



NORTH SYRACUSE
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Welcome to
KINDERGARTEN






School Year
2025 - 2026

IS IT TIME FOR KINDERGARTEN?






How can I tell if my child is ready for Kindergarten?

Starting school can be an exciting and anxious time for families. There are many factors to consider when deciding if your child is ready for Kindergarten. These factors may include maturity, motor skills, attention span, and age. Kindergarten expectations have changed a lot over the years and a key factor to your child's success is his or her readiness for school. By the end of Kindergarten, students will be reading, writing sentences and computing addition and subtraction. If your child meets the age criteria, you may also want to consider the Kindergarten readiness skills below:





Self-Help Skills

-  Use the bathroom independently
-  Zip coat
-  Take shoes on and off
-  Button/snap pant fasteners
-  Recognize his/her first and last name (not a nickname)





Fine Motor Skills

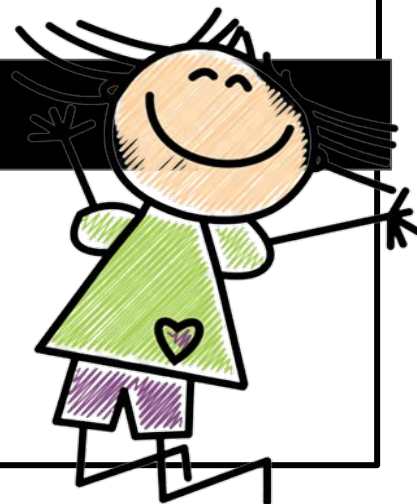
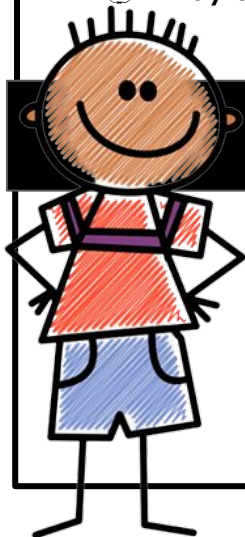
-  Hold a pencil
-  Write first name
-  Use scissors to cut basic shapes
-  Trace lines and shapes
-  Color or draw a picture

Social Skills

-  Complete 2-step directions
-  Sit and listen to someone read a story for 5-10 minutes
-  Play a game and accept losing
-  Take turns while playing
-  Complete short tasks without an adult's help
-  Control emotions without tantrums

Academic Skills

-  Count to 20 and recognize numbers 0-10
-  Sing and say ABCs
-  Recognize their own name
-  Follow directions from adults

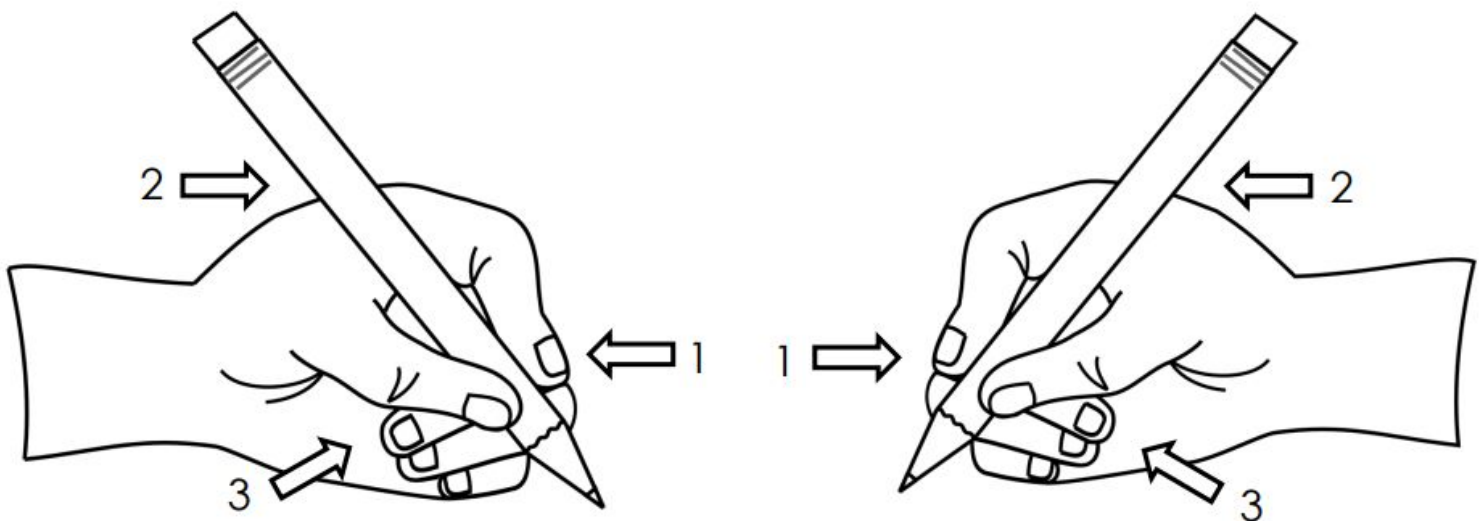


Handwriting

Learning to write letters and how to hold a pencil is difficult. The key is to work on correct pencil grip from the beginning and always start letters "at the top". Be sure to either use a small golf pencil or a regular pencil when beginning to write; the big "beginner" pencils are much too large for little hands and make it more difficult to form letters.

Tip: Always remind your student to hold pencil correctly and to start letters "at the top!"

Pencil & Crayon Grip



Left Hand

Right Hand

- ① "Pinchy fingers" (thumb and pointer finger) hold at the bottom of the pencil
- ② Top of the pencil rests between these two fingers on your hand
- ③ Middle of middle finger helps to hold the pencil up





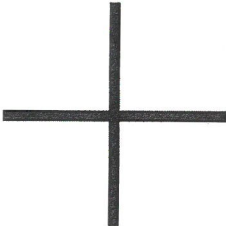
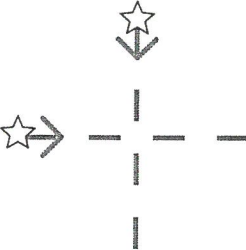
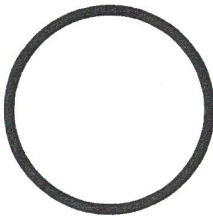
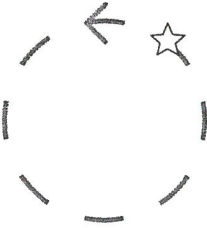




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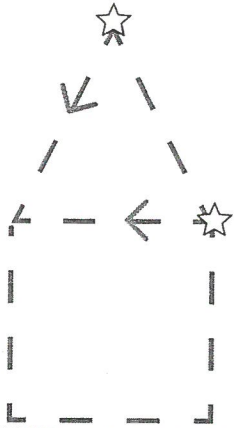
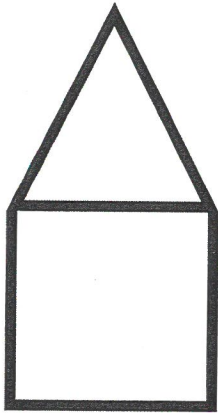
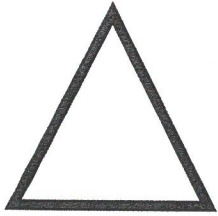
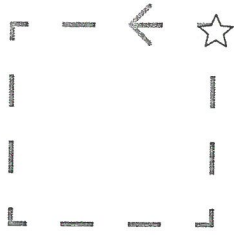
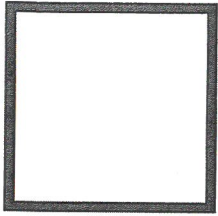
DATE: _____

PP.6

Activity Page

Directions: Ask students to first trace and then draw the shape.



This year we will be using the Core Knowledge Language Arts program with our Kindergarten students.

The program consists of two strands of instruction. The first strand, the Skills Strand, strives to teach students the mechanics of reading and writing using a phonics approach. As part of this strand, students will learn how to hear sounds in words and write “pictures of sounds,” also known as letters.

For the first few weeks students will be learning to make simple writing strokes—lines, circles, humps, cups, etc.—while also learning to hear words in sentences. Next, students will learn to hear sounds in words. When that skill is in place, they will begin to learn the letters used to represent sounds. From time to time we will send you an activity page like this one to explain what is being taught in the program. It will inform you of activities you can do at home to supplement and solidify the learning your child is doing at school.

The second strand, Knowledge, strives to build students’ vocabulary and background knowledge through oral language experiences. As part of this strand, students will listen to stories and nonfiction selections read aloud, participate in discussions, and complete vocabulary work.

Letter Sounds

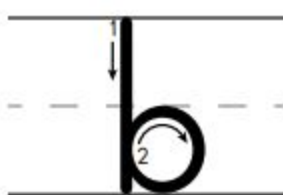
Letter sounds are the foundation of reading. Once students can easily produce letter sounds, they will begin to be able to blend sounds to read words. We always practice letter sounds with **lowercase** letters, as the vast majority of print is in lowercase.

Lowercase Letter Formation



Start between the dotted line and the bottom line.

1. circle to the left
2. short line down



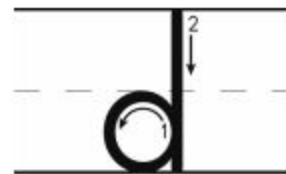
Start on the top line.

1. long line down
2. circle to the right



Start just below the dotted line.

1. most of a circle to the left



Start between the dotted line and the bottom line.

1. circle to the left
2. long line down



Start between the dotted line and the bottom line.

1. short line across
2. most of a circle to the left



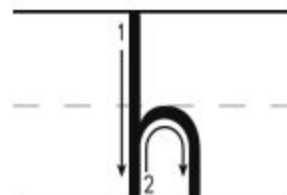
Start just below the top line.

1. candy cane (lift)
2. short line across



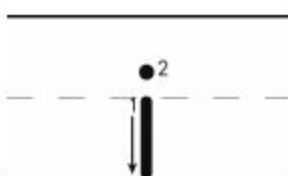
Start between the dotted line and the bottom line.

1. circle to the left
2. fish hook ending below bottom line



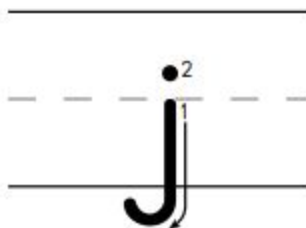
Start on the top line.

1. long line down
2. hump



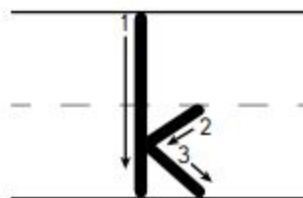
Start on the dotted line.

1. short line down (lift)
2. dot on top



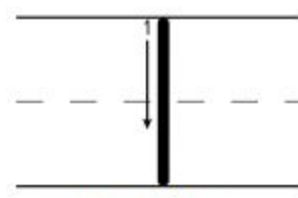
Start on the dotted line.

1. fish hook ending below the bottom line (lift)
2. dot on top



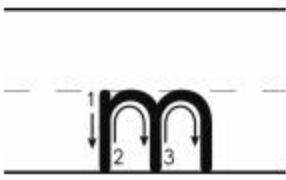
Start on the top line.

1. long line down (lift)
2. diagonal left
3. diagonal right



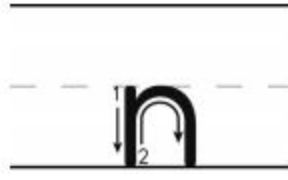
Start on the top line.

1. long line down



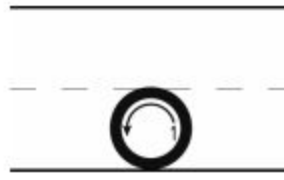
Start on the dotted line.

1. short line down
2. hump
3. hump



1. Start on the dotted line.

2. short line down
3. hump



Start between the dotted line and the bottom line.

1. circle to the left



Start on the dotted line.

1. line down ending below bottom line
2. circle to the right

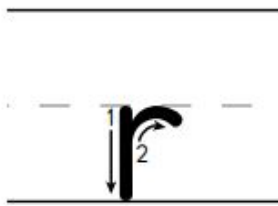


Start between the dotted line and bottom line.

1. circle to the left
2. line down ending below the bottom line

Start on the dotted line.

1. cup
2. short line down



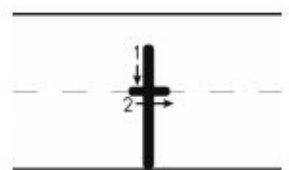
Start on the dotted line.

1. short line down
2. half a hump



Start just below the dotted line.

1. half circle to the left, half circle to the right



Start between the dotted line and the top line.

1. long line down (lift)
2. short line across



Start on the dotted line.

1. cup
2. short line down



Start on the dotted line.

1. diagonal right
2. diagonal up



Start on the dotted line.

1. diagonal right
2. diagonal up
3. diagonal right
4. diagonal up



Start on the dotted line.

1. diagonal right (lift)
2. diagonal left



Start on the dotted line.

1. diagonal right (lift)
2. diagonal left ending below the bottom line



Start on the dotted line.

1. short line across
2. diagonal left
3. short line across



Why Are Scissor Skills SO Important?

Build Fine Motor Strength

- Cutting allows a child to build up the little muscles in their hands with the open and close motion. These muscles are so important for writing, painting, and doing everyday things like a brushing your teeth, eating with utensils, and getting dressed.

Develop Eye-Hand Coordination

- Cutting requires kids to use their eyes and hands in unison to accomplish the cutting task. Eye-hand coordination is important for catching/throwing balls, eating with a spoon, and zipping a coat.

Increase Bilateral Coordination

- Cutting encourages your child to use both sides of the body at the same time while each hand is performing its own task. When cutting a shape, a child must hold the paper with one hand while the other hand is opening and closing the scissors and moving forward to cut. This is essential for tasks like zipping up a coat or pants, washing dishes, and opening an envelope.

Improve Focus and Attention

- Cutting out shapes takes concentration and attention to detail. Both skills are necessary for success not only in the classroom but in everyday life. The ability to sustain focus is essential to being able to read books, listen to instruction and complete many other classroom tasks.

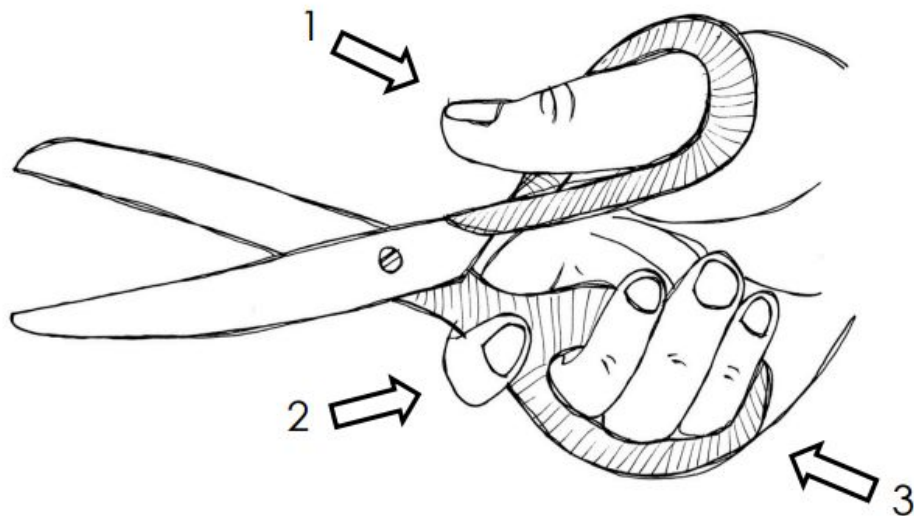


Cutting

Learning to hold scissors and cut is an important fine motor skill and develops bilateral coordination, which is the use of both sides of the body while each hand performs different tasks. It is important that students learn to use both hands at the same time. When cutting, one hand opens and closes the scissors while the other hand holds and moves the paper. The next page will help you reinforce proper scissor grip. Use the following pages to practice cutting skills (you will need: scissors, glue, and additional paper). To make cutting fun, try cutting plastic straws into pieces (and use the pieces to count)!

Tip: Remind your student to use their "helper hand" to hold and move their paper when cutting.

Scissor Grip



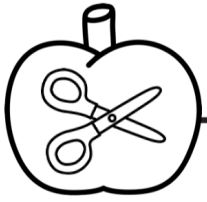
- 1) Thumb through the small top hole
- 2) Index finger holding the bottom of scissors
- 3) Last three fingers through the big bottom hole

Always point scissors AWAY from body
and use your "helper hand" to hold and move the paper.

Name: _____

I Can Cut

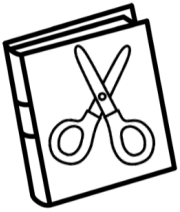
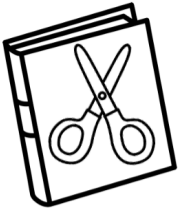
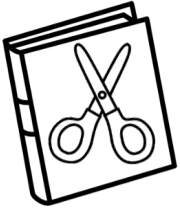
Directions: Cut on the line from the apple to the lunchbox.



Name: _____

I Can Cut

Directions: Cut on the line from the book to the backpack.



Dear Family,

We want your child to be as successful as possible at school. Success in school is not just about reading and math. It is also about knowing how to learn and how to get along with others. We will be using the *Second Step* program in your child's classroom to teach these critical skills.

The *Second Step* program teaches skills in the following four areas:

- 1. Skills for Learning:** Students gain skills to help themselves learn, including how to focus their attention, listen carefully, use self-talk to stay on task, and be assertive when asking for help with schoolwork.
- 2. Empathy:** Students learn to identify and understand their own and others' feelings. Students also learn how to take another's perspective and how to show compassion.
- 3. Emotion Management:** Students learn specific skills for calming down when experiencing strong feelings, such as anxiety or anger.
- 4. Problem Solving:** Students learn a process for solving problems with others in a positive way.

Your child will be learning a lot this year—and he or she will need your help! Throughout the year, your child will be bringing home Home Links that go with several of the *Second Step* lessons. Home Links are simple, fun activities for you and your child to complete together. They are a great way for you to understand what your child is learning and for your child to show you what he or she knows.

If you have any questions about the *Second Step* program, please do not hesitate to contact me for more information. Thank you for supporting your child in learning the skills that lead to success in school and in life.

Sincerely,

P.S. Make sure to join www.secondstep.org with the activation key **SSPK FAMI LY70** to watch videos about the *Second Step* program and get information about what your student is learning.

Go online today!

www.secondstep.org
Enter this activation key:
SSPK FAMI LY70



Second Step Listening Rules



Eyes Watching
(Point to your eye)



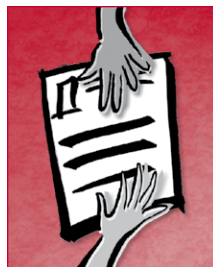
Body Still
(Hug torso with both arms)



Ears Listening
(Cup ears with hands)



Voice Quiet
(Put finger to lips)



What Is My Child Learning?

Your child is learning the rules for how to be a good listener. These rules help your child know how to listen and act in a group so everyone can learn.

Why Is This Important?

Being good listeners helps children be better learners. Following the Listening Rules helps children listen and pay attention in class.

Ask your child: What are the Listening Rules in your class? (Have your child tell you each rule and show you the action that goes with it. Rules are listed at right.)

Practice at Home

Before giving directions for daily activities, such as picking up toys or washing hands, remind your child to use the Listening Rules. For example:

You need to use your Listening Rules now. Say each rule and do the actions along with your child, then give the directions: **We're getting ready to leave now, so put on your shoes and coat.**



Activity

Have your child choose one of the Listening Rules and illustrate it below. After your child has finished, write which rule you think it is under the picture.



The rule is _____

(CHILD'S NAME)	(DATE)	(ADULT'S SIGNATURE)