

Erin's Tips for

Promoting Kindergarten Readiness

Veteran Sandy Spring Friends Lower School teacher Erin Scott—who has taught Pre-K and has spent most of her 26 years as an educator teaching Kindergarten—shares guidance with families looking to help their pre-kindergartner develop the skills, curiosity, and confidence to thrive during the formative Kindergarten year.



Erin's Favorite Books to Read to Kindergartners

Picture Books

- Strega Nona by Tomie dePaola
- The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
- Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Lionni (and many others by the same author)
- Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Pena

Chapter books

- Winnie-the-Pooh by A.A. Milne
- Zoe and Sassafras series by Asia Citro
- Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

General Guidance for Families

- Develop a culture of reading in your family | Let them see you enjoying books, read to your child regularly, go to the local library, and sign your child up for a library card.
- Play card and board games | These build math and language skills. Let your child experience disappointment, frustration, and failure—don't fix it so they win the game.
- Build hand and finger muscles | Playing with playdough and clay, small Legos, or other small materials will help develop fine motor skills that will support writing and drawing.
- Build independence through life skills | As they indicate readiness, let them zip up their own coat, put on their shoes, etc., even if it's quicker to do it for them.
- Limit screens | Let them be outside in nature and get dirty—hands-on learning is best!
- Promote play | Introduce open-ended toys and materials that foster a child's imagination and creativity.
- Expose to daily tasks and diverse experiences | From the grocery store to museums, take them places!
- Expose to the alphabet, letter sounds, and numbers | Avoid drilling your child and don't look for a specific workbook or online program; incorporate learning into everyday life.
- Enroll in a preschool program | This provides structure and socialization in preparation for Kindergarten.

Pre-Literacy Tips for Parents

"We know that kids come to SSFS in very different stages when it comes to reading. Because our classes are small, we can meet them wherever they are, treating each child as an individual with their own goals." —Erin Scott P'17, '22

- Encourage but don't push so you don't turn them off to reading; provide time and space to let them develop on their own timetable
- Read to them
- Play with language, including rhymes, even if you're not using real words
- Encourage practice in writing their name
- Promote a sense of the alphabet (e.g. learn the alphabet song)
- Follow their curiosity about spelling; don't just give them the answer, but be playful (e.g. our pre-k covers phonological awareness, focusing on listening and playing with language)
- Balance screen time with meaningful, hands-on experiences with language, sounds, and letters, such as playing with letter magnets, making letters out of playdough, and providing open-ended materials such as a blank notebook and crayons.



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