



# KINDERGARTEN



## How To Prepare Your Child With Disabilities for Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a big step in any child's life. For a child with disabilities, being ready for that step often requires some intentional preparation. By working with your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, you can plan for your child's success and make that first school experience a good one.

### Use the IEP Team to Plan for Success

Planning for your child's entrance into kindergarten can begin as early as a year ahead of time. You can start the process by asking the IEP team to discuss what skills your child will need to succeed and what IEP goals would move your child in that direction. The IEP team can suggest home-based activities you can use to help your child develop kindergarten skills. It also can recommend community resources if needed.

In the spring before your child starts kindergarten, you can begin to consider specific school choices. Your IEP team can tell you more about options in your area. Many districts have "kindergarten roundup" events so families can check out programs at different schools. Other districts assign children to a kindergarten in a specific school based on geographical location. If you look at a school in the spring, remember that the children you observe are at the end of their school year and their skills will be more advanced than those of a child just beginning kindergarten.

### Know the Signs of Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten readiness is not about being able to read, write, do math, and know science. Teachers say that kindergarten readiness is really about having basic communication skills and a good attitude.

They recommend that children entering kindergarten have the ability to:

- ✿ Communicate wants and needs
- ✿ Share and take turns with others
- ✿ Be an enthusiastic learner
- ✿ Pay attention and sit still
- ✿ Use a pencil and paintbrush
- ✿ Count up to 20
- ✿ Recognize the letters of the alphabet

### Decide if Your Child is Ready

If you feel that your child may not be ready for kindergarten, talk with your IEP team and together you can weigh options. Remember, your child doesn't need to have every skill in order to succeed in kindergarten. In fact, kindergarten experiences such as interacting with typical peers may actually help your child build skills.

If you disagree with the IEP team about your child's abilities, you may use a variety of dispute resolution processes. These include resolution facilitation and mediation.

## Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten (continued)

Once you've decided to enroll your child in kindergarten and are working on readiness skills, you can make your child's transition easier by doing the following:

- Have your child visit the classroom and meet the teacher before the school year begins.
- Take pictures of the school and classroom and use the pictures to talk with your child about starting kindergarten.
- Arrange summer play times with other students who will be in your child's classroom.
- Read books with your child about kindergarten, such as:
  - "David Goes to School" by David Shannon
  - "Off to School, Baby Duck!" by Amy Hest
  - "Vera's First Day of School" by Vera Rosenberry
  - "Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come" by Nancy Carlson

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## Hot Temper, Cool Parenting: How to Handle Temper Tantrums

Temper tantrums are unpleasant for adults, but a normal part of growing up for children. Understanding tantrums at different ages helps parents better be able to deal with a tantrum.

A tantrum is a sudden, intense display of uncontrolled anger or frustration. Screaming, kicking, falling on the ground, or other forceful body motions are typical. Tantrums are most common in children ages 15 months to 4 years old.

Some think that a crying infant is having a tantrum, but this isn't true. Infants express their needs by crying because it's their only way of communicating that they need your care. Infants who are comforted and have their needs met quickly develop a sense of security. This leads to less crying in the future.



Toddlers are the kings and queens of tantrums. Toddlers are just learning how to talk, express their feelings, and problem-solve. Because their skills aren't very good yet, their frustrations sometimes erupt in a tantrum. Tantrums are most likely to happen when toddlers are hungry, tired, frustrated, or overexcited.

Preschoolers are less likely than toddlers to have temper tantrums, since most have developed better coping and communication skills. But they can still get upset and lose control. Pre-schoolers need adults to teach them to recognize and express their emotions, needs, and wants in more skillful ways.

### Steps to Handle a Tantrum

1. Stay calm. Model the desired behavior for your child by controlling your own emotions. Screaming and spanking make the situation worse.
2. Pause before you act. Take 10 seconds to decide the best way to handle the tantrum. Four ways to deal with a tantrum include: **distract, remove, ignore, and hold.**
3. Wait until your child calms down before talking about the situation. Then use it as a chance to teach your child acceptable ways to manage anger, such as asking for help or using self-calming strategies. Asking children to "use their words" is only helpful if adults have taught children what those words could be.
4. Nurture your child. Tantrums can scare kids because they don't understand the reason for losing control. They need to know there are better ways to behave, but also that you still love them.

### Prevention Techniques

- Try to understand your child's tantrums. When and where do they occur? What happens before, during, and after? Who is usually involved?
- Set realistic limits and regular routines, such as mealtimes and bedtimes.
- Offer acceptable choices. Don't ask if your child wants a nap unless they can say no.
- Choose your battles and avoid fighting over little things.
- Give your child a few minutes warning before ending or changing activities.
- Help your child find a balance between challenging activities and ones that are too hard.

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# Parents Can Prepare for Special Education Meetings

If you are a parent of a child with disabilities, the following tips can help you prepare for special education planning meetings.

- 1) Remember that special education decisions are based on data rather than personal opinion. School records – including your child’s three-year evaluation report, current Individualized Education Plan (IEP), discipline reports, progress reports, and report cards—provide important information that is used when making decisions for your child. Be sure you have copies of these records. At a minimum, read the IEP and evaluation report before your child’s annual IEP meeting.
- 2) Be sure to review the meeting notice. Who is invited? What is the purpose of the meeting? Will your child attend all or part of the meeting? Does your child need any preparation for his or her participation?
- 3) Make a list of your priorities and concerns before the meeting. You may want to share your list with your child’s IEP case manager and ask that your items be included on the agenda.
- 4) If you plan to discuss a problem at the IEP meeting, define the issue clearly in your own mind. Bring ideas for solutions and also be willing to listen to the ideas of others. Avoid blame and focus on ways to solve the problem.
- 5) Finally, keep in mind that teamwork creates better outcomes for children. You are the expert on your child, and the school has expertise in education. Together, you can help your child succeed in school.

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## Angel Food Ministries

### “A Food Ministry With A Servant’s Heart”

Angel Food Ministries is a non-profit, non-denominational organization dedicated to providing grocery relief to communities throughout the United States.

Angel Food works through churches and community organizations in over 32 states. For further information, please take a few minutes to peruse our website [www.angelfoodministries.com](http://www.angelfoodministries.com). New menus will be given each month.



To obtain a monthly flier or for further local information, **Cedar Falls/Waterloo**, please contact Pastor Helen M. Seenster at 319-234-5928 or E-mail Angel Food Ministries at [hmsministries@mchsi.com](mailto:hmsministries@mchsi.com). **Marshalltown** Angel Food Ministries contact person: Blair Benefield, First Baptist Church, 641-753-3528. **Charles City:** First Baptist Church, 105 Chapel Lane, Charles City, IA 50616, 1-641-228-1906, *Ruth Yeaton, Director*. **Clear Lake:** Church of Christ, 2010 14th Avenue, N., Clear Lake, IA 50428, 1-641-357-5813, 1-641-529-2274, *Curtis McGinnis, Director* We Accept Food Stamps (EBT).



## Helping With Home Heating Costs

Iowa Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to assist low-income families meet the cost of home heating. Applications are accepted on a first come/first served basis at your local community action agency from November through April (October 1 for households with elderly/disabled member), Monday through Friday, or as posted at the local office.

This program is not designed to pay a household’s total energy costs, but to provide assistance in the payment of residential heating costs for eligible households. In most cases if you are eligible, your utility company will apply credit to your heating bill.

### Household income guidelines:

Household size	Annual income
1.....	\$16,245.00
2.....	21,855.00
3.....	27,465.00
4.....	33,075.00
5.....	38,685.00
6.....	44,295.00

Households who are over the income guidelines may be eligible for LIHEAP benefits through a medical waiver component. Medical expenses must be documented, paid out of pocket and non-reimbursable.

For a list of community action organizations in your area, check the LIHEAP website at: [www.dcaa.iowa.gov/alliowa\\_CAA/index.html](http://www.dcaa.iowa.gov/alliowa_CAA/index.html), click on “Where do I apply for services?” under “I need help!” on the left of the page.

Information for this article provided by the Iowa Community Action Organizations.



## Growing With Group Games

Watch children at play and you'll see them creating their own group games as well as playing old standbys—enjoying the time spent together with other children. But the value of such games goes far beyond the fun kids have in playing them. Group games promote children's development in a variety of ways.

There are several types of group games: aiming games like Drop the Clothespin in the Bottle, races like Spook Race; chasing games like Duck, Duck, Goose; hiding games like Button, Button; and guessing games like Charades.

In many games children develop their large motor skills as well as their eye-hand coordination. Children also develop many social-cognitive skills, from turn taking to negotiation, and they are challenged to see things from different perspectives.

In some group games children need to make comparisons and inferences and solve problems. Children who play games on a regular basis often begin adapting them or inventing their own games, which then adds another dimension to their learning and development.

These days many children have fewer opportunities than in the past to play group games in their neighborhoods. The following are some ideas for group activities in the classroom.

### TRUCK DRIVER

**Equipment:** Beach ball or foam ball for each pair

**Occupation:** Be a Truck Driver

**Activity:** The children are in pairs, standing one behind the other. They must travel together. If they chose to travel on the perimeter of the space in the room, then they can go rather fast (super highway). If they go *down town* to the middle of the space, they must slow down. If the truck driver chooses to go backwards, both children must make beeping sounds while doing so. Once the children can travel together successfully enough to receive their transport license, they can go over to the shipping dock and pick up a load of materials (foam ball) to transport to the Midwest where it can be unloaded at another location. The ball should be kept between the two children. If needed, the second child (the trailer) can be allowed to carry the ball as long as the ball is still touching the cab (first child). Have the children change places after a few minutes.

### AIRPORT

**Equipment:** None

**Occupation:** Be an Air Tower Controller and Aircraft Pilots

**Activity:** The children are in a squat position, arms stretched outwards, scattered throughout the room. The *Air Tower Controller* is located in the center of the room. When the *Air Controller* says, "Tower to Pilots, are you ready for takeoff?" the Pilots say "YES!" and begin to taxi down their runways, gaining speed and height as they go until the planes are all flying throughout the room. If a pilot's plane touches another pilot's plane, both planes crash onto the floor (sit down). The other planes continue flying until the Air Controller announces, "Pilots—you're clear to land," upon which the pilots begin to slow down and come in for a safe landing. Emphasize SAFE landing—looking out for other planes, no landing gear sliding and keep under control. Keep the air travel time short during the beginning stages of the game and increase the time as the children become better pilots.

### LETTER CARRIER

**Equipment:** Groups of envelopes/boxes of different characteristics (different color, number, alphabetic letter, etc.); corresponding mail boxes which should be of the same colors, letters or numbers, etc. as the mail.

**Occupation:** Be a Postal Employee

**Activity:** All of the *Mail* is placed in a pile in the room (the main post office). The children go to the main office, select a piece of mail and deliver it to the correct residential mail box (for instance, the red letter goes in the red mail box; or the pieces of mail with a 4 on them go into the 4 mail box). When all of the mail has been delivered, the mail can then be taken to the local mail drop box (cardboard box painted blue) to be sent to the main post office where it can again be delivered to the residential homes. The game could be modified by giving each child a paper bag to put several pieces of mail in while they are at the mail pile in the beginning of the game. The children can then deliver several pieces of mail before returning to the main office for more mail.

# Tame The Tubes

Children spend more time sitting in front of electronic screens (screen time) than in any other activity besides sleeping. This means they spend more time in front of screens than they do in school. The average time spent with various media (television, computer, video games) is more than five hours per day. Even the very youngest children, preschoolers ages 6 and younger, spend as much time with screen media (TV, video games, and computers) as they do playing outside. That means several hours of inactivity and in the case of television viewing, hours of exposure to advertising for high fat, high calorie foods. Many of these ads are aimed directly at children. Too much screen time affects children's brains and bodies.

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***There is a link between overweight in children and television viewing.***

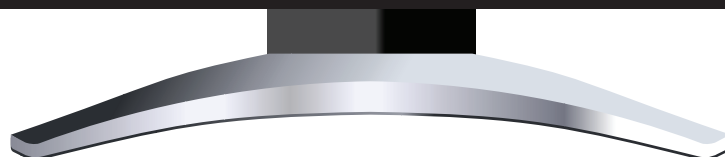
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Children who spend a great deal of time in front of a screen have less time for playing and talking with other children and adults. Language skills are best developed through reading and conversation. Excessive screen time can interfere with growth in this area. Children who watch less television do better in school and perform better on standardized tests.

Perhaps most alarming is the effect of too much screen time on children's bodies. Most children do not get the recommended amount of physical activity each day, and one reason for this is the number of hours spent inactive in front of a screen. There is a link between overweight in children and television viewing. Children who watch more TV tend to be heavier than children who watch less TV. Children who live in families in which television viewing is a normal part of the meal routine eat fewer fruits and vegetables and more pizzas, snack foods, and sodas.

## Ways To Limit Screen Time

1. Plan how much TV you and your family are going to watch. Limit screen time to one to two hours a day. Planning the amount of television you watch and selecting certain shows helps you to get the best of what television has to offer.
2. Set clear limits and be a good TV role model. Setting limits for the whole family is important. Children need to be taught how to have a good media diet.
3. Choose not to keep the TV on all the time, and instead tune into specific shows. With cable channels numbering into the hundreds, you could surf for hours and never watch a show. If the TV is on, this is likely to happen. However, if you have a TV plan and you know what shows you are going to watch, the set goes on when that show is on and off when it is over.
4. Get the TV out of the bedroom. Having a television in the bedroom allows children to watch more television unsupervised. The same goes with video games and computers; put these in a common area of the home.
5. Eat together as a family without the TV. Have media-free meals as a family. Turn off the TV, cell phone, MP3 player, and talk about your day.
6. Make a list of activities you want to do instead of sitting in front of the television, computer, or video games.
7. Watch with your children. Discuss the shows and the advertising. Help your child learn about the tactics advertisers use to sell unhealthy foods.



# Finger Plays for Fun and Learning

Finger Plays are fun for you and your preschooler. Because you don't need any equipment, you can do them anytime and anywhere—even while you wait in line at the supermarket.

Finger plays help your child learn many things:

- ★ Language skills
- ★ Listening skills
- ★ Motor skills
- ★ Memory and thinking skills
- ★ How to follow directions

Try them out to see which ones you want to commit to memory. Then, whenever you want something fun to do, it will be there for you.

## Wiggle

Wiggle, wiggle, fingers (Wiggle fingers)  
Right up to the sky. (Reach arms and wiggling fingers up)  
Wiggle, wiggle fingers (Wiggle fingers)  
Wave them all good bye. (Wave hand)  
Wiggle, wiggle fingers (Wiggle fingers)  
Right into a ball. (Fold hands into a ball)  
Now throw it in your lap (Fold hands into a ball)  
And do not let it fall.

## Trees

Elm trees stretch and stretch so wide, (Extend arms outward at side)  
Their limbs reach out on every side. (Stretch)  
Pine trees stretch and stretch so high, (Extend arms upward)  
They nearly reach up to the sky. (Stretch)  
Willows droop and droop so low, (Let arms hang loosely)  
Their branches sweep the ground so low. (Fingers sweep ground)

## Hop or Clop

*(Suit actions to words)*  
Rabbits hop. Horses clop.  
Worms wiggle. Bugs jiggle.  
Snakes slide. Sea gulls glide.  
Mice creep. Deer leap.  
Puppies bounce. Kittens pounce.  
Lions stalk—but I walk!



## Looking for Support? Support Groups

There are a number of support groups across Iowa and in AEA 267. Right now there are a number of active support groups in our areas focusing on the needs of children and young adults who have autism, Down Syndrome and other issues. Here are a few:

### ADHD Support Group

Meets second Monday of the month during the school year at Upper Iowa University, 3563 University Avenue, Waterloo from 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. For more information contact Barb at 319-266-2901 or [bum1992@cfu.net](mailto:bum1992@cfu.net).

### Autism Spectrum Support Group

Individuals wanting further information or a personal parent contact should contact: Chris and Tyann Rouw 319-266-5876, or the Family-Educator Connection at 319-273-8265.

More information about local news and information may be seen at Chris and Tyann's website: <http://www.autismio-wa.com>.

### Autism Dietary Network Support Group

For more information call Amy Roberts at 319-233-8043.

### ASD Support Group Forming

Jeni Oelkers is a mom who is interested in establishing a support group for parents of children affected by autism and related conditions, and others who are interested in autism spectrum disorders.

If anyone is interested in making a connection through an ASD support group, please contact Jeni at 641-512-6230 or [jhoelkers@gmail.com](mailto:jhoelkers@gmail.com).

### **ASD/PDD Support Group**

A support group for parents. Meetings are held at 3:00 p.m. the first Sunday of the month in Mason City and the third Sunday of the month in St. Ansgar. Locations are Whiskey Creek Woodfire Grill, 1519 4th Street SW in Mason City and Fourth Street Coffee Shop, 230 West 4th Street, in St. Ansgar. For more information, or to sign up for the group's E-mail, send a message to [pddsupport@mchsi.com](mailto:pddsupport@mchsi.com).

### **Designer Genes – A Support Group for families of children with Down Syndrome**

Provides parent groups as well as family events and playgroups for young children.

For more information call 319-404-0396 or e-mail [designergenes2005@yahoo.com](mailto:designergenes2005@yahoo.com).

### **Epilepsy Support Group**

Waterloo, Cedar Falls area. Held at the Kimball Ridge Center, Conference Room 1, 2101 Kimball Avenue, Waterloo, IA. Held the second Thursday of every ODD month at 6:30 p.m.

For more information contact: Karly Ashlock, Services Coordinator for Iowa Epilepsy Foundation North/Central Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, 1111 9th Street, Suite 275, Des Moines, IA 50314. Phone: 515-238-7660/Fax: 515-883-2292, Email: [kashlock@efncil.org](mailto:kashlock@efncil.org).

### **F.A.S.T. Families of Autism Standing Together**

Autism and GFCF (Gluten-Casein Free Diet) Support Group that meets in the Independence area. For more information call Cory or Renae Kress at 319-334-3832.

### **Prader Willi Syndrome Association of Iowa**

For more information please contact: Edie Bogaczyk 515-987-0288 or [dbogaczyk@msn.com](mailto:dbogaczyk@msn.com).

### **Support Group for Parents of Children with Special Needs**

Just forming in the Iowa Falls area. For more information contact Andy Lawler. [alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us) or 631-844-2469.

# Calendar

## February 2011

**Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

**2011 Iowa Early Care, Health, and Education**

**Day on the Hill**

State Capitol Building

The "Day on the Hill" event is one of the most visible opportunities for advocates to make their case for investing in young children. Come and meet with your legislators to discuss the importance of creating a quality early care, health, and education system. To register, visit [www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood](http://www.state.ia.us/earlychildhood).

For more information call: Rhonda Boltz at 515-281-4926 or email [RBoltz@idph.state.ia.us](mailto:RBoltz@idph.state.ia.us)

## March 2011

**Wednesday, March 30, 2011**

**Advocating Change Day**

Iowa State Capitol

This is a free event featuring advocacy training, opportunities to interact with available legislators and a rally.

For more information visit ID Action website: [www.idaction.org](http://www.idaction.org) or call 1-866-432-2846.

## April 2011

**April 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 2011**

**38th Annual Head Start**

**Conference**

Kansas City Convention Center

Kansas City, Missouri

For more information call Angela Smith at 1-703-739-7563 or email [asmith@nhsa.org](mailto:asmith@nhsa.org)

**April 25, 26, 27, 28, 2011**

**Council for Exceptional**

**Children Convention and**

**Expo 2011**

National Harbor

Baltimore, Maryland

For more information call Ebony Montgomery at 1-703-264-9443, or toll free at 1-888-232-7733, email: [ebonym@cec.sped.org](mailto:ebonym@cec.sped.org) or visit the CEC's website: [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org).

Remember to check the Disability Training Information calendar at [www.disabilitytraining.org/](http://www.disabilitytraining.org/) and the AEA 267 Professional Development web site at [www.aea267.k12.ia.us/pd/](http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/pd/) for information on more learning opportunities.

## The Family & Educator Connection

The AEA 267 Family & Educator Connection provides information and support for families and educators around disability-related issues. Whether you would like to talk about family adjustment issues with a new baby or newly diagnosed disability, home-school communication issues, questions relating to understanding a disability, or parenting strategies, we are happy to take your call. We have quite a library of resources available for loan and a number of highly qualified people to consult. If you have a question, we will do our best to help you find the answer. We are available by phone, mail, e-mail or by appointment, in-person.

### **Cedar Falls/ Waterloo Office**

#### **Deb Paton**

3706 Cedar Heights Drive

Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

Ph. 1-800-542-8375 or 1-319-273-8265

[dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us),

### **Clear Lake/Mason City Office**

#### **Sandy Kraschel**

Mason City Airport Grounds

9184 B 265th Street

Clear Lake, Iowa 50428

Ph. 1-800-392-6640 or 1-641-357-6125

[skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us)

### **Marshalltown Office**

#### **Andy Lawler**

909 South 12th Street

Marshalltown, Iowa 50158

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[alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us)

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