



Welcome to Kindergarten™

THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of this document is to provide opportunities to extend & enrich the **Welcome To Kindergarten** experience for educators and their families.

The resources taken home at the end of the Welcome to Kindergarten event provide a foundation for many engaging and playful learning opportunities for families to enjoy with their children.

After children receive their Welcome to Kindergarten bag and explore the contents during the event, there are many opportunities to continue to reinforce the importance of talking, reading, singing, and playing every day.

This resource has been developed to help educators continue these important conversations and key messages with families. A variety of Kindergarten classroom experiences have been suggested as potential ways to support this learning. Each suggestion describes a playful experience or “provocation” for children that connects to important learning in Kindergarten. The term provocation is used to describe a playful learning experience planned by educators. Provocations are invitations to learning and support children’s curiosity and interest to explore, create, and problem solve. Additionally, the resource provides ideas for nurturing connections with children and families by sharing the learning happening in the classroom and extending the learning at home.

The learning experiences described in this document are designed to enrich and extend **Welcome to Kindergarten** family orientations. Educators are invited to use the contents of this document in flexible ways to support their individual contexts and needs.



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Literacy

“Literacy is about more than reading or writing – it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language and culture. Those who use literacy take it for granted – but those who cannot use it are excluded from much communication in today’s world. Indeed, it is the excluded who can best appreciate the notion of “literacy as freedom.”

- UNESCO, *Statement for the United Nations Literacy Decade, 2003–2012*

Children need to experience language and literacy concepts in depth through repeated investigations over a long period of time. It is important for educators to provide students with a variety of experiences and opportunities to talk, listen, read, and write. A balance of experiences are essential for literacy growth and development. Students need opportunities for exploring language in their play however they also need experiences that are more directed instruction.





Letter sort

“I am noticing and describing how letter shapes are the same and different.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- Magnetic letters
- Cookie sheet

Process:

1. Provide a collection of magnetic letters for the students to explore.
2. Demonstrate one way of sorting the letters (e.g. letters with circles, letters with tails, etc.)
3. Ask the students to come up with their own way of sorting the letters.



Family connections:

We have been learning to notice differences and similarities among letters (and numbers!). One way that we are supporting your child with this is by sorting letters so the distinctive features of the letter become more familiar. You can do this activity at home using your **magnetic letters** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag. Place a few letters in front of your child and sort them (e.g., letters that are round, letters that have tall sticks, etc). Ask your child to guess what your sorting rule is. Then offer your child a turn to sort a few letters a different way.

Alphabet oh no!



“I am learning to take turns when I play with others.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Small deck of letter cards (one letter per card and 2-3 cards that say ‘Oh No!’)

Process:

1. Gather a small group of children.
2. Using a small deck of letter cards (one letter/per card plus a few cards that say “Oh No!”) the players take turns pulling a card and reading it to the group.
3. When the “Oh No!” card is pulled, then all the players say “On No!” together and return all of their cards to the deck.

Extension:

Instead of naming the letter have the students say the sound the letter makes or think of a word that begins with that letter.

Family connections:

Games are a fun way to learn about taking turns. In class we have introduced a new game called ‘Oh No!’. In this game students are not only learning how to take turns but they are practicing naming the letters of the alphabet. At home you can play some simple games to support the same learning. One game you could play requires the **magnetic letters and numbers** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag and a container (e.g., a bowl or a small recycled box). Place all of the magnetic letters in the container, as well as one or two of the magnetic numbers. Each player takes a turn pulling a letter out of the can/container and saying its name. If a number is pulled out the players can say ‘Oh no!’ and that game is over. You place all of the letters back in the container to start again.



Environmental print

“I am using what I am familiar with to help me learn new things.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- Collection of packaging from familiar products (e.g. Goldfish, Lego, Tim Hortons, etc.) and an alphabet chart or word wall.

Process:

1. Invite the students to investigate and talk about the different product labels, What do you recognize? How does recognizing the label help you with knowing the letters and sounds?
2. Ask the students to help you add these familiar labels onto the word wall so it may help others recognize letters and/or sounds.

Extension:

Encourage your students to bring in any environmental print from their home that they are familiar with - for example, packaging from a favourite food.

Family connections:

Have you noticed that your child recognizes familiar signs, words and symbols from the environment (e.g., Tim Horton's, favourite cereal, stop sign, etc). Children naturally want to read and understand these signs and symbols. Your child has begun the journey to become a reader!

When you are grocery shopping with your child play a game of 'I spy'. You can ask them to 'spy' for products that start with a certain letter. (e.g., "I spy something that begins with the sound 'b'. You might be in the cookie section and your child is familiar with Bear Claws.) Be sure to use products that your child is familiar with. You might even cut out some of these labels and put them next to the **magnetic letters** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag. See if your child can find the letter that matches the beginning letter on the label.



Name/word scramble

"I am using what I am familiar with to help me learn new things."

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- Cut the name/word cards up to separate the letters.

Process:

1. Show a name card and together say the name and then turn it over so students can't see the name (or you can keep the name visible depending upon the developmental level of the students you are working with).
2. Invite the student(s) to use the cut up letter cards to recreate the name/word.
3. Show the student the name card and compare their recreation to the full name card.
4. Scramble again and invite another student to try.

Extension:

Have the student close their eyes and remove one of the cut up letters from the name. Invite the student to open their eyes and determine which letter is missing from the name/word.

Instead of names you may want to use a high frequency word the student may be familiar with from a small group reading experience.

Family connections:

Children learn a lot about letters by using their own name as well as the names of those important to them. Using your **magnetic letters** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag, select the letters of your child's name and place them in front of them. Scramble the letters and ask them to unscramble the letters to recreate their name. You can do this with other names that are familiar to your child (e.g., siblings, caregivers, etc).

Reading aloud



"I am a reader."

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

1. Gather a picture book to read aloud. When selecting a read aloud text, it is helpful to consider:
 - Titles that explore the children's interests, expand horizons, and offer exposure to different kinds of writing.
 - Stories that highlight how characters in different situations behave toward others.
 - Engaging informational texts with lots of colorful photographs or illustrations that help children build knowledge about the world.

Process:

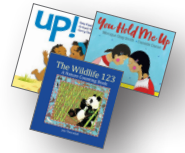
1. Reading aloud to children is an important component of daily instruction. Children are learning important skills and strategies when books are read aloud to them. Through the read aloud children discover that spoken language can be written down and read.
2. When reading aloud, you will support their growing motivation to read. You can support the development of word knowledge, and model comprehension strategies.
3. Display familiar read aloud texts and encourage children to revisit them and make connections to new and prior experiences.

Family connections:

Enjoy reading aloud with your child every day. Explore a variety of books, including wordless picture books, dual-language and first language books. While reading, ask open ended questions about the story such as "Where do you think they might be going on the bus?" or "What do you think they will do when they get to the park?" Hearing a story read aloud helps children learn to focus, and to appreciate the sound of language. Most of all, reading aloud is fun for everyone involved.

The **Welcome to Kindergarten bag** includes storybooks that may be read aloud and enjoyed with your child over and over again. Your community library is another great source of high quality books that can be borrowed at no cost to your family!

Rhyming in the read aloud



"I can hear and say rhyming words."

A provocation for a whole class or a small group of children.

Materials:

- Big books/poems that contain rhymes

Process:

1. Educator begins to read the poem/big book and emphasize the rhyme.
2. As the educator continues to read they pause before reading the 'rhyming word' and encourage the students to guess what the word might be.
3. Educator could highlight the rhyming words in the poem or big book.
4. Are there any other words that might rhyme? Why do you think the author chose this word instead of others?
5. Play 'I Spy' using rhyming words and things you can see in the classroom (e.g. 'I spy something that rhymes with hair - chair').

Family connections:

We have been reading many poems and books that have rhyming words in them. Your child's ability to hear the rhymes in words is important to reading. A good place to find rhymes are in the songs from the **Welcome to Kindergarten resources** at thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk

Listen to some of the songs with your child and see if they can come up with the rhyming words as you listen and sing along. You can also play 'I spy' using rhyming words (e.g., I spy something that rhymes with ...)



Rhyming challenge

"I am hearing and creating rhymes."

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Collection of magnetic letters and a familiar rhyming poem/song/nursery rhyme

Process:

1. Expose students to many rhyming poems, nursery rhymes, big books.
2. Have the students brainstorm other words that rhyme with that word.
3. 'What sound do you hear at the beginning of ___(new rhyming word)?'
4. Model moving the first letter of the initial word and slide in the beginning letter of the new word (e.g. original word is 'cat' - slide the 'c' away as you lie the letter 'p' in its place and say 'pat.')
5. Invite students to try this with another word that rhymes (e.g. the child says 'hat', finds the magnetic 'h' and replaces the 'p' with the 'h'. Reads 'pat').

Extension:

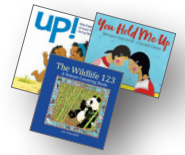
Write the rhyming words as you make them to create a list. Students may use these words to keep track or they may recreate them as a way of exploring the rhyme.

Family connections:

Hearing rhymes in words is important to reading. One way that we can support this learning is by saying nursery rhymes, singing songs with rhymes, reading poems with rhyming words. A good place to find rhymes are in the songs from the **Welcome to Kindergarten resources** at thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk

Play with rhyming words with your child! Choose a simple word from your favourite song or poem and work together to think of as many rhyming words as you can.

Family time



“I can retell stories about my family experiences.”

A provocation for a whole class or small group of children.

Materials:

- Photos or picture of the educators’ family doing something fun together.
- Photo or picture of a shared experience in the classroom.

Process:

1. Show a photo or picture to the students and tell them you are a storyteller. Tell them the story of the picture.
2. Present the students with a new photo of a shared experience in the classroom. Ask them to help you tell the story of the photo.

Extension:

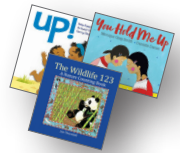
Students can bring in photos or pictures from home and be offered opportunities to tell the story of the picture.

Family connections:

We are learning to become storytellers and learning about each other. We are using photos or drawings to retell a story about ourselves. We would like you and your child to either pick a photo or draw a picture of something that your family has fun doing together (reading books at bedtime, cooking, etc). Talk to your child about the ‘story’ they might tell about their photo or drawing. There are examples of photos on pg. 26 of the **Chirp magazine** provided in your WTK bag.



Caring community



“I am learning that my actions can affect others”

A provocation for a whole class or small group of children.

Materials:

- Various picture books related to helping others
- Chart paper
- Photos of students doing actions

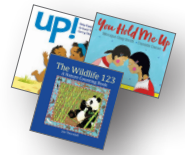
Process:

1. Take photographs of students doing things around the classroom that demonstrate being part of a caring community.
2. Share one of these photos and invite the students to tell you what the student is doing that helps others (you can do other photos on different days - with small groups or individuals that may need more explicit teaching).
3. Post this in the classroom and refer to it when you see someone else doing this action. (e.g., “I saw Derek holding the door open for others - just like in the picture where Serena is holding the door open for friends.”)
4. Attach the photos to a chart and write what the students say.

Family connections:

Recently in class we have been noticing when people do nice things for others like: holding doors open for people, helping someone in need, and allowing someone to go first. On page 9 in your **Chirp magazine** you will see a Chirp Challenge. Talk with your child about how we care for one another in our community. Ask your child about some of the nice things they can do at home (e.g., helping set the table, making their bed, sharing with their sibling, etc).

Let's count the beats



"I can hear the beats in words."

A provocation for a whole class or small group of children

Materials:

- Name cards of students in class

Process:

1. Ask the students to listen to how many beats are in a name and the educator says it aloud. (e.g., 'Sa - man - tha' - Samantha has 3 beats in her name)
2. Ask the students to clap the number of beats in various students names with you.
3. Invite students that have one beat in their name to stand up. Then 2 beats, etc.

Extension:

Continue to do this with different words.

Family connections:

As your child develops as a reader and writer it is important 'play' with language. Children need to be able to hear the sounds of language. One thing that we have been 'playing' with in our class is hearing the beats in words. We began with listening to the beats in our name (e.g. Sa-man-tha has 3 beats). Ask your child to listen for the number of beats in the names of those significant people in your family. You could also do this with the book **Wildlife 1 2 3** and clap the beats of each of the animals in the book as you read. (e.g., "pan-da", "Panda has two beats").

Mathematics



Young children come to school already knowing a great deal about mathematics. Children bring with them an intuitive knowledge of mathematics that they have developed through curiosity about their physical world and through real-life experiences. It is important for educators to build on the experiences and knowledge of children to support their continued development of mathematical concepts. Educators do this by providing a balance of opportunities for free play, investigation, and exploration as well as guided and direct instruction.

Through these types of mathematical experiences children are developing key skills and processes to help them understand the world around them. The foundational mathematical processes are:

Problem solving - developing strategies and persevering when solving problems

- Reasoning and Proving - creating, investigating and testing out possibilities and theories.
- Reflecting - monitoring their thinking to clarify their understanding or revise their thinking.
- Selecting Tools and Strategies - choosing and using from a variety of appropriate tools and strategies.
- Connecting - connecting mathematical concepts to their everyday life
- Representing - showing their thinking in a variety of ways (concrete materials, movement, drawings, etc).
- Communicating - using mathematical language.



All the same



“I am learning to notice and name how things are the same or different from each other.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity.

Materials:

- A collection of materials (e.g., various manipulatives from around the room, loose parts, outdoor items, photos of a variety of natural and man made things, etc.)

Process:

1. Educator sorts materials from a collection into a pile and sings the song:
“How are these things all the same, all the same, all the same. How are these things all the same, I can tell can you?” (To the tune of ‘Mary had a Little Lamb’).
2. The students in the small group try to determine how the items in the identified group are all the same. There may be a number of correct answers the students discover.
3. Offer each student in the small group an opportunity to choose their own ‘sorting’ rule for a collection of items.

Family connections:

Sorting involves noticing and talking about similarities and differences. It’s a very early form of algebra! Matching and sorting, as with all other math activities, are best learned when they are part of a child’s everyday life. Putting a puzzle together means matching shapes. When setting a spoon with each bowl for breakfast, children are matching objects. While helping to clean up their toys or helping with laundry, children are sorting objects.

Check out page 11 in the **Chirp magazine** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag. There are many things indoors and outdoors that you and your child can sort.

Many items around your home could become fun objects for sorting: buttons, cutlery, laundry items, gems or stones, toys, coins, etc. Food can also be fun to sort. While preparing this or any other snack, talk with your child about ways that you could sort the ingredients (e.g., by colour, food group, preference, temperature, texture, etc.)

Count and move



“I am learning to control my body and adapt my behaviour.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity

Materials:

- One die
- One “cube” with simple actions illustrated on the faces of the cube (e.g., “hop”, “clap”, “beep”).

Process:

1. Roll the regular die first - this shows how many times you will do the actions.
2. Roll the actions cube - the action is done the same number of times. Shown on the regular die.
Example: Die is rolled 6. Action cube shows hopping. The children count and hop six times.

Family connections:

Many games and activities can actually help to develop self regulation in fun and engaging ways. They provide children with an opportunity to practice focusing and shifting their attention, remembering something, and controlling their physical actions. In class we have been playing a game called ‘Count and Move’. You can try your own version at home!

Enjoy reading **Wildlife 1 2 3** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag with your child. Together, pick a favourite page and talk about an action or sound that animals might use, can you make that action or sound the same number of times? For example, the crocodiles might snap their jaws. Can you use your arms to show how they do this? Try doing this six times to match the number on the crocodile page!

Finger, fingers



“I am learning to control my body and adapt my behaviour.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity.

Process:

1. Say, “Hold your hands behind your back.”
2. Together, chant, “Fingers, fingers, 1, 2, 3. How many fingers do you see?”
3. Using two hands, hold up three fingers. (Start with the typical ways of showing 1–5 on your fingers)
4. Children can say three or show three with their fingers.
5. Keep playing with different numbers of fingers, focusing on 1–5 and slowly moving up to 10.
6. Vary how you show each number on your fingers. Example: 5 can be 2 and 3 fingers or 1 and 4 fingers. It is important to show 5 in many ways.

Family connections:

Many games and activities can actually help to develop self regulation in fun and engaging ways. They provide children with an opportunity to practice focusing and shifting their attention, remembering something, and controlling their physical actions. Have your child explain “Fingers, fingers,” a game we have been playing at school.

Enjoy reading **Wildlife 123** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag, as well as any other “counting books” such as ‘Mouse Count’ by Ellen Walsh or ‘Chicka, Chicka 1,2,3’ by Bill Martin Jr.

Race to ten



“I am learning ways to count.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity.

Materials:

- Gather a ten frame for each student, a die, and some counters or other small objects to place on the ten frames.

Process:

1. Each child may take a turn rolling the die, and then places the corresponding number of counters on their ten frame.
2. The first child to cover their entire ten frame “wins.”

Extensions/supports:

- Use a five frame instead of a ten frame.
- Customize the die to show only numbers to 3.
- Use more than one ten frame and two die.
- Grid games can be readily used to support students who are developing their oral language skills because there are few language barriers in play of this kind.
- Children may wish to create their own games by decorating their ten frames and coming up with unique objects to use as counters.

Family connections:

Simple board games can be a fun way to spend time together. They are simple to make, and customizable to children’s interests - and they help children to practice so many important math skills.

Try playing the simple board game found on pages 20-21 in the **Chirp magazine**. Once you have tried the game, you and your child may wish to play again using a die to move your counters. Perhaps consider making the game outdoor with sidewalk chalk. Can you and your child think of different actions for the squares?

Counting sets and comparing sets



“I am learning ways to count.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity.

Materials and process:

Children need extensive experience counting objects and comparing sets of objects to fully understand the concept of number and how that concept can be used to solve problems. Useful math manipulatives are all around. Try counting small collections of pebbles, corks, marker lids, bottle tops, or even snacks at lunch time!

As children become more confident counters, they will begin to notice differences between sets. Introducing mathematical terms such as “more”, “fewer” and “same” help children to describe what they see. Opportunities to count and compare sets of objects emerge throughout the day: (e.g., “Three children want to paint. How many brushes will we need?”)

Family connections:

Enjoy reading **Wildlife 1 2 3** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag. There is no need to read about all the numbers in the book at once - try focusing on numbers to 5 or ten. You could even choose only one page to look at together. Try counting the number of animals and looking at the numeral. Can you and your child spot the matching quantity of animals drawn in the border of each illustration? For example, on page 5, there are five tigers in the main part of the picture. If you and your child look carefully, can you find the five tigers hidden in the border around the picture?

Sorting and counting



“I am learning to notice and name how things are the same or different from each other.”

A provocation for a small group or a whole class of children.

Materials:

- A variety of toys and play materials
- Bins and shelves for storage
- Labels and/or photographs

Process:

1. Provide children with a clear and consistent signal that tidy-up time is approaching. Some educators use transition time as a musical moment by singing tidying up songs. Song examples can be found at Dr. Jean and Friends.
2. Take advantage of the learning opportunity posed in tidy-up routines! Model, name and support the mathematics in this everyday task:
 - Invite children to count and sort their play materials when tidying.
 - As they separate items, talk about what characteristics the children notice that helps them to sort. Could your labels reflect these characteristics? (e.g., some students decided to sort their unit blocks by labelling the bins “straight”, “curvy” and “triangles”).
 - Ask children what they notice about quantities. (e.g., are there more lego blocks or magna tiles?)
 - Count as you tidy - have a “10 Challenge”. Can everyone tidy 10 items by counting each item that they put away?

Family connections:

Children can sort and count their toys when cleaning up. Ask your child to put all the stuffed animals in one container and all the blocks in another; this encourages sorting sets of objects. Ask if there are more teddy bears or blocks – now you are comparing sets based on the attribute of number. Sorting and counting can be done when putting dishes away or folding laundry. It also gives you and your child something interesting to talk about while doing daily chores together.

Enjoy reading **Wildlife 1 2 3** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag, as well as any other “counting books” such as ‘Mouse Count’ by Ellen Walsh or ‘Chicka, Chicka 1,2,3’ by Bill Martin Jr.

Count and climb



“I am learning ways to count.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or an individual child

Process:

1. Locate a safe set of stairs (not too crowded, and with a bannister for balance).
2. Count each stair as you climb.
3. End the counting when you get to the final step and say the total number of steps (e.g. “ten steps in all”).

Family connections:

Count each stair as you walk up and down. This helps your child attach number words to an action. Ending the counting when you get to the final step and saying, “ten steps in all” (In this example, 10 is the size of the set of stairs). This helps your child understand cardinal numbers, or the numbers used to describe the size of a set.

You can also use **the ball** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag and have your child count how many times they can bounce or catch the ball!

Counting on



“I am learning ways to count.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity

Process:

1. Identify places in the classroom, school, or outdoor learning area where children regularly visit. For example, a staircase, a ladder on playground equipment, a short ledge surrounding an outdoor sand area, a coloured line on the floor of the gymnasium, etc.
2. From an identified starting point, count up to four steps or stairs and then stop.
3. When you continue walking or stepping, start counting again by continuing with 5, not starting back at 1 again. This can help children to think about counting on and leads them to understand that a total number can be broken into two sets or parts.

Extensions/supports:

- Ensure that the area with steps of stairs that you will be counting has a total number that's not too big - no more than 5 or 10.
- Perhaps stop and then count on twice!

Family connections:

A process called “counting on” prepares children for higher math functions. For example, walk up and count the first 4 stairs, stopping on stair 4. When you continue walking up, start with 5, not back at 1.

Ask children to predict how many steps it is from their bedroom to the kitchen, or how many scoops of cereal it will take to fill their bowl. Then compare the actual number of steps or scoops.

Use the **magnetic numbers** from the WTK bag to practice this skill with a fun and simple game. Place the numbers in a container. Take turns pulling a number out of the container. Name the number and then count on to 10 after identifying the number you have pulled!

Numbers in order



"I am learning ways to count."

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity

Materials:

- A collection of magnetic numbers

Process:

1. At first, use several "1's", "2's", and "3's". Spread them out in no particular order on a table or the floor.
2. Work together to arrange the numbers in the correct order (1, 2, 3, etc.) on a cookie sheet while naming the numbers.

Extensions/supports:

Add one number at a time (up to 5, and then up to 10) in order to increase the level of difficulty.

Family Connections:

From early in life, many children learn to rote count, saying the number words in the correct order. This is an accomplishment that should be celebrated, but there is a lot more to counting!

Children need extensive experience counting objects to fully understand the concept of number. Expensive items from the store are not required to help your child develop foundational math skills. Use the **magnetic numbers** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag to play a variation of our classroom activity: Place the magnetic numbers on a table, in no particular order. You and your child can work together to arrange the numbers in the correct order (1, 2, 3, etc.) on a cookie sheet or the fridge while naming the numbers.

The number match



“I am learning ways to count.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or a partner activity

Process:

1. Download the Welcome to Kindergarten album on The Learning Partnership's Website.
2. Enjoy singing and marching to the song The Number March, in the classroom or gymnasium.

Extensions/supports:

Challenge the children to find other ways to move along with the song.



Family connections:

Music and movement is a fun way to learn about concepts and to get some exercise. Download the **Welcome to Kindergarten album** on their website. Enjoy singing and marching to The Number March. Can you and your child find other ways to move along with the song?

Number challenge



“I am learning to control my body and adapt my behaviour.”

A partner activity

Materials:

- A collection of magnetic numbers, or cards that show numbers

Process:

1. Place the number cards in a stack, or the magnetic numbers in a container.
2. Take turns flipping over one card (or pulling out one magnetic number) each.
3. Whoever has the largest number, say “Me.”
4. Repeat

Extensions/supports:

- Each person flips over 2 cards and adds them together. Whoever has the most, says “Me.”
- Limit the numbers used to 1-5, then 1-10.

Family connections:

From early in life, many children learn to rote count, saying the number words in the correct order. This is an accomplishment that should be celebrated, but there is a lot more to counting!

Children need extensive experience counting objects to fully understand the concept of number. Expensive items from the store are not required to help your child develop foundational math skills. Collect small items like bread tabs, corks, pretty stones, etc. to create your own sets of objects to count. Use the **magnetic numbers** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag to play a variation of our classroom activity:

1. Gather the magnetic numbers in a container set in the middle of the table.
2. Each player may pull out one magnetic number to set in front of them.
3. The player who has the largest number, says “Me.”
4. Repeat until all of the numbers are gone.

Music and movement



Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children:

- Concentration, memory and listening skills
- Inhibitory control
- Speech patterns
- Vocabulary and recalling words through movements.
- Stimulation of new neural pathways and connections in the brain that speed-up the learning process
- Creativity and curiosity
- Social interaction



Sing along



“I can use my voice and gestures to communicate and respond.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Device to play music
- Album from The Learning Partnership website - find one that is a favourite!
thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk.

Process:

1. Sing a familiar song together, and try to vary the volume and tone of voice. Try to make up some actions!

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

Download the **Welcome to Kindergarten album** on their website. Listen and sing along to your favourite songs with your child. Can you make up actions or a little dance to go along with the song?

Beat and repeat



“I am learning to control my body and adapt my behaviour.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Process:

1. Model for children a beat with two claps.
2. Can they copy it? Repeat until they can remember.
3. Now invite the child(ren) to create a beat. When someone misses, try it again.
4. Can you make it to three beats or more?

Extension:

Try to add in different types of sounds (snaps, stomps, etc.)

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

We have been exploring listening and matching different beats. One person provide a beat (e.g., three claps) and the rest of the children need to match the beat. You can try this at home. Start with a small number of beats and then increase the number slowly. Instead of claps you can do stomps, finger snaps or use an instrument.

Songs with a strong beat are fun for singing and moving. The **album on The Learning Partnership's** website includes a silly action song called “Got A Hat Hat”. Grab your favourite hats and have fun!

Music maps



“I am learning to control my body and adapt my behaviour.”

A provocation for a small group of children or whole class.

Materials:

- Paper
- Markers or crayons or pencil
- Device to play music
- Album from the WTK website - find one that is a favourite!
thelearningpartnership.ca/wt

Process:

1. Explain to a small group of children that you will be drawing along to music and that they can draw any way that they like. If children in your classroom are at a developmental level where they are able to follow more complex sets of directions, ask them to draw without lifting up their marker or crayon so that they draw one continuous line/scribble.
2. You can also ask children to try to follow along with the music (drawing quickly during fast parts and slowly during slow parts).
3. Try this activity several times on different days, using different types of music.

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

We have been exploring our responses to music in our classroom. We are playing various pieces of music for students and having them draw, or respond using different materials such as markers and paper or sand and tools.

One way that you can provide a similar experience is by providing your child with paper and the **crayons** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag. Play a piece of music and ask them to draw what the music is making them feel. You can try this alongside them!

Freeze dance



"I am learning to follow rules of games and pay attention to cues in the game."

A provocation for a small group of children or whole class.

Materials:

- Large space to move (indoors or outdoors)
- Music device
- Welcome to Kindergarten music link (or songs with different tempos)
thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk

Process:

1. Children dance when the music plays and freeze when the music stops.
2. Invite the student to move slowly when the music tempo is slow and move fast when the tempo is fast.

Extensions/supports:

- Invite the student to dance slowly when the music is fast and dance fast when the music is slow.
- Cooperative Freeze Dance - provide carpet squares or mats that the students must freeze on. More than one student can be on the mat or squares at a time. Watch for students that are making room on the mat/square for other students.

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

Playing games that require children to stop and go in response to visual or oral cues help to develop their self-regulation. Freeze dance is a game that we have been doing at school and you can do at home. When music is being played you and your child dance. Periodically turn off the music. When the music is off you and your child must freeze. Try the song 'Jump Up, Jump Down'. You can access the **Welcome to Kindergarten music album** at this link: thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk

Get your sillies out



“I can move my body at different speeds and at different levels according to the music.”

A provocation for a small group of children or whole class.

Materials:

- Music to get students moving in different ways (slow, fast, lightly, heavy)
- Large enough space for moving around

Process:

1. Invite the students to listen to a piece of music. Tell them they are going to move quickly when the music is fast and move slowly when the music is slow. Ask them what type of movement they would like to do (skipping, hopping, jumping, galloping, etc.)
2. After ask them what they noticed when they did the movement quickly versus slowly. What did their body feel like?
3. Next invite the students to do a different movement to the music. Are there some movements that are harder or easier?

Extension:

Instead of speed you can talk about the element of level (make your body tall when the music is loud and small when the music is quiet).

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

You can play with music and movement at home with your child. Read page 16 of your **Chirp magazine** in your Welcome to Kindergarten bag with your child. Download the song ‘Jump’ from the The Learning Partnership’s website: thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk

Movement challenge



“I am learning to test out my theories.”

A provocation for a small group of children, partners or individuals.

Materials:

- Small ball or beanbag
- Open area to move

Process:

1. Challenge your students to figure out a way to move the beanbag or ball from one spot to another without using their hands.
2. How many ways can they figure out? What parts of their body do they use? Do they bring in other materials? Do they use their classmates? Do they persist?
3. Next invite the students to do a different movement to the music. Are there some movements that are harder or easier?

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

We provoked some good problem solving this week in our Movement Challenge. Students were asked to come up with as many ways as they could to move a beanbag from one point to another without using their hands. You can try this at home using the **ball** provided in your Welcome to Kindergarten bag. How many ways can you and your child find? It is fun to be creative!

Music and sand



"I am learning ways to respond to music."

A provocation for a small group of children, partners or individuals.

Materials:

- Sand
- Paint brushes, combs (other sand tools)
- Music

Process:

1. Play music as the children explore the tools with the sand.
2. Ask them to use the tools in the sand to draw, create, or express how the music feels or the pictures it creates in their minds.
3. Possible prompts: 'What part of the music made you think of this?' 'Why did you make these designs/marks?'

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

In our classroom we have been experiencing ways of responding to music. Most recently we have invited children to listen to a piece of music while exploring sand and various tools. Students have been using the tools to respond to how the music is making them feel.

One way that you can provide a similar experience is by providing your child with paper and the **crayons** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag. Play a piece of music and ask them to draw what the music is making them feel. You can try this alongside them!

Jack be nimble



“I am learning to control my body and adapt my behaviour.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Open space
- A prop to represent the ‘candle’

Process:

1. Sit in a circle with the students. Place the ‘candle’ in the centre of the circle.
2. Sing the song ‘Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candlestick.’
3. Replace Jack with a student’s name. When the child’s name is called he/she can stand up and jump over the candlestick.
4. Repeat.

Extension:

This could be used to support a transition - as you sing about one child at a time they can be dismissed to the next activity.

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

Listen to the song **‘Jump Up, Jump Down’** from **The Learning Partnership’s website** (thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk). You and your child can follow along singing and doing the actions from the song.

Funny faces



“I am learning to control my body and adapt my behaviour.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Open space

Process:

1. Sit in a circle with the students.
2. Sing the song (to the tune of Mary has a Little Lamb): “Sumer makes a funny face, funny face, funny face. Sumer makes a funny face. Watch and copy him.”
3. When the child’s name is called he/she can make up a funny face. The rest of the children try to copy the face.
4. Repeat with a new student

Extension:

Rather than making funny faces, ask children to make various feelings faces. (e.g. sad face, happy face, etc.) Have children look at the feeling face, copy it, and then discuss what makes that emotion visible on the face.

Family connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

Listen to the song **‘In the Morning’** from **The Learning Partnership’s website** thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk. Create actions that match the song and act them out as you and your child sing along. Could you create words and actions for ‘At bedtime’ with your child?

Beach ball blanket toss



“I can move my body in a variety of ways.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Beach ball or other ball
- Blanket
- Large open area

Process:

1. Place the Beach Ball on top of the blanket (or towel). Students hold the corners of the blanket.
2. Instruct the children to bounce the ball and then try to catch it on the blanket.

Extension:

How high could they toss the ball and successfully catch it? How many times can they catch the ball in a row without dropping it?

Family Connections:

Music and movement are important tools for children who are learning to express their thoughts and feelings. Young children love to explore music, movement, rhythm, and dance. Music and movement together provide many benefits to the development of children.

We have been playing ‘Beach Ball Blanket Toss’ outdoors. You can try this at home as well! All you need is a towel or blanket, the **ball** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag and an open space. Place the ball in the centre of the towel. You and your child hold onto the corners of the towel and toss the ball up in the air and catch it on the towel. How many times can you catch it in a row? How high can you toss the ball?

Sensory



Sensory activities encourage children to explore as they play, create, investigate and explore using all of their senses. These are many benefits of sensory play:

- Physical development: Fine motor skills develop as children shaping, scoop or mold sensory play materials such as sand and clay.
- Cognitive development: Young children's verbal skills are developing, so they still discover and learn to understand new things through their senses.
- Sense of self: Through sensory play, children learn about the world around them. They also learn to describe their experiences and preferences. For example, some children prefer not to have their hands get wet or cold. Educators can respond by helping the child to select other sensory play that is more comfortable. You may also create opportunities for children to become more comfortable with new sensations - by touching sticky playdough with just one finger, for example
- Social skills: If more children participate in sensory play, they will observe how others handle materials they play with, communicate different ways to shape, mold or hold them, discover new ideas etc.
- Communication and language skills: Both verbally and non-verbally, children communicate with others during sensory play. This provides an opportunity to learn new words as they describe their experiences (sharp vinegar smell, bubbly warm water, rough tree bark etc).



Playdough letters



“I am learning how to use and control my small muscles to create things.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- Playdough
- Large letter cards for models (on paper plate or cardstock)
- Large open area

Process:

1. Teacher models using the playdough to create a letter.
2. Think aloud so the students can hear what you are doing to create the letter. (e.g., ‘there is one long straight stick and now I need two shorter sticks to make my letter’).
3. Suggest the student to choose the first letter of their name to create.

Family connections:

Playing with playdough is a great way for your child to build their fine motor skills. Pinching, squeezing, rolling, poking at the playdough develops the muscles in their hands. These muscles are the ones that help your child to hold pens and pencils correctly and to be able to do up buttons and zippers. You will find a **recipe for playdough** in your Welcome to Kindergarten resources.



Play with texture

“I can use different tools to create textures in my creations.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- Playdough
- Various tools for creating texture (plastic forks, knives, popsicle stick, straws, etc.)

Process:

1. Explore different picture books in class that use playdough pictures in them (e.g. any of Barbara Reid's books). Invite the students to talk about the illustrations and how the artist may have created the textures in the images.
2. Display one or two of the pictures at the playdough centre for students to explore.
3. Invite the students to explore using the tools to create different textures in the playdough.
4. 'How did you create this design?' 'How would you describe that texture?' 'Can you create more than one texture using the same tool?'

Family connections:

Playing with playdough has so many benefits for your child including: strengthening small muscles; supporting their problem solving skills; encouraging their creativity, as well as language and literacy skills. We have been reading Barbara Reid's books in our class and have been paying attention to her illustrations. Her illustrations are all created with playdough with interesting textures. At our playdough centre we have been providing students with different types of tools for them to experiment creating their own textures. Using **playdough**, you can experience this with your child at home. Ask your child to find something that they think might make an interesting texture in the playdough. Encourage them to describe the texture to build their vocabulary.

Playdough story



“I can create and share my stories using different materials.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- Playdough
- Variety of props (e.g. plastic animals/people, sticks, gems, leaves, etc.)
- Surface for creating (e.g. cookie tray, paper plate, cardboard, etc.)

Process:

1. Invite the students to explore the materials.
2. You could model creating a scene for a story using the props in the playdough and telling your story to them.
3. Invite them to create their own story and share it with you or their friends.

Family connections:

In our playdough centre we have added different types of props for the students to explore. The children are using the props with the playdough and creating different scenes. We are inviting the students to tell us the story they are creating with the props. You can try this at home with your own playdough. There is a **recipe for playdough** in your WTK resources. Add some props such as sticks/twigs, stones, plastic animals, etc. Take turns creating and telling stories with your child.

Playing with sand



"I am learning ways to count."

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Sensory activities encourage children to explore as they play, create, investigate and explore using all of their senses.

Materials:

- Gather a small bin or container (e.g. an old lasagna pan or plastic container) and add a thin layer of sand (engaging sand play does not always require a large quantity of sand!)
- Display a small number of loose parts with the sand container (e.g. marker lids, twigs, pinecones, rocks, bread tabs).

Process:

1. Invite the students to explore.
2. Promote development by preparing an interesting, challenging sand play environment. This environment can be achieved by continually changing and adding interesting accessories to the center. In this case a small number of loose parts might be selected with a view to exploring the quantity "five."

Family connections:

Provide your child with opportunities to explore their senses. Giving them a chance to play with various materials, textures or actions (running, jumping, scooping, burying) in all its messiness immensely helps them discover the world around them.

Materials for sensory play are simple and inexpensive. Use **playdough** (or you can make your own using the recipe in the Family Activities Resource Book) to enjoy the benefits of a simple and fun sensory experience with your child.

Recently we have been adding various materials to our sand centre for the children to explore (e.g. twigs, gems, marker lids, rocks). You can provide a similar experience using a cookie sheet or old shoe box, adding a small layer of sand and a small collection of materials.

Playing with ice



“I can ask questions and discover new things.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Sensory activities encourage children to explore as they play, create, investigate and explore using all of their senses.

Materials:

- Gather a variety of ice cubes of various sizes (e.g., fill empty milk cartons or plastic containers for ice blocks of different sizes.) and place them in a container.
- You may wish to have some spare mittens and tongs available as well.

Process:

1. Invite the students to explore the ice.
2. As you observe the children, consider using one or more of these prompts to challenge and extend their thinking:
 - “What can you create/build with the blocks?”
 - “What do the blocks feel like?” “What is happening to the blocks as we work with them?”
 - “Why do they get smaller?”
 - “Which blocks will melt first? Why?”
 - “What might the ice blocks look like at the end of the day?”
 - “What happens if we add water?”

Extensions:

You could provide salt, food colouring (with eye droppers), or snow along with the ice:

- What happens when we add salt?” “Why?”
- *If you add colour* - “How is the colour moving? Why might that be?”
- *If you add snow* - “How is the snow different/same from the ice? Which will melt faster?”



Family connections:

Provide your child with opportunities to explore their senses. Giving them a chance to play with various materials, textures or actions (running, jumping, scooping, burying) in all its messiness immensely helps them discover the world around them.

Materials for sensory play are simple and inexpensive. Use **playdough** (or you can make your own using the recipe in the Family Activities Resource Book) to enjoy the benefits of a simple and fun sensory experience with your child.

Recently we have been examining blocks of ice in a variety of sizes. You could try this at home! In addition to ice cubes, try making blocks of ice of different sizes by using a variety of empty plastic containers. Have fun talking with your child as you use all of your senses to explore the ice.

Table-top building



“I can ask questions and discover new things.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Sensory activities encourage children to explore as they play, create, investigate and explore using all of their senses.

Materials:

- Gather a collection of foam blocks and an inexpensive container of shaving cream. For easy clean-up, you may wish to cover a table with a plastic garbage bag. A shovel or spatula can be used as a “trowel.”

Process:

1. Invite the students to explore the use of a small amount of shaving cream to act as “mortar” between the blocks.
2. Possible prompts include:
 - “How can you play with these materials?”
 - “What do you wonder/see/feel?”
 - “What did you discover?”

Family connections:

Provide your child with opportunities to explore their senses. Giving them a chance to play with various materials, textures or actions (running, jumping, scooping, burying) in all its messiness immensely helps them discover the world around them.

Materials for sensory play are simple and inexpensive. Use **playdough** (or you can make your own using the recipe in the Family Activities Resource Book) to enjoy the benefits of a simple and fun sensory experience with your child.

Recently we have been exploring shaving cream and blocks as a sensory experience. Ask your child to tell you about what they have discovered!

Exploring light



“I can ask questions and discover new things.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Sensory activities encourage children to explore as they play, create, investigate and explore using all of their senses.

Materials:

- Gather an overhead projector, a flashlight, or a light table and a small collection of loose parts (e.g., blocks, tubes, sticks, jewelry) and any translucent/found materials (cups, tubes, buttons, jewelry, wire, pipe cleaners).

Process:

1. Using the loose parts, children can explore and build on or in front of projected light.
2. Possible prompts include:
 - “What might you do with these materials?”
 - “What are you noticing?”
 - “Why do you think that happens?”

Family connections:

Provide your child with opportunities to explore their senses. Giving them a chance to play with various materials, textures or actions (running, jumping, scooping, burying) in all its messiness immensely helps them discover the world around them.

Materials for sensory play are simple and inexpensive. Use **playdough** (or you can make your own using the recipe in the Family Activities Resource Book) to enjoy the benefits of a simple and fun sensory experience with your child.

Recently we have been exploring the properties of light. Our students have been experiencing what happens to light when they play with materials on or in front of light. You could provide a similar experience using a flashlight or by playing outside on a sunny day.

"Feely" bag



"I can ask questions and discover new things."

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Sensory activities encourage children to explore as they play, create, investigate and explore using all of their senses.

Materials:

- Gather six items that can be used for "feeling" (e.g. ball of yarn, prickly ball, balloon filled with sand, rubbery toy, etc.) and a bag (fabric or paper).

Process:

1. Place one item in feeling bag. Have child insert hand & feel the item.
2. Ask the child to describe what they feel - prompt and support the use of descriptive vocabulary (e.g., "soft", "prickly", "smooth", etc).
3. Continue for remaining objects - you can break this up as you see fit.

Extension:

Divide a piece of paper into 6 squares - one piece of paper for each child. Invite the children to record their observations with sketches and/or words. When done (or next day or two) show students the items and invite them to match the items to their sketches.

Family connections:

Provide your child with opportunities to explore their senses. Giving them a chance to play with various materials, textures or actions (running, jumping, scooping, burying) in all its messiness immensely helps them discover the world around them.

Materials for sensory play are simple and inexpensive. Use **playdough** (or you can make your own using the recipe in the Family Activities Resource Book) to enjoy the benefits of a simple and fun sensory experience with your child.

In our classroom we have been talking about our senses. We have a 'feely bag' that contains various objects that have different textures (e.g., spiky, smooth, bumpy, etc). Students reach in the bag and try to describe one of the objects they feel. You could create a similar experience using items from home.

Calming sensory experiences



"I am learning to name and manage my feelings."

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Sensory activities encourage children to explore as they play, create, investigate and explore using all of their senses.

Materials:

Create a Calming Basket:

- Sparkle jar (water/pop bottle with coloured water, some glue/glycerin to make it thick, and sparkles so when students shake it, they can watch the sparkles slowly fall to the bottom of the jar).
- Balloon with clay or sand in it to squeeze.
- Fabric rings (keychain ring, different pieces of textured fabric attached).
- I Spy bottles (can be rice in bottle with hidden letters, hidden coloured beads to search for).
- Headphones
- Activity sticks (popcicle sticks with different stretches/activities for those students who might need to gain energy rather than calm down).
- Hand prints copied and stuck to wall for release of energy (students can push on wall when feeling strong emotions).
- Music
- Books

Family connections:

Provide your child with opportunities to explore their senses. Giving them a chance to play with various materials, textures or actions (running, jumping, scooping, burying) in all its messiness immensely helps them discover the world around them. Using sensory tools and experiences can really support young children who are learning about ways to express and even recover from strong emotions.

Ask your child about some of the ways that they are learning to manage their emotions. As about our 'Calming centre'. Your child might appreciate an opportunity to use the **playdough** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag (or make some of your own using the recipe from the Welcome to

Creative exploration



Children are naturally curious. They explore, observe and imitate. Art is a natural - and fun - way to support exploration and experimentation. Art allows your child to practice a wide range of skills that are useful not only for life but also for learning:

- Fine motor development is supported through grasping pencils, crayons, chalk, and paintbrushes.
- Creative experiences can help children learn and practice skills like patterning and cause and effect (i.e. "If I push very hard with a crayon the color is darker.") Thinking about and planning their creative work helps children to practice critical thinking skills.
- Children begin to understand concepts like size, shape, making comparisons, counting, and spatial reasoning.
- As children describe and share their work, they develop language skills. Through active listening and the use of open-ended questions, educators are able to support this important development. Creative experiences also provide a great opportunity to learn new descriptive vocabulary words (i.e., texture words like bumpy, smooth, sticky, etc.)
- A creative outlet can help relieve stress and help children work through things happening in their lives.



Partner drawing



“I am learning to focus my attention and take turns.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner activity.

Materials:

- Two large pieces of paper
- Crayons
- A timer

Process:

1. Set two large pieces of paper side by side on a table.
2. Tell one partner that they are the leader and instruct them to draw a picture, one step at a time.
3. Instruct the other partner to follow the leader, drawing the exact same shapes and lines in the same places on their paper.
4. Set a timer for a few minutes to indicate when that partner's turn is over and then switch.

Extension:

Use other tools to make marks such as; paint, sidewalk chalk, water and brushes on pavement, etc.

Family connections:

Copying a partner is a fun way for children to pay close attention to others. Turn taking is an important skill for children to learn.

Try out partner drawing activity at home using the **crayons** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag. Each of you will use a piece of paper and a crayon. The leader draws a picture, one step at a time. The partner follows the leader by drawing the same things on his/her paper. Now switch!

Play a follow the leader game by having partners imitate simple actions. Change the leader after a few minutes.

Building a bridge



“I am using problem solving skills to design and create things.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- A copy of the text, ‘Three Billy Goats Gruff’ by Paul Gladoneballoon
- Photos of different types of bridges
- Recycled materials - cardboard, tinfoil, construction paper, wood scraps, craft sticks, glue, tape, scissors, etc

Process:

1. Read ‘Three Billy Goats Gruff’. Share different photos of bridges. Invite children to consider similarities/differences by asking “What do you notice about the bridges that is the same? Different? Which bridge do you think might be the strongest?”
2. Design challenge: Build a bridge that the ‘trolls’ can walk over. (Educators may wish to provide props from the story - small plastic goats, troll).
3. Draw your design for your bridge. What materials will you use to make a sturdy bridge?
4. Offer a number of materials (recycled boxes, cartons, cardboard tubes, cardboard, paper, straws, small pieces of wood, glue, tape, scissors).
5. Educators watch students as they select their materials - listen for comments they are making, observe how they are putting materials together, how they problem solve if something doesn’t work - questions they may have.
6. Testing the bridges - did it work? If not, what changes can you make to make it stronger?
7. Ask if they had any problems as they built their bridge? What was the most challenging part of building it? How did they solve that problem?
8. Provide an opportunity for students to examine their classmates bridges. What do you notice? What is the same as your bridge and what is different? If you were going to build another bridge would you use the same design/materials?

Note:

Educators may wish to capture and display images of the various designs children have created.



Family connections:

Children benefit from hearing familiar stories many times. They enjoy “acting out” stories and using toys and materials at home to retell the story. Parents and Caregivers are encouraged to read many traditional tales such as; The Three Little Pigs, The Gingerbread Man, Chicken Little. At school, children have been reading The Billy Goats Gruff and acting out the story using some props from the class. They have been creating bridges using a variety of recycled materials. Reading and playing with your child develops a sense of story and builds your child’s vocabulary and language skills. Using the **scissors, crayons and glue** from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag, invite your child to create props to retell familiar stories.

Puppet play



“I can retell a familiar story.”

A provocation for a small group of children - or an independent activity.

Materials:

- Paper
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue, tape
- Various recycled materials (e.g. yarn, buttons, fabric scraps, old socks etc.)

Process:

1. Puppets help children’s play come to life. Creating scenarios for different characters can increase children’s vocabularies and storytelling skills and provide a safe way to express challenging feelings.
2. Invite the student(s) to create a puppet of their favourite character from a familiar story.
3. Invite children to use their puppet to retell the story. You may want to have a copy of the story nearby for the child to refer to.

Extensions:

- Explore different methods for creating puppets. (e.g. finger puppets, paper bag puppets, shadow puppets, sock puppets, etc.)
- Invite the students to create/write their own story to tell with the puppets.

Family connections:

As children play with puppets they develop language, math and creative skills. With puppets children can work through their feelings and recreate experiences.

Read ‘Visit a Classroom’ on pg. 6-7 in the **Chirp magazine** provided in the Welcome to Kindergarten bag. Work together to create a puppet representing your child. Use the **scissors, glue and crayons** provided in the Welcome to Kindergarten bag. Invite your child to tell about their day at school and their classroom. Parents/Guardians can create their own puppet and tell about their day at home or work.

Torn paper collage



“I am using problem solving skills to design and create things.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Glue stick
- Recycled paper of varying colours, sizes and thickness (e.g. wallpaper, construction paper, tissue paper, etc.)
- Large piece of paper for background of collage.

Process:

1. Model tearing paper into unusual shapes. Encourage children to use a pincer grip with their finger tips.
2. Sing this tearing song to the tune of ‘Frere Jacques’:

*“Tearing, tearing; Tearing, tearing
1, 2, 3; 1,2, 3
What’s it going to be now; What’s it going to be now
Wait and see; Wait and see...”*

Extensions:

- Cut paper collage - instead of tearing, children cut pieces of paper for collage.
- 3D collage - strips of paper that can ‘pop’ by folding.
- provide paper clips, tape and/or stapler as alternatives to fastening materials together.

Family connections:

Collage is an engaging open ended art experience that requires only a few simple materials such as the **scissors and glue** provided in the Welcome to Kindergarten bag.

Create a bin of various types of paper (newspaper, magazine, recycled materials, etc) for your child to tear and cut into various shapes. In our classroom, we have been using these small pieces to create art by gluing them onto a larger paper. Use your imaginations and have fun creating original art together at home!

Natural instruments



“I am using problem solving skills to design and create things.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Various musical instruments (tambourines, ukulele, drums, musical sticks, triable, shakers, horn, rain stick)
- Collection of items from nature (pinecones, sticks, acorns, pebbles, shells)
- Recycled materials (cartons, cardboard tubes, glue, string, elastics, tape, scissors, etc.)

Process:

1. Have numerous instruments for students to explore and examine. What do you notice? How do these instruments make sound? What materials help to make the sound? What do you notice about the shape of the instruments/materials? What is it made from/textures, etc.? What are the different ways you can make sound? (Strumming, blowing, hitting, tapping, shaking).
2. Can you use the materials provided to create your own instrument that makes a sound by either strumming, blowing, hitting, shaking)?
3. Students are offered the materials from nature as well as the recycled materials.

Extension:

Can you create an instrument that has two or more ways to make a sound?

Family connections:

In our classroom we have been exploring musical instruments. Using various recycled material students have created their own instruments. On pg 19 of the Chirp magazine in your WTK bag you will find instructions for creating musical instruments in an article called ‘Rock Out’. Create a musical instrument with your child at home.

Use the following link to find the **Welcome to Kindergarten music album**. Use your instruments to play along with your favourite song (thelearningpartnership.ca/wtk).

Let's pretend



"I can imagine and create."

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- Small collection of unusual/unfamiliar objects (e.g. old camera, found item from nature, unique piece of clothing/fabric, etc.)
- Container to store these objects

Process:

1. Gather a small group of children, and together examine a small collection of unfamiliar/unusual objects.
2. Notice how the children engage with the materials and use their imaginations to assign meaning to the objects.
3. Work with the children to develop their ideas about how these items might be used in their dramatic play. They may wish to label the storage container and record some of their ideas with drawings and/or words.
4. Place this collection of items near a dramatic play area so that it can be accessed by the children to support their pretend play.

Extensions:

- Some children may benefit from encouragement to explore with their senses, ask questions, and express their ideas about these items.
- Items in the dramatic play collections can be added to or exchanged in response to the interests of the children.

Family connections:

Props for pretend play can help to build or expand children's interests, offer new challenges, and introduce new activities. Props do not need to be purchased from the store. Outgrown clothing, old toys, and spare keys are interesting items for children to explore. You and your child may wish to use the **crayons, glue and scissors** from the Welcome to Kindergarten bag to create some interesting props as well.

“Yes and...”



“I can listen to and respond to others.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Process:

1. Have a small group of children sit together in a storytelling circle. Ask what they would like to call their story.
2. Once the story has a title, begin the game by offering the first sentence, such as “Yesterday Mohamad and his mother went to the park.”
3. Next children take turns adding to this story, beginning with the phrase “Yes, and...”

Supports/Extensions:

- Children may pass a small object around the circle so it is clear whose turn it is to talk.
- Multilingual children who are learning English may need more time to formulate their responses - it’s important to model patience during the wait time, and to pick up on nonverbal communication cues.
- Provide open-ended materials in the dramatic play centre, so that children can use their developing imaginative play in this context.

Family connections:

Simple storytelling activities help children learn how to accept and build on each other’s offers - an important play skill. Work together with your child to create a story with each sentence beginning with the words “Yes, and...”. Use a favourite page in the story **Up!** (from your Welcome to Kindergarten bag) to begin (e.g. “Baby is nestled safe and warm in Grandmother’s parka.”)

Folktales



“I am learning about diverse perspectives.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Folktales are oral histories passed down from generation to generation. They offer cultural awareness and imaginative narratives.

Materials/Process:

1. Select a read-aloud based on folktales (e.g., *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback, *Moon Rope* by Louis Ehlert, *Thunder Cake* by Patricia Polacco). School and community libraries are a helpful resource in locating these and other titles.
2. Read, discuss and act out these stories by using props or puppets.

Supports/Extensions:

- Invite children to share folktales from the cultures important to their own families. A map of the world could be placed in the classroom and marked with the locations of folktales they have heard.
- Invite children to tell their own stories. Encourage them to share experiences from their lives or something make believe. Put a voice-recording device in the dramatic play area so children can record and replay their stories.

Family connections:

We have been exploring folk tales in our classroom such as...

We invite you to read and talk about the story about ‘How Gwiingwa’age Came to Earth’ on page 12 of the **Chirp magazine**. Are there stories from your family’s cultural traditions or history that you could share with your child?

Animal shelters



“I can pose questions to address problems and make choices for my designs.”

A provocation for a small group of children.

Materials:

- A variety of recycled items (e.g. cardboard, milk, cartons, plastic containers)
- Tape, glue, stapler
- Markers, crayons

Process:

1. Gather a small group of children to talk about homes for a variety of creatures - mammals, birds, insects.
2. Consider viewing examples of animal shelters online. Children may notice that the features, size and location of animal shelters carries to meet the unique needs of the animal for which it is designed.
3. Invite children to create a shelter for an animal.

Supports/Extensions:

- An online search of animal shelters reveals some elaborate designs. It is interesting to ask children to consider whether animals will prefer function over decorative features.
- Consider spending time outdoors in the school yard to identify some animals “in the neighbourhood” for whom the children could design their shelters.
- Ask the children to consider “What makes a good home” from the perspective of an animal. Ask them to consider the same question from their own perspective. What is the same? (e.g. a good home is safe, warm, a place where a family can be together) What is different? (e.g. Birds live in trees, I live on the ground).

Family connections:

Children enjoy designing homes for animals. Explore the book **Wildlife 1 2 3** together. Does your child have a favourite animal? Talk about where that animal might live. You may wish to explore this question together by looking online or locating a book at the library. Use **scissors, glue, crayons**, and a variety of recycled materials to create a home for your selected animal.

Sand art



“I can imagine and create.”

A provocation for a small group of children - a partner or independent activity.

Materials:

- Gather a small amount of sand in a container with a large base (e.g. an old lasagna pan, recycled shoe box, etc.)
- Other props may include a familiar song, water (to change the texture of the sand), various small recycled plastic containers (e.g. yogurt, applesauce, egg cartons), old combs or brushes.

Process:

1. Support children’s creative expression through sand play. Model and encourage:
 - Making castings, moldings, and prints.
 - Use combs and brushes in the sand and describe pattern and design.
2. Observe and respond to the children’s expressions. Encourage them to talk about their thinking.

Family connections:

Children are naturally curious. They explore, observe and imitate. Art is a natural - and fun - way to support exploration and experimentation. Art is a natural - and fun - way to support exploration and experimentation.

We have been using sand in creative ways. Ask your child to tell you about it! Many items around your home can be used to make art. Try making art with your child in the sand - many parks include a sand area. The **playdough** in your Welcome to Kindergarten bag can be used to create art - divide the dough in half and you and your child can enjoy some time creating together. Talk to one another about how you are using the dough and what you are making.

Appendix: Alignment to British Columbia's New Curriculum, 2016-17

The following chart links the extended Welcome to Kindergarten activities to the BC New Curriculum. Examples link to the BC Core Competencies and Curriculum. <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum-updates>.

The following suggested activities also reflect key concepts from the B.C. Ministry of Education resources: Early Learning Framework and The Play Today BC Handbook.

Area of Learning	Activity Title	Link to The Kindergarten Program, 2016-17
Core Competency English Language Arts Arts Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies Core Competency Science	Building a bridge	Creative Thinking: Developing Ideas
	Partner drawing	Social Responsibility: Building Relationships
	Puppet play	Curricular Competency: Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers
	Torn paper collage	Curricular Competency: Exploring Creating Content: Visual Arts
	Natural instruments	Curricular Competency: Ideating and Making
	Let's pretend	Curricular Competency: Ideating and Making
	Yes and...	Communication: Connect and Engage with Others (to share and develop ideas)
	Folk tales	Positive Person and Cultural Identity: Relationship and Cultural Context
	Animal shelters	Curricular Competency: Planning and Conducting; Content: Basic needs of plants and animals
Sand art	Curricular Competency: Content: Visual Art: processes materials, movements, technologies tools and techniques to support arts activities	

Area of Learning	Activity Title	Link to The Kindergarten Program, 2016-17
English Language Arts	Alphabet oh no!	Curricular Competency: Create and Communicate; Content: Language Features Structures and Conventions
	Letter sort	Curricular Competency: Create and Communicate; Content: Language Features Structures and Conventions
	Environmental print	Curricular Competency: Create and Communicate; Content: Language Features Structures and Conventions
	Name/Word scrabble	Curricular Competency: Create and Communicate; Content: Language Features Structures and Conventions
	Rhyming challenge	Curricular Competency: Create and Communicate; Content: Story: Literary Elements and Devices
	Reading aloud	Curricular Competency: Content: Strategies and Processes
	Rhyming in the read aloud	Curricular Competency: Create and Communicate; Content: Story: Literary Elements and Devices
	Family time	Curricular Competency: Content: Comprehend and Connect
	Caring community	Curricular Competency: Content: Comprehend and Connect
	Let's count the beats	Curricular Competency: Create and Communicate; Content: Language Features Structures and Conventions

Area of Learning	Activity Title	Link to The Kindergarten Program, 2016-17
Mathematics	All the same	Curricular Competency: Content: Single Attributes
	Count and move	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
	Finger, fingers	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
	Race to ten	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
	Counting sets and comparing sets	Curricular Competency: Content: Single Attributes
	Count and climb	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
	Counting on	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
	Numbers in order	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
	The number march	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
	Number challenge	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts

Area of Learning	Activity Title	Link to The Kindergarten Program, 2016-17
Arts Education and Physical and Health Education	Sing along	Curricular Competency: Content: Music
	Beat and repeat	Curricular Competency: Content: Elements of Art (Dance)
	Music maps	Curricular Competency: Content: Visual Arts
	Freeze dance	Curricular Competency: Content: Elements of Art (Dance)
	Get your sillies out	Curricular Competency: Content: Elements of Art (Dance)
	Movement challenge	Curricular Competency: Content: Elements of Art (Dance); Curricular Competency Content: How to participate in different types of physical activity
	Music and sand	Curricular Competency: Content: Visual Art; Processes materials, movements, technologies tools and techniques to support arts activities
	Jack be nimble	Curricular Competency: Content: Elements of Art (Dance); Curricular Competency Content: How to participate in different types of physical activity
	Funny faces	Curricular Competency Content: How to participate in different types of physical activity
	Beach blanket toss	Curricular Competency Content: How to participate in different types of physical activity

Area of Learning	Activity Title	Link to The Kindergarten Program, 2016-17
English Language Arts	Playdough letters	Curricular Competency: Content: Language Features Structures and Conventions
Arts Education	Play with texture	Curricular Competency: Content: Visual Arts: Elements of design: line shape, texture, colour, principles of design. Pattern, repetition
English Language Arts	Playdough story	Curricular Competency: Recognize the importance of story
Science	Playing with ice	Curricular Competency: Questioning and Predicting: Content: properties of familiar materials
Mathematics	Playing with sand	Curricular Competency: Content: Number Concepts
Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies	Table-top building	Curricular Competency: Making
Science	Exploring light	Curricular Competency: Ideating
Core Competency: Personal Awareness and Responsibility	"Feely" bag	Curricular Competency: Questioning and Predicting: Content: properties of familiar materials
	Calming sensory experiences	Self-Regulation and Well-being

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