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Dear CEP Volunteer,

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a volunteer tutor with a pre-K student! The learning your student does with you may be among the most important of his or her life, as it will lay the foundation for future learning and success.

Right now, too many children enter school without the tools and foundation to succeed. Indeed, **research shows that learning begins long before a child enters kindergarten.** Children, even infants, soak up words, rhymes, songs, and images. Vocabulary development in the early years is particularly important.

Just as there is an achievement gap in school performance, there is a school readiness gap that separates disadvantaged children from their more affluent peers. As early as 18 months, low-income children begin to fall behind in vocabulary development and other skills critical for school success. Parents play an enormous role in closing this gap, as do daycare providers, pediatricians, preschools programs, and the broader community. **And now you will play an important role in closing this gap for your student!**

In the pages that follow you will find **Kindergarten Readiness Skills** that we hope your student will achieve. You will also find activity ideas and resources to use with your student during your 45-minute tutoring sessions. **We hope you will use this packet as a starting point and feel free to come up with your own ideas and activities!**

Most importantly, please remember to read to your student for at least 15 minutes of every tutoring session!

Thank you for all you do and please do not hesitate to contact CEP with any questions!

PRE-K “TOOL KIT” CONTENTS

- Reading Log
- Books
- Whiteboard and markers
- Mixed beans (can also be used for bingo)
- Letter Bingo sheets
- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Pens

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

If they are not doing so already, **we hope that your student will be able to demonstrate the following skills after three (3) months of working with you.** These are the most basic skills that they will need for kindergarten.

COGNITIVE SKILLS:

- Holds a book correctly and can retell stories
- Knows her first and last name
- Can sort objects by color, shape, and size
- Is familiar with letters and numbers

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

- Verbally communicates needs and ideas
- Uses sentences of 5 or 6 words

MOTOR SKILLS:

- Can hold a pencil and cut with scissors
- Runs, jumps, and throws

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS TO WORK ON

COGNITIVE SKILLS

Numbers:

- Is consistently able to count to 20
- Recognizes numbers 0-10
- Can do addition with numbers 1-5 with manipulatives

Letters:

- Can recite the letters of alphabet in order
- Identifies the letters A to Z (uppercase)
- Identifies the letters a to z (lowercase)
- Knows the sounds of most of the letters of the alphabet

Self-Awareness Skills:

- Recognizes first name by sight
- Can orally spell first name
- Knows their age and birthday
- Can name the city they live in
- Can name siblings or other family members
- Can say their favorite color, food, and animal and why they like them

Other skills:

- Understands the difference between the truth and make-believe (fact or fiction)
- Understands opposites (e.g. up/down, hot/cold, over/under, in/out)
- Understands basic concepts of time (e.g. morning, afternoon, night time)
- Recognizes and generates words that rhyme with one another (hop, pop, stop)
- Knows 8 basic colors (red, blue, yellow, green, orange, black, brown, purple)
- Knows and recognizes basic shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle)
- Can recognize and repeat a simple patterning sequence (e.g. ABABAB)
- Distinguishes between left and right

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Uses 5 to 6 word sentences, speaking clearly enough that most people are able to understand what is being said
- Can describe an event in sequenced order
- Follows two or three step directions without confusion

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

- Stands on one foot for 5-10 seconds
- Hops on one foot 5 times
- Walks forward heel to toe 6 feet
- Can walk on tiptoes
- Can jump forward with both feet 5 times
- Can jump backwards with both feet once
- Can skip, run, and gallop

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

- Can draw lines (vertical, horizontal, and basic shapes)
- Can draw and name a recognizable picture
- Wiggles thumb in imitation
- Can fold and crease paper
- Can effectively use scissors and moves paper while cutting
- Grasps a pencil correctly
- Can draw lines between matching objects
- Can draw a recognizable person with basic body parts

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR TUTORING SESSION

Each tutoring session is 45 minutes long. Please remember that the attention span of a young child is quite short and that sitting still for that long can feel difficult (if not impossible) for them! The best tutoring sessions will have a variety of activities that, together, will engage your student's mind and body.

We suggest that each session be broken down in the following way:

Introduction (3 minutes)

- o Check in with each other, share something about your week, ask questions about his/her day or week
- o Talk about the activities for that session
- o If applicable, talk about your progress towards goals you are working on together

Activities (two for 10-15 minutes each)

- o Ideas for these activities are included in this packet
- o If possible, tie in the season, upcoming holidays, etc.

Read (15-20 Minutes)

- Read for at least 15 minutes of each session. Refer to 'Tips for Reading to a Preschool Student' to make the most of this time.
- Reading Log - encourage your student to use the enclosed log to keep track of their daily reading. Don't forget to set goals and decide on a small reward or prize for reaching this goal!

Closing (3 minutes)

- o Thank your student for his or her hard work and tell them what they did that made you feel proud of them; award stickers if appropriate
- o Confirm your next meeting with parent/caregiver, if possible

TIPS FOR READING TO A PRESCHOOL STUDENT

- ◆ Introduce the book: read the title, author, and illustrator; look at the cover; talk about what the book might be about; suggest things to look and listen for.

- ◆ Run your finger under the text, while reading.

- ◆ Answer questions related to the book; save other questions for later.

- ◆ Talk about the story during and after a read-aloud session.

- ◆ Ask children to look closely at the pictures to help them understand the story and make predictions about what might happen next.

- ◆ Repeat interesting words and rhymes while reading a book and at a later time.

- ◆ Pause and wait so children can say the word that ends a repetitive or predictable phrase.

- ◆ Stop to ask thinking questions: "What might happen next? Where did he go? Why did she do that?"

- ◆ Follow up on the story. Invite a child to talk; draw or paint; pretend to be one of the characters; and so on.

- ◆ Ask your student to imagine and explain a different ending to the book.

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR STUDENT GET READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

(adapted from First 5 Contra Costa County)

Talk Together - Children need both confidence and ability to use their words:

- ✓ Have frequent conversations with your students and encourage them to use words to express their feelings and reactions to the world around them.
- ✓ Read to your students for 20 minutes every day and talk about the story, the characters and what happened first, next and last.
- ✓ Stories and songs with rhyming words expose children to different sounds and help build their vocabulary.

Sharing - Sharing is hard for preschoolers, but a necessary skill in kindergarten:

- ✓ Tutors can teach cooperative play, like completing puzzles or building a block tower together.
- ✓ As you're building the block tower, walk through the concept of sharing by saying, "Now it's your turn to add a block and then it will be my turn."
- ✓ Use positive reinforcement to encourage sharing. When you see your student sharing well, point it out.

Counting - Children entering kindergarten can typically count to 10:

- ✓ Teach your student to count by using objects like blocks, buttons, or books.
- ✓ Make counting part of your daily routine. Ask your student to count the number of pencils you have or how many stripes are on your sweater.

My Name - Children are expected to be able to print their first name:

- ✓ You can start pointing out the first letter of your student's name whenever you see it. You can also play word games by saying, "Your name starts with 'T' like tiger. What else starts with that letter?"
- ✓ Students can practice writing their name with their finger to get the feel of the letters. Try spreading shaving cream on a cookie sheet for practice.
- ✓ Teach your student the proper pincer grip, which is needed for holding a pencil, by asking your student to pick up Cheerios or small objects with his or her thumb and index finger.
- ✓ Playing with play dough can also help develop hand muscles needed for writing or cutting.

Listening - Teachers expect children to be able to follow directions and listen:

- ✓ Improve listening skills by encouraging your student to repeat directions back to you.
- ✓ Use multi-step directions to build your student's attention span, such as "Please put away your book and then get out some paper."
- ✓ Try playing games that require listening and following directions, such as Simon Says or Red Light, Green Light.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Letter Bingo

- o Kids generally love playing bingo!
- o If possible, take turns being the “caller” and the player
- o Make letter cards and spread them around on the floor. Ask your student to run, walk, hop, skip, etc. to whichever card you call out. This is fun and develops gross motor skills.

Writing Stories Together

- o Have your student tell you a story (either one they made up or one they heard) and write the story out for him/her. Have your student illustrate the story.
- o Make up the first few sentences of a story and ask your student to narrate the rest of the story. Write it down.
- o Together, rewrite the ending of a book you previously read

Fun with Phones!

- o Use the timer on your phone to time your student doing all sorts of things (writing their name; counting out 10 beans; finding a word, color, or object in a book; hopping up and down ten times; etc.). Your student will also enjoy racing him/herself and trying to beat his/her own record.
- o If you have a voice recorder on your phone, record your student telling a story. They will enjoy hearing it played back to them!

Bag o’ Beans

- o A bag of mixed beans can be used for all sorts of activities (and as bingo markers!)
- o Ask your student to count out a specified number of beans
- o Have your student group beans according to size, shape, color, etc.
- o Use beans for basic addition and subtraction
- o Ask your student to make a repeating pattern using the beans
- o **Safety:** Make sure that your student does not put the beans in his/her mouth and be sure that all of the beans are collected and put away after the activity.

Dry Erase Board

- o Dry erase boards are great for all sorts of activities and a good substitute for paper and pencils/pens
- o Practice writing uppercase and lowercase letter, numbers, your student’s name, etc.
- o Play games like tic-tac-toe and hangman
- o Take turns telling each other what to draw
- o Bring in something from nature like a leaf, rock, or flower and ask your student to draw it

- o Help your student learn to rhyme. Draw a picture such as grass, a tree, a flower, a hill, and the sun. Say a word, such as “tower,” and have your student erase what rhymes in the picture (flower), or “bee” (tree), and so on until the whole picture is erased.

Get to Know Your Body

- o Have your student jump, hop, do jumping jacks, play freeze dance, or anything to get them moving and get the wiggles out!
- o Ask your student to move various body parts, starting with the easy ones (arms, legs, eyes, mouth, etc.) and move to the harder one (chest, ankles, elbows, etc.)
- o Teach your student some basic stretches
- o Practice deep breathing with your student. This is a great way to help your student relax and calm down.
- o Have students follow a specific pattern of movements (e.g. slap thighs twice, touch shoulders twice, pat head twice, repeat). The variations are endless!
- o Practice sitting very still and being quiet. This is an important classroom skill. Make it fun by timing how long your student can sit still or be quiet and encourage them to try to break their own record.

Get Crafty!

- o Make a card for a family member or friend for an upcoming birthday or holiday
- o Make a cover for one of the stories you write together
- o Practice cutting out shapes
- o Draw a picture for someone special
- o Make your own number, letter, or word flashcards

Sing Songs!

- o Sing your favorite childhood songs with your student. Some all time favorites include:
 - o Baa Baa Black Sheep
 - o Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
 - o The Wheels on the Bus
 - o Row, Row, Row Your Boat
 - o The Itsy, Bitsy Spider
 - o If You're Happy and You Know It
 - o Old MacDonald Had a Farm
- o If there are movements that go along with the song, don't forget to do them.
- o After you sing a song, talk about the words that rhyme in the song
- o Ask your student to try singing with a very low or very high or silly voice!