

A day in the life of Kindergarten

What is our kindergarten curriculum made up of?

The kinder day is broken up into structured and unstructured learning. The classroom is laid out in a way that allows learning to occur through play (unstructured learning). Group times and small planned lessons occur throughout the day to challenge children's specific learning needs (structured learning).

You can create an unstructured learning environment at home by incorporating some of the ideas below, and then include a mix of activities from the structured learning section to build your child's literacy and STEM knowledge.

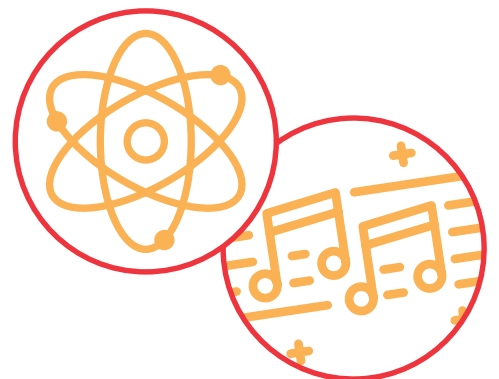


UNSTRUCTURED LEARNING:

Unstructured play (also known as free time) involves games that are made up on the spot or allows children to use the equipment around them as they like, without a set agenda. Evidence shows that play can support learning across physical, social, emotional and intellectual areas of development. It helps children learn about themselves and where they fit in the world.

Examples include:

- Imaginative play with make-believe stories
- Dancing to music
- Junk modelling with recycled objects
- Drawing, painting, finger painting and playdough
- Emptying and filling containers of water in the sink, bath or a paddling pool in warmer months
- Dress ups
- Climbing, digging and running outdoors
- Playing with dolls or small toy animals



STRUCTURED LEARNING:

It's important for children to engage in both structured and unstructured play. Structured play (organized activities) usually includes rules, time limits or special equipment. These can help your child prepare for the school environment. Examples of structured play includes prescriptive tasks that build literacy and STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) skills via a challenge, worksheet or guided activity.

LITERACY SKILLS - READING

Words are everywhere, so remember to read with your child every chance you get. Talk about signs, food labels, and always keep a book handy.

Discussing the content and meaning of books is an important part of reading comprehension. Chat about the book before, during and after reading, encouraging your child to share their ideas and ask questions.

Here are some questions you can ask:

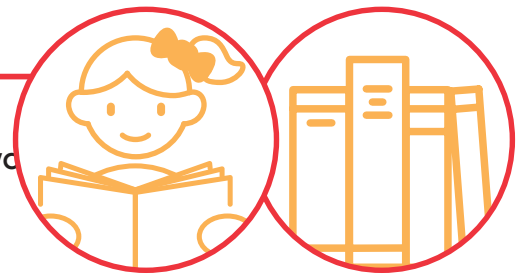
- Look at the cover. What do you think this book might be about?
- How would you describe the character at the beginning of the story?
- What is happening in the pictures?
- What do you think is going to happen next?
- Why do you think the character did that? What would you do in the same situation?
- Who was your favourite character in the story? Why did you like that character?
- What was your favourite part of the book?
- Can you retell the story in your own words?

Talk as much as you can with your child and engage them in conversation often. Your child will learn new vocabulary faster and speak with greater fluency.

Use the same series of questions to discuss TV programs or films you watch together. Understanding visual media is a key element of your child's literacy.

Other reading activities:

- Read a recipe together and follow the steps to make your child's favourite meal.
- Ask your child to read and tick off each grocery item on a shopping list as you buy or unpack them.
- Play a word hunt. Write random words on bits of paper and place them around a room. Say one of the words and ask your child to find the right word.
- Put post-it notes on objects around the house so your child can read and learn new words every day.



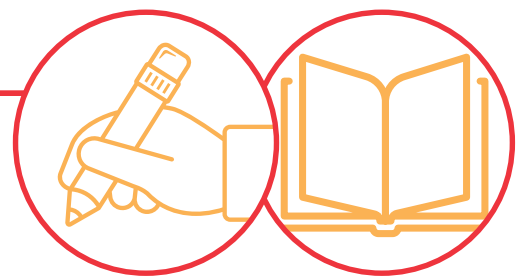
LITERACY SKILLS- WRITING

Like reading, writing with your child can be incorporated as an everyday activity at home.

Try some of these writing ideas:

- Write a shopping list or add items on a to-do list.
- Use a whiteboard to write and read family messages.
- Give your child a pad of sticky notes to write reminders for themselves.
- Plan and write your weekly menu together.
- Write captions for photographs in your family photo album.
- Write labels for your child's art works and creations.
- Make words using magnetic letters and stick them on the fridge.
- Make and write greeting cards, birthday cards, and thank you notes.

Your child may be able to form some letters and words already but using scribbles as symbols to represent words and letters is ok at this stage – they are learning to associate writing with a purpose regardless of what the text looks like. You can also ask them what message they want to convey and get them to copy your text!



MATHS AND STEM SKILLS

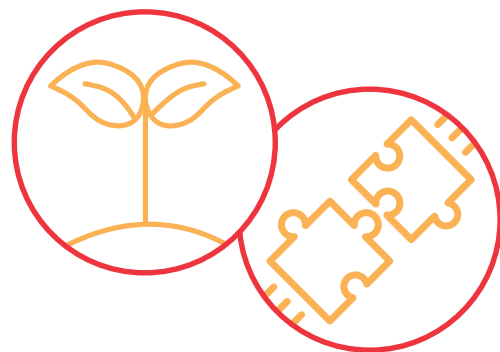
Maths can be practiced during everyday activities such as:

- Cutting fruit into pieces and asking your child to count them.
- Asking them how many pieces they would like their toast cut up into and having them check the number.
- Adding the total number of cutlery items at the table.
- Counting how many steps it takes to walk from the kitchen to the bathroom.
- Creating a number hunt around the house with post-it notes.
- Building numbers out of playdough.
- Ordering objects or toys from smallest to largest.
- Noticing the different shapes, animals and people shown on coins. Discuss the differences. Create coin rubbings with pencils and paper.
- Encouraging your child to order food items by height or cost.
- Using coloured pegs, blocks, beads or cutlery to begin a pattern for your child to continue. Once confident, ask them to create a pattern of their own.
- Trying to incorporate some patterns in rhythm. Create a clapping pattern and ask your child to copy and then create their own pattern.



STEM involves investigating concepts and ideas we are curious about. Some activities you can try are:

- Sprouting seeds in a jar and observing the growth.
- Observing how ice is formed and reacts to different temperatures.
- Testing out which objects sink and float.
- Building a bridge out of recyclables and household objects and then testing who has created the strongest structure.
- Create a lego maze for marbles.



You can adapt some of the activity suggestions based on the resources you have available and your child's interests. Kindergarten educators incorporate several structured activities into a child's day, along with plenty of breaks for free play. More than anything it's important for children to take interest and gain enjoyment from learning as this fosters a positive attitude as they head into school.

