

Getting Ready for Kindergarten



Winchester Elementary

Building Responsibility

- Practice zipping and filling a backpack
- Make a “School Spot” – a designated place for school items
- Opening Ziploc bags and water bottles
- Dressing self COMPLETELY and independently (Put on own coat and zip/button their own pants; tie shoes or provide slip-ons)
- Giving your child 2-step directions (i.e. put your shoes in the corner or hang up your coat; or go to get a book and put it on the 2nd shelf)
- For SAFETY purposes, help your child learn his/her full name, address, and phone number

Teachers and parents in the Winchester Elementary community are excited to join other NPS **Leader in Me** elementary schools. As a Leader in Me School, students at Winchester will discover and practice a set of leadership, organizational, and life skills based on Stephen Covey’s book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. **Leader in Me** schools receive national recognition for developing important leadership and life skills in young children.

By incorporating **The Leader in Me** habits into our school day our students will develop skills and characteristics such as work ethic, motivation, problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork, academic achievements and appreciation of diversity.

Today’s changing world has a new set of rules. *Leader in Me* provides an effective framework for a systematic approach to developing leaders one child at a time. The principles, strategies and practices within Leader in Me offer students the tools needed to acquire essential life skills and characteristics necessary for success in the 21st Century. I encourage you to read more about *Leader in Me* by visiting www.leaderinme.org

The Winchester community hopes you will join us in our excitement and help support our efforts to fully implement Leader in Me at Winchester. This is a wonderful opportunity for staff, parents, and students to learn and grow together as we strengthen our culture and benefit student learning through implementation of the principles of *Leader in Me*.

Let the Car be your Playground

- Point out and encourage your child to read familiar signs (McDonald's, Target, Kohl's, Stop, etc.)
- Find individual letters of the alphabet on signs
- Read numbers around you
- Sing and chant nursery rhymes
- Listen to CD of nursery rhymes, such as "Mother Goose Rocks"
- "Toss the Rhyme": take turns rhyming words with your child (she says "cat", you say "bat")
- "Turtle Talk": Say a word or phrase very slowly and see if your child can then say it quickly, then switch roles
- "Clap a Word": Say a word then clap the number of syllables while repeating the word
- Have your child tell you a familiar story such as *The Three Little Pigs*

Fun-filled Free Field Trips

- Grocery store- name fruits and vegetables, read names on labels, ask to go into a bakery area, read the signs and ask your child what you might find down the aisle
- Public Library- play with the puppets, attend story times, check out ABC books
- Music in the Park- Plymouth: Wednesdays @ noon, Canton: various dates
- Pet store- talk about the animals and their needs
- Museum Adventure Pass- visit your local library for free passes to MANY museums around Michigan
- Scrap Box- Ann Arbor, gather supplies for creative projects. To learn more visit www.scrapbox.org or phone (734) 994-0012

NUMERACY ACTIVITIES

Mathematical thinking is ALL around us! Encourage your child to count EVERYTHING!

In the Kitchen:

- When eating finger foods like raisins or crackers, encourage your child to count the total pieces he has, how many he eats, and how many are left as pieces are eaten.
- Provide your child with empty plastic food containers with lids and encourage the child to stack them on top or inside each other. See if your child matches the lids with the containers. It's fun to explore shapes and sizes this way.

In the Living Room:

- Have your child hunt for shapes. Give your child a paper rectangle and ask her to look for items that contain that shape. Do the same thing with a square, circle, triangle and oval.
- Have your child compare the sizes of items in the living room. Discuss which items are large and which are small. Help your child arrange the items by size, from smallest to biggest or biggest to smallest

In the Bedroom:

- When putting clean laundry away, encourage your child to sort the clothes into two groups: clothes that will go in the closet and clothes that will go in a drawer.
- Play a clean-up game of "Clean the Colors." Have your child choose a color, then put away items that are that color. Continue with other colors until the room is clean.

In the Bathroom:

- Give your child assorted containers in the bathtub. Talk about which containers hold more, or less, water.
- Draw your child's attention to the waterline in the bathtub before and after she gets in. Any changes? Ask: "Does the amount of water in the bathtub change?"

NUMERACY ACTIVITIES cont.

In the Yard:

- Count out the number of steps it takes to get from the front yard to the back yard. Help your child draw a map of your yard including how many steps it takes to get from one part to another. Find items in the yard and help your child sort them into piles of items that are hard and items that are soft.

In the Car:

- Count telephone poles as you pass them. This will help your child learn the math skill of counting. It will also help him recognize rhythm.
- While on the freeway go on a “number hunt” to see how many numbers you and your child can find on billboards or exit signs.

In the Neighborhood:

- Count how many cars pass by your home in a one minute time span. Help your child write the number on a piece of paper.
- During a grocery shopping trip, comment on the number of types of containers (boxes, bags, cans, bottles, etc.) being selected for purchase. Are there more cans than boxes? More bottles than bags?

Visit this website for ideas:

<http://www.resa.net/earlychildhood/>

EVERYONE CAN READ

Reading to/with children is the single most important thing parents can do to prepare their child for school. Enjoy a book together every day.

Encourage your child to:

“Picture read”: read the book by looking at the pictures and talking about the things he sees

“Pretend Read”: pick a favorite book and let your child tell you the story from memory as the pages are turned

“Read aloud”: read all the letters/words your child recognizes in print

The important thing is to make reading a pleasurable experience!

Ideas from 7 Keys to Comprehension by S. Zimmermann & C. Hutchins

- As you read, talk about what you see in your mind, and then ask your child what s/he sees. ***“I can get a picture in my mind...”***
- Books often remind us of personal experiences, ***“That part reminds me of...”***
- Questions about the cover ignite curiosity about what might happen inside the book. ***“I wonder...”***
- To know how to question, your child needs to hear your questions first. This is not about asking your child questions. Instead, it’s about modeling what it means to be curious by modeling the questions you have while reading.
- Playing word games, reading riddle books, and listening to rhyming songs are fun ways to set the stage for inferring, or understanding things that the author doesn’t put in words. ***“Maybe it means...” or “I’m guessing that...”***
- Model what’s important to remember in the books you read together. Make this a playful exchange. ***“This is important...”***
- Make a game of “getting it”: Pause and summarize the story line thus far. If you get lost, share your confusion, and model what you do to get back on track. ***“Aha! I get it...”***

EVERYONE CAN WRITE

Develop Oral Language

Recall everyday events (falling off your bike, spilling milk on the floor, holding the rabbit at the petting farm...) Talk about what happened at the beginning, middle, and end. For example: I reached for the box of cereal. My arm bumped the milk. It fell off the table and spilled all over the floor. I grabbed a roll of paper towels and soaked up the soggy mess!

Draw pictures to convey a message

Add some scribbles, letters, and/or words:

Begin with your child's name and family members/friends names – mom, dad, papa...

- **Provide inviting materials** to foster writing. Paper choice- blank paper in different colors, sizes, old wrapping paper and cardboard scraps; pencils, pens, crayons, markers, dry erase markers and white boards, magnadoodles, easel & paintbrushes.
- **Celebrate all attempts** by your child to write. Encourage your child to re-read what s/he has written (even if it has only been represented by a picture or scribbles on the page!) Many children first learn to read their own writing.
- **Use writing to make things happen.** Have your child label his Lego creation (perhaps on post-it notes), write a reminder note about something he needs you to do, a letter or invitation, thank you notes, grocery lists, menus, etc. This will show your child the many purposes of writing.
- Support your child in taking risks in his writing. Say, "Let's try writing that word." **Promote approximations** of words rather than expecting conventional spelling. Stretch the word together, saying it slowly (using "turtle talk"). Your child can record sounds s/he hears. Begin by listening for beginning and ending sounds; gradually increase, as your child becomes more proficient. Refer to the ABC chart with letters and picture cues. Offer choices – Does "mom" begin like "turtle" or "mouse"?

Fine Motor Activities

Your child should be able to write his/her name upon entering Kindergarten. To build the necessary fine motor skills:

- Use scissors to cut EVERYTHING
- Use clothes pins to clip onto different items and pick up small beans or beads to place into a container
- Play with any firm play dough or modeling clay
- Write your name with crayons over a bumpy surface using different colored crayons
- Pick up coins or other small objects with just your thumb and pointer finger, sort the objects into different groupings
- Limit screen time and when you do choose to have it, make it educational

Fine Motor Movement (small muscles)

Fine motor skills actually come from strong upper arm and shoulder muscles. So, it is important to work on these upper body strength exercises:

- Chair or wall push-ups
- Small and large arm circles
- Wheelbarrow walk, bear crawl or crab walk
- Writing on a vertical surface
- Jumping rope
- Play catch
- Push a friend around the room on a rolling chair
- Limit screen time and when you do choose to have it, make it educational

Gross Motor Movement (large muscles)

- Skip EVERYWHERE
- Hopscotch or jump rope
- Visit playgrounds or splash parks
- Make your own balance beam using tape or chalk
- Toss a ball underhand back and forth: recite the alphabet, say a letter and name a word that begins with that letter, count, etc.
- Hop on one foot
- Ride a bike
- Limit screen time and when you do choose to have it, make it educational

ABC's

Sing the ABC song, read alphabet books.

Use magnetic letters, foam bathtub letters, and ABC puzzles at home. Practice saying the sound each letter makes.

Look for letters in the environment around you – What letters do you see in “CVS”? What letter do you see at the beginning of “Applebee’s”?

Create letters with play-doh and/or wikki-sticks.

Write letters in sand, pudding on a cookie sheet, shaving cream, sidewalk chalk, magnadoodle, on a white board with dry erase markers.

Letter Formation

Always start at the TOP!

Begin with capital letters – much easier to form and are the foundation for handwriting success.

Demonstrate and show each letter step-by-step.

Use the words – Big Line, Little Line, Big Curve, and Little Curve.

Practice writing letters a little each day.