



# **FDK Startup Handbook:** *Strategies for Creating a Strong and Effective Kindergarten Class*

2019-2020



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This document is intended to be used for all Kindergarten educators as they set up and begin their planning and preparations for the year ahead. It is also a resource to be used as a self evaluation tool at any point of the year when a class may not be functioning in a productive manner\*. When this happens, take a pause, reflect on the various classroom components highlighted in this document, and consider a 'reset' to help get a class, or group of students, back on a more positive and successful track.

When starting out the year, or resetting expectations and routines in a classroom, it is important to remember the following;

- Play based learning is intentional and play in a Kindergarten setting needs to be modelled and taught to provide a positive context for learning.
- A kindergarten classroom begins with high structure where educators set routines, expectations and opportunities for learning. Our view of the child as 'capable and competent' means that we believe all students can learn, succeed, and contribute to their experiences. As such, we support a gradual release of responsibility model as students become familiar and confident in the Kindergarten setting (as the year progresses children should learn the skills to move freely between centres and help to develop the inquiries and learning opportunities in the class).
- Direct instruction and learning through play are complementary and play key roles in student learning. They are both part of a daily program.
- Literacy, Math, Inquiry and Play are not mutually exclusive. These key components of learning should be connected throughout the day in intentional play, small group instruction, and large group consolidation and activities.
- Assessment is an essential component of planning; knowing our students key learning, growth in learning and next steps in learning.

### **Early Learning Website -**

<https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/early-learning-kindergarten/home>

As the year progresses, check our website for additional resources, inspiration, and strategies to support the Kindergarten Program. The Developmental Record for Assessment and the literacy and math continuums are essential tools for tracking student achievement in relation to the expectations in the Literacy and math Behaviour frame of the Kindergarten Program, 2016.

<https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/early-learning-kindergarten/assessment>

**This handbook is also online through our website and includes interactive links.**

\* *Productive Manner* : see Appendix A, "Indicators That Its Time to Reflect & Reset"

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## Belonging & Inclusion

- ❑ **Establish a positive entry:** this means that you meet and greet each child as they arrive or enter your class each day
  - ❑ Bend down and look the child in eyes
  - ❑ Address each child by name
  - ❑ Tell them 'I'm glad you are here', 'I'm looking forward to our day together' etc.
  - ❑ Ensure they feel safe (consider this from their perspective, not only our intentions)
- ❑ **Get to know your students and families as early as you can.** Student profiles can be a helpful tool to get to know student experiences and interests that can support their learning in the classroom. Do families know how and when to best connect with the educators?
- ❑ **Build Trust One Step at A Time;** It's very difficult to drop your 3-5 year old off at a gate. Consider ways you can be supportive and reassuring to parents. A quick call at recess when a child began the day crying goes a long way to building a positive relationship. Building trust includes building caring, supportive and nurturing relationships with each student in the class as well.

### What Do Parents/Guardians Want?

- For their children to be successful, happy, and engaged in school.
  - For their children to feel welcomed, valued and celebrated by school (and themselves as well).
  - To receive updates on their child's progress (good communication between home and school)
  - For their children to feel safe, have their feelings understood, and to develop self confidence.
  - To feel secure in what they offer to their children and to the school.
- ❑ **Create a space where children, and their families, feel at home.** Sometimes the classroom can reflect the style and interests of the educators; leave space for the students to make this their space as well.
    - ❑ Are students part of creating the classroom environment (the walls, learning spaces etc.)?
    - ❑ Are cubbies/hooks clearly labeled with student names?
    - ❑ Do books and resources include a variety of cultures, families, interests and all the factors that make up our global community?
  - ❑ **Protect children's dignity:** It is normal for some students to have separation anxiety or 'accidents' when transitioning into school. With support and caring coaching most students will resolve these issues quickly. Some students are still developing these self care/regulation skills.
    - ❑ For separation anxiety, stay positive, sit with the child and use a calm voice. If this continues for over a week or worsens, schedule a private meeting with parents to make a supportive plan for entry.
    - ❑ For toileting, be positive and nurturing by creating positive bathroom routines and coaching through self care as necessary. This can be a very sensitive issue for both the student and parent.

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## Classroom Set-Up

**“A classroom that is functioning successfully as a third teacher will be responsive to the children’s interests, provide opportunities for children to make their thinking visible and then foster further learning and engagement.”** (Susan

Fraser, *Authentic childhood*. To, ON: Nelson Education 2012, p. 67)

Have you arranged your furniture to create a variety of learning centres? A writing centre is a must have! Do you have a balance of quiet (reading corner, writing centre, puzzles, listening centre, light table) and noisy areas (building area, sensory bins, dramatic centre)?

Every classroom should have clearly defined learning spaces. These spaces need to be modelled for students each time there is a change of materials. Understanding the expectations and opportunities that each area provides is critical in supporting appropriate behaviour and deep learning.

### Reflect on your room...

- All of the centres listed on the next page are present
- All centres and materials are accessible for all students; ensure the needs of students with IEPs, transition plans, and physical needs are all accommodated for.
- Centres are labelled and I/we have reviewed the expectations for each. Children do not come to school knowing how to play with 15-30 friends and share toys and space. **This must be explicitly taught** and is your primary learning goal in the first weeks of school.
  - Begin the year with high structure: educators decide how many students at each centre and what is available when
  - You can teach expectations by starting small group instruction in your centres on day 1 and focus on the routines and expectations and ways to play/explore with the materials
  - Once all students demonstrate an understanding of routines and expectations it is appropriate and important to invite them to play a more significant role in the development of new centres and the expectations for them
- Each centre has room for students to move around and are fully accessible
- Quietest centres are not located next to noisiest ones
- The volume of materials is appropriate (too many materials can lead to children becoming overwhelmed and using the materials in ways they were not intended).
- Quiet/Sensory areas for students to ‘take a break’ are made to support all, not just a corner/desk for 1 student (use an inclusive and supportive model)

Find lots of ideas about setting up your classroom on our Google Site!

[Environment as the Third Teacher Webpage](#)

Centres to be included in every Kindergarten Classroom include (but are not limited to):

**❑ Writing Centre:**

- ❑ Stock with markers, pencils, crayons, and paper at the beginning of the year.
- ❑ As you discuss writing throughout the year more materials such as small booklets for making books, envelopes, special paper for lists, stickies, etc. may be added.
- ❑ In addition to the writing centre, writing materials (markers, pencils, crayons, paper) are available to students throughout the classroom.
- ❑ Writing and drawing/art go hand in hand for small children. Consider having your writing and art centres next to each other.
- ❑ Ensure there are models of letters and words in the centre and around the room (picture-word cards, alphabet strips, word wall, letter shapes, student names, etc.)

**❑ Drama Centre**

- ❑ Have you modelled how to interact with the materials in the dramatic centre? As students demonstrate self-regulation they should become part of setting the purpose behind the dramatic play areas.
- ❑ Have you modelled how to “take on roles” while engaging in dramatic play?
- ❑ Have you included opportunities for literacy development? Do you have paper, writing materials, clipboards, a selection of relevant fiction/non-fiction books, flyers, child created menus or magazines to extend learning?
- ❑ Have you introduced new vocabulary for students to practice and play with as they take on roles in the dramatic centre?
- ❑ Have students been invited to include child-created signs in this space?
- ❑ Have you included opportunities for students to use their math skills in play? (Cash register and money, surveys, 10 frames)

**❑ Art Centre**

- ❑ Are there a variety of materials available for children to independently access?
- ❑ Change the materials throughout the year starting with familiar materials such as paper, markers and crayons, for drawing, paint, glue and construction paper, etc.. Add other materials throughout the year based on interest, intention, etc.
- ❑ Have students been explicitly taught how to care for art materials?
- ❑ Can students independently place their paintings or gluey/wet creations to dry, and tidy up drama materials?
- ❑ As children often express themselves through both drawing/art and writing consider having the art centre next to the writing centre.

**❑ Sandbox/Water/Sensory Table**

- ❑ Are there a variety of tools/materials for students to independently access?
- ❑ Are cleaning supplies available and organized close by? Have you modelled how to use these materials to clean up?
- ❑ Do students know how to independently clean up spills?
- ❑ Have you spent some time explicitly teaching students who to play in the sand and water safely?
- ❑ Have students been taught how to return materials they are no longer using?

### ❑ Math Area

- ❑ Have you included a wide variety of math “tools” available to students to use? (Rekenreks, counters, loose parts, balance scale, numerals, dot cards, 10 frames, dominoes, 3D figures, 2D shapes).
- ❑ Math games
- ❑ Have you modelled how to use these math tools?
- ❑ Will all of these math tools be available all the time? Will they change? When?

### ❑ Book Corner

- ❑ Do you have a varied selection of books for students to look through (including fiction, non-fiction)?
- ❑ Will the child see him/herself reflected in these books?
- ❑ Is there a comfortable spot to sit and read or look at pictures (on floor, laundry basket, chairs)?
- ❑ Are other literacy materials available in this area (writing materials, paper, magnetic letters, sight words, reading pointers)?

### ❑ Building Center

- ❑ Do you have a variety of sizes of blocks that are arranged in a way so that students can make intentional choices about what size and shape of block they need?
- ❑ Is there an area nearby where children can build with smaller materials such as lego?
- ❑ Start the year off with fewer pieces at this centre and add more as the year goes on. Explicit instruction about how to handle materials should happen early in the year.
- ❑ Do you add materials on a regular basis to provoke links to reading, writing, math, oral language, story telling, problem solving, etc. (e.g. clipboards, books, loose parts, small toys, chart paper)
- ❑ Do you add materials based on the interests of the children? (e.g. The children are building castles so books and pictures of castles are added.)

### ***What can we do when a child will only engage at one or two centres?***

- Reflect if you have effectively modelled ways to play with the various centres
- Teach a small group lesson in the area that a student/group are reluctant to go to
- Find out the child’s interest and include their interests in the centre they are reluctant to engage with
- Bring the ‘skill’ you are trying to build into the centre the child is engaging with (example add clipboards, sticky notes, non fiction books etc to centres)
- Use read alouds to create interest, by highlighting activities related to the read aloud in various centres (e.g. turning the dramatic play area into an airport, space station, garden centre or add retell materials and prompts to the building materials or art and writing centres)

All classrooms should reflect a universal design for learning. (*Learning For All*, Ministry of Education 2013)

## Flow of the Day & Classroom Routines

Kindergarten is a time to learn and develop strong self-regulation and we can support them by scaffolding this learning and providing positive modelling. Students thrive with routines, clear instructions, and a calm environment. The routines and use of centres needs to move from teacher facilitated approach to a co-facilitated approach as self-regulation skills develop and emerge.

**Establishing clear routines, structures and class expectations is critical in the first few weeks of the school year.**

- Ensure there is a **visual schedule**, that students can relate to, which shows the transitions for the day. We recommend using photos to create anchor charts for routines with students. You may also find pic symbols helpful. [Link to a shared folder of Visual Supports](#)
- **Classroom routines need to start out well established from day one.**
  - ❑ Start out with firm structure and routine.
  - ❑ Noise is a key trigger for many students. Teach volume recognition and management skills from day one.
  - ❑ Centres: be intentional with what is open and when: having all centers open and available all the time from day one is very hard for our early learners. It is best to open a few centers at a time with explicit expectations for safe exploration. Once centres are 'learned', it is ok to close them and introduce new ones until they have learned how to use everything in the class. As students begin to grow their self-regulation skills it is important to give them more opportunities to apply them. For example, later in September/October, when introducing a new centre, ask the students to help make a plan for safe play and inquiry. "How many friends should we have here at a time?" They will start to learn from your examples how to make appropriate choices. We cannot expect students to start off with these skills developed. Start small!
  - ❑ Teach and model routines and expectations for all aspects of the day (we recommend this be the focus of small group instruction during the first days of school. Anchor charts (and visual schedules), co-created with students, can be a great support when teaching these skills).
    - ❑ How to interact with materials and play in each centre
    - ❑ Boundaries (inside and out)
    - ❑ Lining up, including body/personal space awareness
    - ❑ Washing hands
    - ❑ Attention signals (for getting student attention when needing to address noise, safety, or other issues that arise during learning blocks that does not indicate a transition.)
    - ❑ Transition signals
    - ❑ Putting away materials and toys
    - ❑ Eating routines (including eating and putting away lunches)
    - ❑ Bathroom routines (including classes with no washroom)
    - ❑ Outdoor spaces and materials
    - ❑ Entry and end of the day routines (including dressing routines in each change of season. Note: for some, this may not be a key learning goal and they may require assistance)



## Lessons & Planning

Below you will find a sample ‘week at a glance’. This tool helps educators to see the flow of their week and structure their daily plans. As you plan, consider the needs of students based on assessment information. Learning goals and learning opportunities must be differentiated based on assessment (not grade).

Daily plans are also required and should reflect the following;

- Key learning goals
- Students and focus of small group instruction for the day (there should be at least one small group in each literacy and math. Additional small groups often occur in areas such as social skills, fine motor, strategies for play, etc.
- Intentional Play: learning focus, embedded math and literacy per centre (including large play centres, not just table top)
- Inquiry Focus
- Provocations
- Shared Reading: book and focus
- Modelled/Shared Math & Literacy activities (may be transitional or consolidation/sharing activities)
- Outdoor learning goals (this does not need to be daily, but does need to be intentional)

### Sample Week at a Glance:

Kindergarten	*Note Fridays = Forest Walk, Times to be announced				
	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
8:40 - 9:20 (40)	Planned Outdoor Learning & DPA	Planned Outdoor Learning & DPA	Gym	Planned Outdoor Learning & DPA	Planned Outdoor Learning & DPA
9:20 - 9:50 (40)	Open Snack & Math Focus Playful Learning Small Group Math Lessons	Open Snack & Math Focus Playful Learning Small Group Math Lessons	Playful Learning Math Focus & Small Groups Small Group Math Lessons	Open Snack & Math Focus Playful Learning Small Group Math Lessons	Open Snack & Math Focus Playful Learning Small Group Math Lessons
9:50- 10:30 (40)	Planning Gym-	Planning Music/Drama	Planning Music/Drama	Planning Gym	Planning Music/Drama
10:40 - 11:25(45)	B	R	E	A	K
11:25 - 11:45 (20)	Large Group Read Aloud & Literacy Development	Large Group Read Aloud & Literacy Development	Large Group Read Aloud & Literacy Development	Large Group Read Aloud & Literacy Development	Large Group Read Aloud & Literacy Development
11:45 - 1:05 (50) *12:40 Clean up and share learning	Playful Learning - Small Group - Literacy Focus	Playful Learning - Small Group - Literacy Focus	Playful Learning - Small Group - Literacy Focus	Playful Learning - Small Group - Literacy Focus	Playful Learning - Small Group - Literacy Focus
1:05 -1:50(45)	B	R	E	A	K
1:50 - 2:15 (25)	Planned Large Group Story 1:50-2:15	Planned Large Group Story 1:50-2:15	Planned Large Group Story 1:50-2:15	Planned Large Group Story 1:50-2:15	Planning Library 1:50 - 2:30 (40)
2:15 - 3:10 (55)	Educators engage with students in Playful Learning/ Inquiry	Educators engage with students in Playful Learning/ Inquiry	Educators engage with students in Playful Learning/ Inquiry	Educators engage with students in Playful Learning/ Inquiry	Educators engage with students in Playful Learning/ Inquiry

- Note: Outdoor Learning does not need to be at the start of the day.
- More tips and resources for getting started <https://tinyurl.com/Preparing-for-September>

## Transitions

- ❑ **Minimize transitions throughout the day.** Some transitions are not avoidable (e.g., nutrition break, gym, recess, special assembly)
  - ❑ Ideally, students should have a minimum of one 60 minute block of intentional and continuous play based learning in the classroom, each day. **During this continuous block of intentional play based learning time, students will be included in a planned small group math or language activity with an educator.** Additionally, this block of time is to provide opportunities for students to engage in an inquiry/play based project, writing activity, building project, numeracy game, art project or dramatic play.
- ❑ Work collaboratively with families to support positive home-school transitions
- ❑ Educators should be fully engaged with students during intentional play based learning blocks, in either small group instruction or playful learning. This is an optimal time for observation, engaging, and extending learning.
- ❑ Transitions can be difficult for many children, as we are asking them to stop what they are doing (they may be very engaged in an activity and not feel ready to stop!) and switch to a new activity or task. For some children, transitions are a source of stress, causing them to cry or to loudly refuse to participate. It is our job as educators to minimize these potentially stressful times and to support students through transitions.
  - ❑ Provide a meaningful and accessible visual schedule
  - ❑ Be consistent with schedules and provide ample warning of upcoming transitions
  - ❑ Provide 'saving spaces' for students to save work/activities that are still in progress
  - ❑ Provide 'hold my space cards' for students to use when asked to join small groups. This is also a good strategy for students who struggle with recess transitions. Often they need to know what they are coming back to. Picking our after recess spot, before going outside, can help reduce the stress some students experience around the uncertainty of returning to class after recess (or other activity).
  - ❑ Use a quiet voice, and consider calming music (played quietly).
  - ❑ Provide enough time to transition, while also not leaving students idle (waiting for the next activity to begin).
  - ❑ Use 'bridge' transition activities (e.g. have a child perform a task such as delivering an envelope to the office, just before a transition begins, having them return once the transition has ended. Thus reducing the stress during the transition for the child).
- Support students in different transitional goals: skills like getting dressed or undressed for recess are not the same for all students. Some students need more support with these skills as their stress around these transition times is higher. Holding all students to the same standards around larger transitions can often increase stress and behaviours. Ensure you are clear about a students needs and goals and support them accordingly. (This means that some students need their zippers done for them.)
- While students are gathering on the carpet or preparing to line up at the door, have some planned [transition time activities](#) ready to engage and focus those students who are waiting. (One educator should start the transition activity, while the other assists those students who need a few more minutes.)

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## Literacy, Math, Inquiry

- **Literacy and Math begin with intentional observations** by all educators working in the classroom. It is critically important that the educators (Teacher & ECE) get to know the students and have a good understanding of what knowledge and understanding they are bringing with them.
- **The Kindergarten program is a responsive curriculum** that meets students where they are, moving through the two years from their starting point to meet the expectations of the Kindergarten Program (curriculum). It is highly differentiated. It begins by the educators knowing their students and what their next steps are and programming accordingly.
  - This includes deliberate planning for students with transition plans, IEPs, and other needs, ensuring a supportive, safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.  
<https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/early-learning-kindergarten/the-kindergarten-program>
- **Literacy** begins with a strong focus on **Oral Language and Phonological Awareness**. **Numeracy** begins with an understanding of **Subitizing and Counting Skills**. These skills are strong indicators of later success in Language and Math. As students move through JK and Sk it is critical you move beyond these skills and ensure they meet all of the expectations of the Kindergarten Program.
  - ❑ **Use the Developmental Record and Continuums** to record your assessment data and track student progress
  - ❑ **Literacy and Math must be taught each day**. Students will learn through focused small group direct instruction, intentional inquiry-based activities and provocations, and purposeful play .
  - ❑ **Read aloud daily**: intentional shared reading that targets specific skills should occur at least twice daily.
  - ❑ **Check each centre to ensure literacy and math learning are embedded**. Educators can use these embedded prompts to engage with students during play and help by noticing and naming the learning.
- **Visit the Early Learning Website for details on math and literacy assessments** to support the FDK program. There is also a binder available in each school with hard copies of assessment documents and supporting resources. Be sure to read the Math Assessment and Literacy Assessment Overviews in addition to the Developmental Records.  
<https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/early-learning-kindergarten/assessment>
- **Inquiry** is a key component of the Kindergarten program. It support students curiosity about the world around them. To create a curious, inquiry based classroom, consider starting with a good book. As you get to know your students their interests and wonderings will become more apparent, but in the beginning (and those times in between) use literature to spark curiosity and create an inquiry based learning environment in your classroom.
  - The Early Learning website has a number of good books with rich provocations to help you get started!

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## Outdoor Learning

- **Outdoor learning is always intentional.** Educators must have clear goals for outdoor learning and make decisions for who, when, and why based on students' needs and assessment.

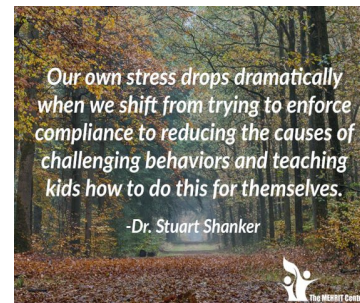
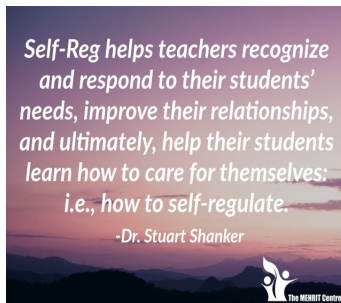
**Outdoors is an amazing place for children to learn.** As educators, it is our job to plan for and implement playful and intentional learning opportunities outdoors. This planning is based on gathered student assessment data (e.g., pedagogical documentation, anecdotal notes, observations and conversations). Link: [Outdoor Education Ideas](#) on the Early Years Google Site.

**Outdoor learning should not look like an extension of recess and must include intentional planning and interactions with the educators,** and students should understand the difference between a recess and outdoor learning time.

- Division of students for combined indoor/outdoor activities should be done based on needs, never based on JK/SK groupings
  - No matter the time of day outdoor learning occurs students must be explicitly taught the routines and expectations. If you are starting out after a recess, or at the start of the day, students must know that recess/arrival has ended and learning has begun. This will include a gathering and sharing time (whole group lesson, introduction of materials, review/introductions of expectations) followed by the learning opportunities.
  - Educators must be fully engaged in the student learning and documentation during all learning times (including outdoors). How will you document key learnings? How will you use these observations to plan for the students' "next steps?"
- **Ideally, there should be only one class outside at a time.** This might require some coordination with other classes to negotiate space and timing. When spending time together as a class, educators are able to focus on the interests of their students and use those interests as a basis for planning intentional outdoor learning stations. What findings might be brought back indoors to explore further? What research do we need to do to find out more information on a topic? How might this topic link to literacy, numeracy and problem solving and innovating? What experiences or challenges can we offer our students to extend their learning? Note: There may be times when inviting another class to join you is appropriate or would enhance student learning. Again, the key is co-planning this time with other educators. Each educator will take on a specific role.
  - **How outdoor learning "looks" will vary,** depending on the educator's learning goals. The key feature of outdoor learning time is that it is purposeful. Outdoor learning might include a combination of structured stations (e.g., educators may plan through a math, language, and/or problem solving and innovation focus). Outdoor learning might take on a "community walk" focus or might look like an educator engaging with a group of students as they explore an area of the playground or nearby forest area, with a purpose. This purpose might be joining in with students who are looking under rocks to find bugs, using sticks to measure how deep a hole is or gathering litter and helping to care for our environment. Educators can "notice and name" student learning and extend students' understanding through open-ended and effective prompts and questions. Outdoor learning might include inviting students to complete a challenge or play an active game.

## What Do I Do When a Child is Struggling?

These strategies are important for students at all times, not only when they are struggling. However, some students may need more time and more explicit, individual, support with these skills and strategies. Also, review the previous steps in this document. Have you organized and planned using all of the recommendations outlined? If not, go back and make the necessary changes. Supporting struggling students begins in the classroom with us - the educators.



- ❑ **Know your children!** Stop and observe them.
  - ❑ What times of day are they successful (there will be some point of the day that they are connecting/successful)? What activities are they successful at?
  - ❑ What are some situations that cause this child to cry, hit/throw or run? Reflect on the child's environment as well as your own responses. Use the [Behaviour/Lagging Skills Log](#) available on UGShare to begin tracking and understanding behaviour. Try to adapt problematic situations and ensure your expectations match the child's needs/readiness.
    - ❑ What happened just before this child became upset/why are they upset? Understand and address these issues (Consider this: a child yells/is oppositional every day getting their lunch bag. WHY? Is it too difficult? Or could it be that they can't do it fast enough to ensure they get to sit beside their friend? Etc.) How do you ensure you are implementing supportive strategies that address the cause of behaviour, not focusing solely on the behaviour.
    - ❑ Is the child's ability to communicate a source of frustration or a strength? If it is a source of frustration, develop cues and signals with the child that can help them feel heard and support more appropriate problem solving skills.
    - ❑ Ensure your supports and strategies are inclusive, seek to find solutions that help a child become part of the class.
- ❑ Is the **classroom environment** physically supportive and well laid out? How might we change our classroom environment or expectations to support this child in feeling safe and successful in the classroom?
- ❑ Have we **planned the day with this student in mind**? Daily lesson plans should be made so that every child will be successful in the day. If you begin with a plan that supports the struggling student and scaffolds for their needs, it will support the whole class.
- ❑ Establish a **positive home-school connection**. Examples of ways to connect with home include: student information sheets at the beginning of the year, sunshine calls, pickup/drop off check-ins, communication book/bag, email, monthly newsletter, All About Me/My Blueprint documentation sharing, visitor days/volunteers/guest readers (this can be very helpful over lunch hours).



- ❑ **Responsive relationships with children:**
  - ❑ Have you built a relationship with this child?
  - ❑ Do you make a personal connection with each child everyday?
  - ❑ What are the strengths, interests of this child?
  - ❑ Are we providing differentiated support or providing and expecting the same as we do other students? Supports and expectations need to be individualized for these students. (a good example is getting dressed - if the recess transitions are a source of frustration for the student, then provide more support. They may not be ready to learn to do their zipper or take off their boots. It won't be the whole class)
  
- ❑ **Visual Schedule** - Many children benefit from knowing what to expect throughout the day. Having a visual schedule posted that students can easily see and touch may help students feel comfortable as they can predict what will be happening throughout the day. Struggling students may need a smaller, and more personalized schedule (e.g. first - then)
  
- ❑ **Universal Design of the Classroom** - Environment is the third educator! How can we physically set up the classroom to ensure there are quiet and active areas that all students can access? How will you introduce these areas to the class? Whole group meeting? Read aloud?
  
- ❑ **Choice** - Is there some choice available for your students? Too many choices can also be stressful for some children, so offering 2 choices ("Would you like to try \_\_\_ or \_\_\_?") is a good place to start. If joining the class in large group activities is a time this student is having a hard time, is it possible to offer to choices? ("You are welcome to join us on the carpet or you can choose to draw at the table.") Do crowds upset this child? Could this child be dismissed first to wash his/her hands? Is this child regularly upset when choosing a learning centre? Might a "preview" of the centres (walk around to look with one educator) help this child? If you need this child to participate in a small group lesson is there room to give them time to join? ("I see you are building a bridge right now. When you are done, please come and see me at \_\_\_\_\_. I have a game we can play together!") Is there another way you can help this student extend a skill (e.g., joining in with the child's play, with the intention of extending his/her learning)?
  
- ❑ **Quiet table with a bin of soothing items:** set out playdough or clay, a few small people/animals, paper and crayons. Items can be changed every couple of weeks or as needed. Adding a battery operated light (if it is on, this means, please do not disturb me right now) and a sand timer (child can start timer while using this quiet area) may help the child to feel empowered and supported. Our goal as educators, would be that in teaching children how/when/why they might use this quiet table, students will learn to self-regulate and go to this spot when they are feeling like they need to take a break. **Consider how you would introduce this quiet table/corner to students and how you might teach them how to use this area effectively.**
  
- ❑ **Exercise corner** - setting up an area where students might try some yoga poses (pictures in a book or posted on the wall), or engage in a set of exercises (e.g., jumping 8 times, pushing hands against the wall 7 times, doing the "superman" pose on the floor for a count of 10 etc.). Consider how/when you would introduce this centre to the children in the class.

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## Working as a Team

- **Nurture a positive and collaborative team of educators:** It is very important that the ECE and Teacher work together and develop strategies for communication of student needs, class learning opportunities, and maintaining parent relationships. Spend time early on to identify what is working well and what needs adapting as your relationship develops.
- All educators are responsible for student learning. During instructional time, educators are to be engaged with students
  - ❑ Start with one educator (take turns) leading small group instruction while the other educator engages with students during play.
  - ❑ Know your purpose: identify students and key look, each day, for both the teacher and the ECE. These 'look fors' need to be based on assessment.
  - ❑ During instructional time both educators are engaged with students. Effective Kindergarten classes maximize learning opportunities. This is not a time for checking bags or cleaning/prepping supplies.
- **You are not alone:** Remember that your team extends beyond the educators in your classroom
  - ❑ Include your planning time teachers and develop a plan early on around how to support students and what transitions will look like.
  - ❑ Communicate with Administration and Planning time teachers at the start of the year so everyone knows which expectations they are responsible for assessing and which frame they will report in. Keep in mind that while one educator may be responsible for assessment and reporting of specific expectations, it does not mean that other educators aren't also including similar learning opportunities (e.g. if a planning teacher is reporting on music, it does not mean that the classroom teacher and ECE don't include music in other aspects of their program).
  - ❑ Include EAs, who support students in your class, in your plans and strategies for support. Connect with EAs to foster an inclusive model and provide activities and strategies closely connected to the students needs and class inquiries etc.
  - ❑ **Connect with your school team** including other Kindie Educators, SERT, Staff and Admin. ISTs are recommended when you need more ideas to support a child. Through ISTs you can be connected with Student Support and Program Services (like Speech and Language) where appropriate.
  - ❑ Ensure you have created a positive partnership and are working with the parents/guardians to provide the best support available for each child.
  - ❑ Problem solving often works best through the support and collaboration with others.

*Celebrate Each Day!!!*

## Early Learning Website

Scan the QR Code to visit our website, or enter:

<https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/early-learning-kindergarten/home>



The Early Learning Website is packed full of resources, lessons and activities from Upper Grand Classrooms, assessment tools, and past PD. The image on the right shows the menu bar from our website. New ideas to support learning in the four frames are added regularly. Bookmark this site and use it to support your programming.

## Additional Resources

### In Schools

- Math Bin (set of manipulatives to support Math, 1 per school)
- Literacy Place (September 2019)
- Multiple Paths to Literacy, M. Trehearne
- Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum
- A Mindset for Learning, K. Mraz and C. Hertz

### In the Terry James Resource Centre (September 2019)

<p><u>Provocation Kits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthetic Materials Treasure Basket</li> <li>• Natural Materials Treasure Basket</li> <li>• Self Care</li> <li>• Props to Enhance Storytime</li> </ul>	<p><u>Class Management &amp; Organization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calm, Alert &amp; Learning, S. Shanker</li> <li>• Spaces and Places, D. Diller</li> <li>• A Mindset for Learning, K. Mraz and C. Hertz</li> <li>• Kindergarten Teacher Resource Book, Nelson Education</li> </ul>	<p><u>Math</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messy Maths; J. Robertson</li> <li>• More Than Counting; Moomaw &amp; Hieronymus</li> <li>• Teaching Preschool and Kindergarten Math, C Carlyle and B. Mercado</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class Act Phonological Awareness Kit</li> </ul>	<p><u>Literacy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already Ready - Nurturing Writers in Preschool &amp; Kindergarten, K Ray &amp; M Glover</li> <li>• Multiple Paths to Literacy, M. Trehearne</li> <li>• Ready to Learn, A. Burke</li> <li>• ABC and Beyond - Building Emergent Literacy in Early Childhood Settings, Weitzman &amp; Greenberg</li> </ul>	<p><u>Inquiry &amp; Outdoor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ThinQ Kindergarten, Colyer, Reimer, Watters, Watt</li> <li>• Balanced and Barefoot; A. Hanscom</li> <li>• Nature Preschools &amp; Forest Kindergartens; D. Sobel</li> <li>• Loose Parts, Daly &amp; Beloglovsky</li> <li>• Learning with Nature; C. Warden</li> <li>• Natural Curiosity, D. Suzuki</li> </ul>

### Early Learning - K & 1

**Home**

- The Kindergarten Program
- Kinder Newsletters 2018/19
- Literacy and Numeracy Behaviours
- Belonging and Contributing
- Self Regulation and Wellbeing
- Problem Solving and Innovating
- Assessment
- Supports and Interventions
- Classroom As the Third Teacher
- French Immersion
- Communication of Learning
- Past Workshops & PD
- Kindergarten Registration & Orientation
- Communication, Language and Speech Services
- Outdoor Learning
- Professional Resources and Articles
- Inquiry
- Resources For Parents
- Administrator Resources



## Appendix A

### Indicators That Its Time to Reflect & Reset

If you are finding these indicators present on a regular basis then it is time to go back to the beginning. At some point and time we all struggle.

When the struggles become overwhelming, or we feel that things are not as we'd like them to be then it's time to use the handbook as a tool to self evaluate your program and reflect on what is working and what areas need to be addressed. Address any areas that need adjusting; this may mean resetting the expectations and routines in your class and going back to 'start of year' routines...even if it's later in the year.

#### **Pedagogy Indicators:**

- More documentation than time to analyse the data/evidence of learning
- Feeling overwhelmed with assessment and not sure where to start
- Struggling to identify a child's next step
- Unsure of how to incorporate children's interests and needs in meaningful inquiry
- Students are reluctant to join small group instruction
- Feeling like days and lessons are disjointed
- Finding it hard to fit everything in
- Instructional time is used for cleaning or organizing
- Our team feels disconnected

#### **Behaviour Indicators:**

These indicators become increasingly problematic when one or more occurs on a regular basis. These are most often stress related behaviours. Responses to stress tend to fall into one of three modes fight, flight, freeze. These stress behaviour indicators emerge when an aspect of the program needs to be addressed.

- Volume in the classroom is loud (note: excessive volume is a trigger for many young children)
- Children struggle to enter, or stay, in room (safely or calmly)
- Children struggle to engage in play (may look like wandering, indecisive, reluctant, aggressive)
- Children ignore adults
- Children do not put away and care for materials
- Children are showing aggression towards other children and adults
- Children dumping bins, knocking over structures, etc. (this may be the only way a child is connecting with the materials)
- Children arguing and fighting
- Children struggle with transitions (has difficulty starting/stopping an activity)
- Children won't engage in some/many aspects of the program (whole group, play, small group, outdoors, gym etc., may include hiding, running)

If you find that many of these indicators are true for your class, remember you are not alone and it's time to connect as a team, with a mentor, SERT or Administrator to problem solve where to start and set some goals using this handbook as a tool to support your discussion and work moving forward.

