age-appropriate behaviour. You should expect the same rules of behaviour for your child as you do for your child’s peers.













When interacting with other children in group activities, behavioural expectations are important. You can prepare your child for good social behaviour by involving them in pre-school or play groups where he will learn to interact with other children and adults. In these social situations, your child will also learn the language of his peers, which is very important for social acceptance and making friends.

F. Activities Outside of School

Building your child's social life outside of school is important in building self-confidence and learning skills. Hobbies, sports, and time with friends are key language-building opportunities as well.

Going to School: A General Guide to Basic Skills

Note for Parents: Complete this checklist with your child in mind. Use the results to help inform educators on your child’s team about their current skill set. Remember this checklist is a basic guide only and not a test.

<p>I know my colors</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can recite the alphabet</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I recognize initial sounds</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can recognize my own name</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>
<p>I try to write my name and words I know</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I know my shapes</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can count from 1 to 10</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I recognise the numbers 1 to 10</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>
<p>I can match groups with numbers</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can sequence numbers 1 to 10</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can write some numbers</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can color neatly</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>

<p>I am interested in books</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I enjoy outdoor play</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can skip</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can use scissors</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>
<p>I can dress myself</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can play well with others</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can take care of my things</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I am a good listener</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>
<p>I can speak and listen to others in class</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can join others in songs ...and talks...</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can follow instructions</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>	<p>I can share with others and take turns</p>  <p>Yes Trying Not yet</p>

Adapted from The Shepherd Centre Auditory Verbal Handout 2004

Letters from Parents to Teachers/to Other Parents

The following is a sample letter from a parent to the school personnel. When you write your own letter, include information about your child *before* the information about hearing loss. This order is also important for in-person transition or “Meet the Teacher” meetings, especially when your child is present.

You may wish to take something like this introduction letter along with you to prospective school placement meetings to help the principal and teachers get to know your child and their needs. Teachers have found having such a letter helpful for their own reference and to leave for substitute teachers when they are away.

You can also write a letter to other parents. An example is included below.

Including a photo of your child is helpful to make your letter more personal. Instructions for placing an image behind the text, as shown in this example letter to the school, are included at the end of this section. If you prefer, you can also insert an image of your child into a letter and have a white background as shown in the example letter to other parents.



A summary of your child’s information is useful as well and can be used in place of or in addition to a letter. See “Information About my Child” for an outline, following this section, and include other information you feel is important for others to know.

Dear Name of School Staff,

Hi, I'm [child's name]. I am very excited about starting Kindergarten!

I like playing dress up, playing with dolls, Play-Doh, and sand. I LOVE music and dancing! I am a BIG fan of my two big sisters, Trisha and Hayley.

I have a severe hearing loss in my right ear, and I wear a hearing aid. In my left ear, I have profound hearing loss, so when I was four years old, I had surgery and got a cochlear implant.

My hearing aids and cochlear implant help me to hear really well, but it is still not perfect. Here are some things to keep in mind when communicating with me:

1. To get my attention, call my name. Wait for me to find you because sometimes I don't know where you are when you call me. Start speaking only when I am looking at your face. I need to be close to you in order to hear you. Please let me sit near the front or near whoever is talking.
2. If I don't hear you call my name, tap me on the shoulder.
3. Speak clearly (no need to shout). You may need to get down to my height if the room is noisy or if you are not wearing my FM system.
4. When giving instructions, use short, simple sentences. Avoid using single words; these are harder for me to hear.
5. If I appear not to understand, repeat by paraphrasing or re-wording. For example, "I'm going to wait until everybody is sitting quietly before we can all go outside." Repetition: "When everyone is quiet, we will go outside."
6. Use my FM system for direct instruction. I really depend on it! Please mute it or turn it off when you are not addressing me or the class so I can hear my friends. It is really distracting for me when I can hear you through the FM system but you are not talking to me.
7. Repeat or rephrase questions and answers of my classmates in any situation in which understanding may be difficult. Say my classmate's name and point in their direction so that I can see who is talking. For class discussions, it really helps me if you pass around the transmitter.

Dear Kindergarten Parent,

Hi, my name is [child's name].

I am five years old and I love an adventure! I am in your child's kindergarten class. I am soooo excited to be in school! My favourite things are swimming and playing with my friends. Oh, and by the way, I am Hard of Hearing and I wear two hearing aids. I've had hearing aids since I was a baby. You can ask me or my dad questions about my hearing aids, but really, I am just like other kids.

If you come into the class as a parent volunteer, a few things that could really help me are:

To get my attention, call my name. Wait for me to find you because sometimes I don't know where you are when you call me. Start speaking only when I am looking at your face. I need to be close to you in order to hear you.

If I don't hear you call my name, tap me on the shoulder. Speak clearly (no need to shout). You may need to get down to my height if there is a lot of noise.

In the classroom, you will see the teacher wearing a microphone. That is my FM system and it helps me so much. If you are reading a book out loud to the class, please wear it so I can hear the story. It helps me when you repeat the questions from the other students, especially if they have a little voice. It helps everyone, really. Please turn the FM system off or mute it when you are not talking to me so I can hear my friends.

If it is really noisy or there is lots going on, I might miss things. Usually I try to figure out what is going on by watching other children. If you think I am missing something important, please tell me.

Other than that, I am good to go! Oh, and I love play dates!

See you soon, [child's name].



Information About My Child

My child's name is: _____

My child likes to: _____

My child's strengths are: _____

About my child's hearing loss: _____

My child uses this listening equipment: _____

My child expresses his/herself by: _____

My child shows s/he understands by: _____

My child learns best by: _____

My child's challenges are: _____

Specialized services that my child requires: _____

Other helpful information: _____

What are the Top Ten Signs of a Good Kindergarten?

Kindergarten is a time for children to expand their love of learning, their general knowledge, their ability to get along with others and their interest in reaching out to the world.

While kindergarten marks an important transition step between preschool to the primary grades, it is important that children still get to be children. Getting kindergarteners ready for elementary school does not mean substituting academics for play time, forcing children to master first grade "skills," or relying on standardized tests to assess children's success.

A strong kindergarten program will have these characteristics:

1. Children are playing and working with materials or other children. They are not aimlessly wandering or forced to sit quietly for long periods of time.
2. Children have access to various activities throughout the day, such as block building, pretend play, picture books, paints and other art materials, and table toys such as Legos, pegboards, and puzzles. Children are not all doing the same things at the same time.
3. Teachers work with individual children, small groups, and the whole group at different times during the day. They do not spend time only with the entire group.
4. The classroom is decorated with children's original artwork, their own writing with invented spelling, and dictated stories.
5. Children learn numbers and the alphabet in the context of their everyday experiences. Exploring the natural world of plants and animals, cooking, taking attendance, and serving snacks are all meaningful activities to children.
6. Children work on projects and have at least one hour, and preferably more, to play and explore. Filling out worksheets should not be their primary activity.

7. Children have an opportunity to play outside every day that weather permits. This play is never sacrificed for more instructional time.
8. Teachers read books to children throughout the day, not just at group story time.
9. Curriculum is adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help. Because children differ in experiences and background, they do not learn the same things at the same time in the same way.
10. Children and their parents look forward to school. Parents feel safe sending their child to kindergarten. Children are happy; they are not crying or regularly sick.

Individual kindergarten classrooms will vary, and curriculum will vary according to the interests and backgrounds of the children. But all great kindergarten classrooms will have one thing in common: the focus will be on the development of the child as a whole.

Adapted from:

-Peck, J., G. McCaig & M.E. Sapp, Kindergarten policies: What is best for children? Washington, DC: NAEYC.