LER 3478

All Ready for Kindergarten

Readiness Kit



Parent Guide



Learning Resources®

⚠ WARNING:
CHOKING HAZARD - Small parts.
Not for children under 3 years.

LER 3478
380 N. Fairway Drive
Vernon Hills, IL 60061
800-222-3909

Illustrations by: Steve Simpson

© Learning Resources, Inc., Vernon Hills, IL (U.S.A.)
Learning Resources Ltd., King's Lynn, Norfolk (U.K.)

This kit is protected by copyright. No part of this kit may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission.

Printed in China.

Learning Resources®

Contents

Introduction: Welcome to Kindergarten! 4

What's Included 5

Ready, Set, Go! Activity Framework 7

Fine Motor Skills 8

Language

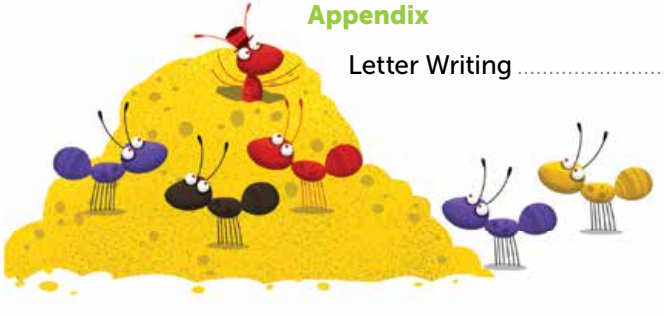
- Letter Identification 10
- Beginning Sounds (phonics) 12
- Rhyming 14
- Writing 16
- Following Verbal Directions 18

Math

- Shapes 20
- More/Less & Beginning Measurement 22
- Adding (Numbers 0–10) 24
- Subtracting (Numbers 0–10) 26
- Higher Numbers & Skip Counting 28

Appendix

- Letter Writing 30





Welcome to Kindergarten!



Can you believe it? Your child is, or soon will be, a student. Can you picture it? *Your* child, sitting in a classroom, reciting ABCs and 123s, solving addition and subtraction problems, learning to pronounce and spell new words...it's a big step for both of you. Whether you're feeling anxious, excited, prepared for the challenge, or overwhelmed, we're here to help. **Fun, critter-themed materials and activities** give you the necessary tools to teach your child exactly what they need to thrive in kindergarten.

One more thing about kindergarten: it's fun! Children learn so much through play, games, and songs that delight, inspire, and stay with them over the years. In that spirit, we offer you and your child educational play and games in a positive, supportive environment—your own. All Ready for Kindergarten prepares your child for a lifetime of learning.

Ready? Set? Go! It's time to take that next step!



What's Included

Your kit features three main components that complement and reinforce one another:

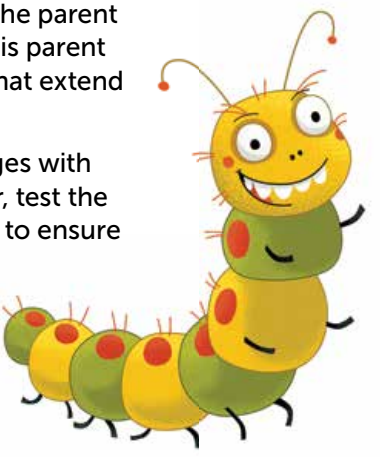
1. Parent Guide is filled with hands-on activities and simple games that you and your child can do together. Also included are other quick and easy ideas for additional learning opportunities.





2. Write-and-Wipe Activity Book is for a child's independent use, or for skill reinforcement in tandem with the parent guide. Look for references in this parent guide for activity-book pages that extend the learning.

Note: Before writing on the pages with a dry-erase or washable marker, test the marker on the corner of a page to ensure that marks erase.



What's Included (continued)

3. Hands-on Tools, below, have been specially selected to support the skills developed in kindergarten, such as shape identification, writing, and addition and subtraction within 10.



Gator Grabber



Critter Counters



Lacing Letters and Lace
(uppercase & lowercase)



Picture Cards



Write & Wipe Leaf Board



Shape Puzzle Cards with Shapes



Number Cube

Ready, Set, Go! Activity Framework

A child's learning ability progresses from the beginning of a year through the end. In other words, what your child is capable of at the beginning of kindergarten is vastly different from what he or she can learn and accomplish by the end of kindergarten.

Provided in this guide are suggested activities that build upon knowledge in a progressive Ready, Set, Go framework. Try starting with a *Ready* activity to gauge your child's ability. Then, choose the activities that best meet your child's needs and abilities. Feel free to personalize your child's learning path, customizing the order of lessons to fit their skill level. If you feel your child is becoming frustrated, choose a different skill activity or try again a different day.

The activities are structured as follows:

Ready

READY activities — These activities provide a friendly introduction to classroom tools, with a sprinkle of learning thrown in. Think of these activities as your child saying, "I'm READY to learn!" If a *Ready* activity seems too easy, move on to a *Set* activity. If a *Ready* activity seems too hard, just let your child play with the tools for the sake of play, and try the activity again in a few weeks.

Set

SET activities — Think of these activities as the next step in building the skill set: "I can build this skill SET!" Try these activities after your child has demonstrated knowledge of the *Ready* activity for that skill.

Go!

GO activities — Think of these activities as either slightly more challenging than the previous levels, or something your child might practice independently. Picture your proud child thinking, "I can GO take the next step!" Remember, the more experience a child has with a skill, the better the chances are that they will internalize that skill.

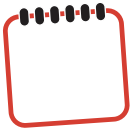
Fine Motor Skills

Being able to write letters and numbers correctly can be challenging for children. Rest assured that it's common for children to reverse letters and numbers, even at the beginning of 1st grade. Providing practice and modeling correct letter and number formation help your child build important handwriting skills at an early age.

Fine Motor Skills

Using the Gator Grabber in these activities helps your child develop fine motor skills for writing, printing letters and numbers, holding a pencil, cutting on a line, and turning pages in a book. **See Appendix pgs. 30–31 in this book to instruct your child on how to write letters.**

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).



Activity Book Connection pgs. 4–5

Quick and easy ideas for building fine motor skills:

- Use the Gator Grabber to pick up items from around your house, such as small plastic toys, marshmallows, and so on.
- Push thin straws, or coffee stirrers, through the holes in a colander (adult supervision recommended).
- Cut on the lines of notebook paper.
- Practice drawing circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, and hexagons.
- Drop coins into a piggy bank.
- Play with modeling clay to make shapes, letters, or numbers.
- Lace letters in upper- and lowercase pairs.

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Red Rover, Red Rover

- Toss a handful of critter counters onto a flat surface (carpeting works well).
- Then, give your child verbal directions to pick up and move the counters with the Gator Grabber: "Red Rover, Red Rover, let a red bug come over."
- Continue calling out directions until all counters have been moved.



Line Up!

- Roll the number cube to tell how many counters to line up.
- Next, have your child use the Gator Grabber to place that number of critters in a straight line.
- Roll the cube two more times, adding more critters to the lineup.
- Uh-oh! If you roll a *wild*, have your child scatter the critters. Then, use the Gator Grabber to move them back into a neat row.



Buggy Battle

- Open the Activity Book to page 4.
- Give your child 10 seconds to move a group of matching-color critter counters, using the Gator Grabber, to a leaf on the Activity Book page.
- Give your child another 10 seconds to move other color critter counters to each of the other leaves.
- Look at the leaves and talk about which leaf has the most critters on it.

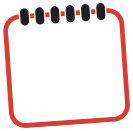
Letter Identification (uppercase & lowercase)

Language development helps children connect meaning to spoken words and build vocabulary for reading, writing, and communicating.
We often think of language development as the spoken word. But language development is much more: listening skills, vocabulary development, reading, and writing.

Letter Identification (uppercase & lowercase)

Letter recognition is a foundational skill for children as they learn how to write, read, and spell. Most kindergarten classrooms require students to write the first letter of their names in an uppercase letter, and the rest of the letters in lowercase. Children also learn letter recognition as a step toward pre-reading skills. In order to read phonetically, children must first be able to recognize a letter and eventually the sound(s) that letter makes.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).



Activity Book Connection pgs. 5–6

Quick and easy ideas for building letter identification skills:

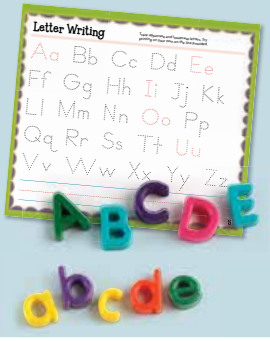
- Sequence letters in groups of 4 *(tuvw,* for example).
- Set out all letters (uppercase). Have your child find the letter that begins his or her name. Continue with other letters that have meaning such as *M* for Mom, *D* for Dad, or the first letter of a sibling's or pet's name.

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Match Game

- Open the Activity Book to page 5.
- Choose three matching uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Have your child place the uppercase letters on top of the matching uppercase letters on the Activity Book page.
- Challenge your child to place the lowercase letters next to their uppercase matches. Say the names of the lowercase letters as your child places them on the page.
- Each time you play, either review the letters your child had difficulty identifying, or add three new letters.



Dancing with Letters

- Choose five matching uppercase and lowercase letters and put them in a pile.
- Pretend the uppercase and lowercase letters need to be paired up with their partners (for a dance or sporting event). Have your child lace the "partners" together.
- Each time you play, lace up 4–5 new upper- and lowercase letter partners.



Lace-in-Line

- Choose four consecutive lowercase letters and scatter them on the kitchen table.
- Either sing a song (such as "The Alphabet Song") or play music while your child walks around the table.
- When you stop the music, your child takes the letters, places them in the correct order, and laces them together.
- Repeat with different lowercase letters.

Teaching Tip:

For support, your child can sing the alphabet, or use page 5 of the Activity Book, as a prompt to help complete the sequence of letters.

Beginning Sounds (phonics)

Children in kindergarten begin reading by learning the sounds of beginning and ending letters, and basic vowel sounds. Stress the beginning sounds of words to help your child recognize and associate the sounds letters make. Being able to distinguish the last letter of words will also help children decode words in the future.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).

ant apple



Activity Book Connection pgs. 7–8

Quick and easy ideas for building phonics skills:

- Ask your child to name the beginning sound for items in the day's routine (clothing, foods, toys).
- Call out names of friends, neighbors, or relatives and ask your child the beginning letter for each name. (Suggestion—use names with one easily identifiable beginning letter such as Sam, rather than Sherri.)

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Picture Day!

- Choose two picture cards and the two corresponding beginning-sound lowercase letters.
- Spread out the materials into two groups: picture cards and letters.
- Have your child choose a card, say the picture on the front by repeating the beginning sound (e.g., h-h-hat), and find the lowercase letter that begins the picture.

Teaching Tip: Limiting letter choices leads to better success and less frustration.



Picture Perfect

- Randomly select ten picture cards.
- Show your child a card and ask him or her to identify the beginning sound.
- If your child gets the beginning sound correct, they keep the card.
- Keep playing with the remaining cards until your child collects all ten cards.
- Repeat again a different day using ten different cards.



Two More

- Place ten picture cards in a stack, face down.
- Have your child take the top card and name the picture and beginning sound.
- Then, have your child name two more words with that same beginning sound.
- When your child masters those ten cards, play again with the remaining picture cards.

Rhyming

By being able to identify rhyming words, children can better decode new words based on the same ending sound as a familiar word. Seeing connections between word beginnings and endings helps children in the reading process.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).

mug

tug



bug

Activity Book Connection pgs. 9–10

Quick and easy ideas for building rhyming skills:

- Play rhyming games—say a word and have your child say as many rhyming words as they can.
- Call out grocery items while shopping and have your child say a rhyming word (e.g., grape-tape).

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Odd Card Out

- Select three picture cards: two that rhyme, and one that does not rhyme (e.g., **can**, **fan**, sock).
- Say and stress the ending rhyme in each picture word.
- Ask your child to tell you which two words rhyme.
- Repeat with three new cards.



All Aboard!

- Have your child line up three stuffed animals or toys. Explain that they're waiting to board the train.
- Place a picture card in front of each animal or toy.
- To have the animal or toy "board" the train, your child needs to either say another word that rhymes with the picture, or find a matching rhyming card.
- Continue until all three animals or toys have left the station!



Remember My Rhyme

- Find 10 picture cards that rhyme (5 pairs).
- Place the cards face down. Turn over cards, one by one, and try to find the rhyming picture words.
- After making a match, help your child write the words while saying them aloud on the write-and-wipe board.
- Stress beginning sounds while helping your child spell the rest of the word.

Writing

Children in kindergarten write—a lot! They write names on papers, print letters, try to sound out and spell words, and begin writing simple stories. Even if they can't spell all the words, they write, write, and write some more to begin expressing ideas and thoughts. Many times children need to have a purpose in writing. By providing an open-ended writing activity, children avoid feeling like there is a right or wrong answer to the prompt, allowing them to write more freely.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).



Activity Book Connection pg. 11

Quick and easy ideas for building writing skills:

- Draw a picture of something that happened at the beginning, middle, and end of a story.
- Ask open-ended questions so your child responds using more than a one- or two-word answer.
- Read your child's favorite book aloud. Have your child choose a favorite sentence from the book to write on the write-and-wipe board.

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Creative Warm-up

- Provide your child with a simple open-ended sentence starter to write on the board, such as, "I like_____."
- Encourage your child to complete the sentence by sounding out the word and then drawing a picture to represent the word.



Storytelling, Act 1

- Open the Activity Book to page 11.
- Choose one story starter.
- Fill in the blank space for that sentence.
- Then, ask questions to help your child *tell* a story, such as, "What did you do on that vacation?" or "Do you think your friends will have fun? Why?"



Tales from the Garden

- Use the critter counters as a story starter. Model telling a story from the point of view of one of the critters.
- For example, speak as an ant: "I want to fly. I want to fly instead of crawl. I would like to fly and land on picnic food."
- Now, have your child try writing a story (a sentence or two) on the write-and-wipe board from the point of view of another critter.

Following Verbal Directions

In kindergarten, children learn to follow more than one direction at a time. Your child goes from being told to perform one task (push in your chair) to being able to follow more than one direction (pick up the toys, go back to your seat, and take out your crayons).

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).



Activity Book Connection pg. 12

Quick and easy ideas for following verbal directions:

- Give your child simple moves to complete in order (spin around, clap your hands, and jump) to build vocabulary and encourage following verbal directions.
- Give your child three simple tasks to follow (take off your shoes, hang up your coat, wash your hands).
- Play a game of "Simon Says."

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Pick Me, Pick Me!

- Give your child a two-step verbal direction for picking up the critter counters: "Pick up all the red counters and put them in your lap." Or, "Pick up a red, then a blue critter."
- Have your child repeat the directions back to you while performing the task.



Roll & Remember

- Say the following directions: "Roll the number cube. Pick up that many counters." (*Wild* means roll again.)
- Now, have your child repeat the directions aloud and follow them.



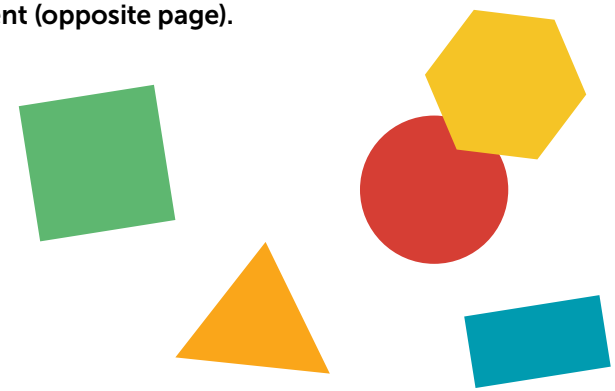
The Write Stuff

- Have your child follow these directions using the write-and-wipe board:
  1. Write your name on the first line.
  2. Write how old you are under your name.
  3. Put your marker down when you are done.

Shapes

Identifying shapes helps children make comparisons and encourages problem-solving skills. In fact, learning to recognize and distinguish between shapes is essential to understanding key math and science principles. Playing with the shapes in this kit encourages visual thinking, an intelligence later used in geometry, engineering, and design.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).



Activity Book Connection pgs. 13–15

Quick and easy ideas for building shape skills:

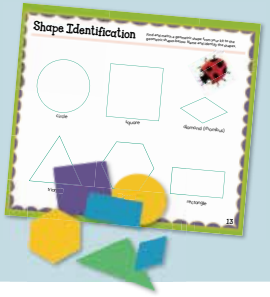
- Play "I Spy" while out for a walk or car ride. Identify signs or items on buildings that have the shape of a circle, square, rectangle, triangle, and hexagon.
- Find or cut foods into shapes (square, circle, and rectangle crackers, watermelon wedges, and so on) as a snack.
- Model shapes at home by building shapes from different materials, such as craft sticks, clay, marshmallows, gumdrops, and toothpicks (with parent supervision).
- Look for 3-D objects such as a cylinder, cube, and pyramid, and talk about the shape of each side (face).

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Shape Up!

- Open the Activity Book to page 13.
- Lay out the following shapes on a table: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, hexagon, and diamond (rhombus).
- Introduce the shapes: have your child trace around each shape with a finger as you talk about their attributes (number of sides, corners, and so on).
- Now, match the shapes to those in the Activity Book.



Building Bugs

- Use the shapes to complete shape puzzle cards.
- Begin with cards 1 and 2 (cards progress in difficulty).

Teaching Tip:

While your child is working on the cards, point out:

- You can make 1 large shape using 2–4 smaller shapes **(this is an introduction to fractions).**
- The similarities and differences in the shapes, such as round, straight, small, and large **(this is called compare/contrast).**



Home Run

- Have your child practice drawing shapes on the write-and-wipe board.
- Then, instruct your child to draw a house!
- Offer simple step-by-step directions, such as draw a square (base of house), draw a triangle on top (roof), make rectangle windows, and so on.

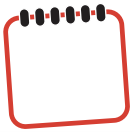
More/Less & Beginning Measurement

How old are you? How many grapes do you want for your snack? Kindergartners are pros at counting. But, in addition to their love of counting, kindergartners need to know how to identify numbers 0–20. What does a 9 look like? Can you write the number 9? Being able to match the written number to the counted number is a core kindergarten skill.

More/Less & Beginning Measurement

Determining which group of objects has more or less is a beginning math skill for comparing size and number amounts. Early measurement skills include determining which object is taller/shorter or longer/shorter by sight, prior to learning how to use a standard unit of measurement.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).



Activity Book Connection pgs. 16–17

Quick and easy ideas for building more/less & beginning measurement skills:

- Arrange two different amounts of critter counters on the floor. Say "more" and have your child run or point to the pile of critter counters with more.
- Draw two lines of different lengths on a piece of paper. Ask, "Which is longer? Which is shorter?" Now, draw vertical lines and ask, "Which is taller?"

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

Pile of Leaves

- Open the Activity Book to page 4.
- Have your child roll the number cube to tell how many critter counters to put on the first leaf.
- Roll the cube two more times to add counters to the second and third leaves.
- Touch and count the critters on each leaf. Which leaf has the most?



Critter Pile-Up

- Have your child roll the number cube, and then place this number of critter counters in a pile using the Gator Grabber.
- Next, you roll the cube to count and pile up a separate collection of critters.
- If you or your child rolls a *wild*, take a critter from the other person and roll again.
- Repeat until all critters have joined a pile.
- Touch and count the critters in each pile to see which one has more.
- Play again—this time see who wins by having less!



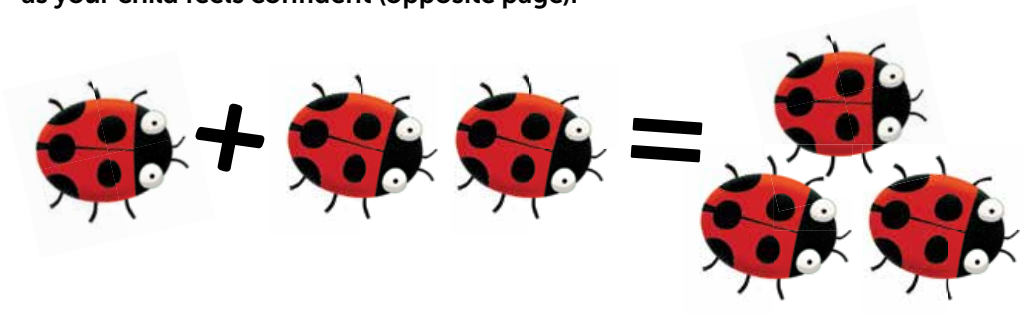
Measure Up!

- Line up the caterpillar and bee counters.
- Ask your child, "Which one is longer? Which one is taller?"
- Now, compare the dragonfly and spider to see which is taller, and which is shorter.
- Compare other items around the house, such as books, shoes, etc.

Adding (Numbers 0–10)

Kindergartners learn basic math skills (addition and subtraction) that they will use repeatedly over the years. Making ten is a big deal in kindergarten. Understanding which numbers added together make ten helps children learn the foundation of our math system. For instance, understanding the value of ten is imperative to counting by 10s, counting money, learning place value, and solving math problems with numbers beyond 10. Learning doubles (2 + 2, 5 + 5, etc.) is a beginning skill toward multiplication in later years.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).



Activity Book Connection pgs. 18 & 20

Quick and easy ideas for building addition skills:

- Hand your child pennies to add for a real-world experience.
- Roll dice and add the totals between the numbers rolled.

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need: **Let's Begin:**



Big Bug Bash

- It's party time with the critter counters. Place three critter counters in front of your child.
- Have your child count the number of critter counters (3).
- Have four more critter counters fly over to join the party.
- Ask your child to count how many total critters are at the party (7). Say, "Three critters were here, plus 4 more joined them. Three critters plus 4 critters is 7 critters."
- Make more fun story problems or encourage your child to make up addition stories for numbers 0–10 using the critter counters.



I'm Seeing Double

- Place two critter counters in front of your child.
- Have your child place the same amount (2) next to your two critter counters to double the amount of counters.
- Count the total number of critter counters (4). Say the number sentence (2 + 2 = 4).
- Repeat this activity using doubles of 3, 4, and 5 critter counters. Remember to say the number sentence for each double group your child makes.



Balancing Bugs

- Roll the number cube twice.
- Place groups of critter counters to represent the two numbers rolled. (For example, make a group of 2 and a group of 3 critters if the numbers rolled were 2 and 3.)
- Count the total number of critter counters in both groups (2 + 3 = 5).
- Next, switch the piles you just made to show that the same two amounts equal the same total number of critter counters (3 + 2 = 5).

Subtracting (Numbers 0–10)

These activities will help children identify beginning numbers and their values, and perform simple subtraction operations. Being able to quickly compute or recite basic subtraction facts is a foundational skill for future division tasks.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).

3-1 4-2



Activity Book Connection pgs. 19–20

Quick and easy ideas for building subtraction skills:

- Using paper cups and a tennis ball, play a bowling game. Have your child help figure out the number of "pins" knocked down, based on how many are standing.
- Tell number stories involving multiple solutions, such as: "Eight bugs went to the movies. Some are sitting in the balcony and some are sitting on the main floor. How many bugs are in the balcony? How many are on the main floor? Show as many different solutions as you can, using the critter counters." Continue telling other number stories using numbers *0–10*.

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need: **Let's Begin:**



Fly Away

- Place seven critter counters in a row in front of your child. Have your child touch and count each one.
- Call out a number of critters to "fly" away (3 critters). Move three critter counters away.
- Count how many critters are still left (4).
- Say the number sentence aloud (7 critters – 3 critters = 4 critters).
- Repeat, using different problems for numbers *0–10*.



Picture Frame

- Open the Activity Book to page 20.
- Place 10 critter counters in the 10-frame, filling from left to right in the top row, and then the bottom row. Ask, "How many critter counters can fit in this frame?" (10)
- Have your child take away six critter counters. Ask, "How many were taken away?" (6)
- Ask, "How many are left?" (4) Have your child count to verify.
- Say the number sentence aloud: 10 – 6 = 4.
- Repeat several times, filling the frame to ten and taking away critter counters to build subtraction facts from ten.



Making Problems

- Let your child play with the critter counters to make up their own take away problems for numbers *0–10*. (For example, 9 take away 4, 8 take away 5, etc.)
- After each take-away problem, help your child write the subtraction sentence on the write-and-wipe board (9 – 4 = 5; 8 – 5 = 3, etc.).

Higher Numbers & Skip Counting

Kindergarten is a prime time for counting. Children love to inform you that they can count to 100 (or beyond)! Counting by 5s and 10s helps children learn to tell time and eventually count nickels and dimes. Follow these activities for faster counting by 5s and 10s.

Begin with a Ready activity and move on to Set and Go as your child feels confident (opposite page).

10, 20, 30...



Activity Book Connection pgs. 21–22

Quick and easy ideas for building skills involving higher numbers:

- Practice counting up from a number.
- Count by 10s instead of 1s when playing "Hide and Go Seek."
- Play one-minute challenges:
  - Count by 10s
  - Begin counting from a random number (35, 36, 37)
  - Count by 5s
  - Count backward from 10 or 20
  - Count to 100

Ready

Set

Go!

You'll Need:



Let's Begin:

I Can Count!

- Open the Activity Book to page 21.
- Use the 100 board on the page to help your child recognize and count numbers *1–20*.
- Call out a number. Have your child circle the number you named.
- Move on to *21–30* when your child is ready.
- Practice counting by 1s to 100.



Skip Around!

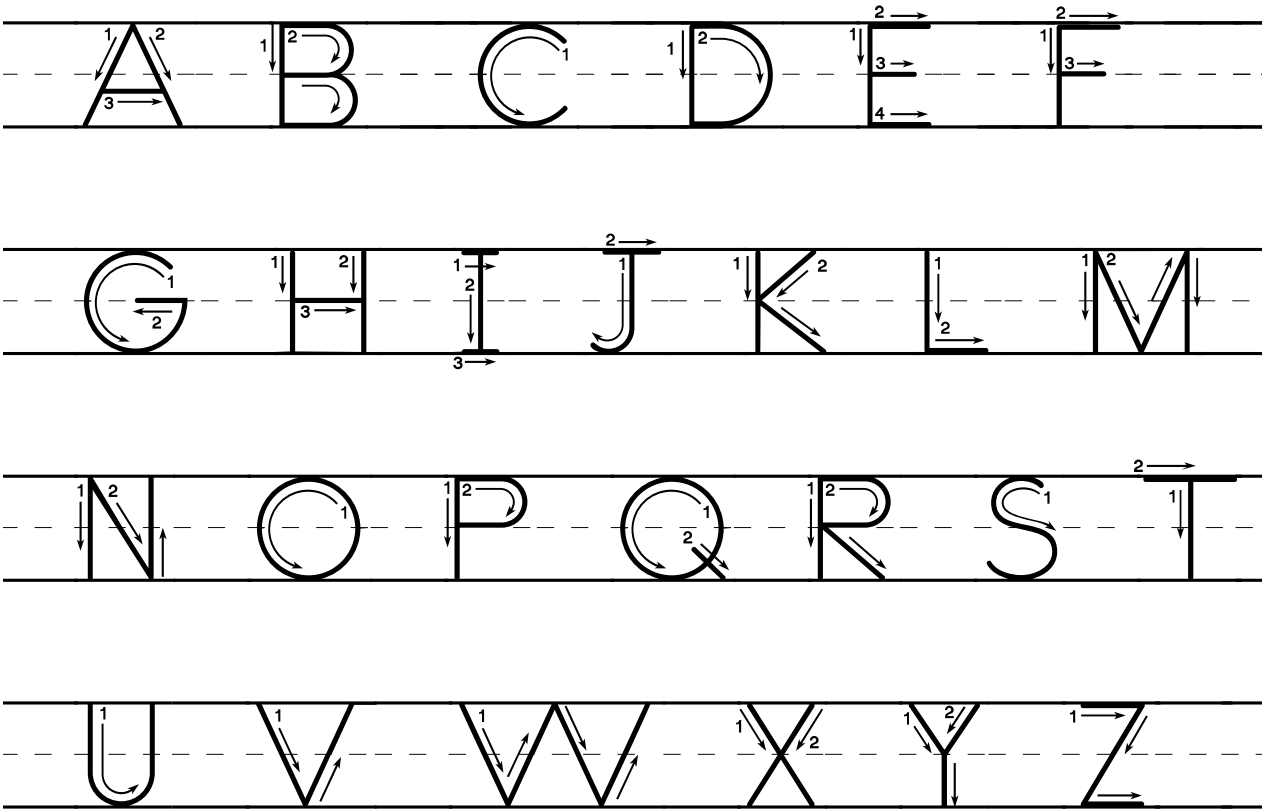
- Open the Activity Book to page 21. Practice skip counting by 10s on the 100 board.
- Have your child circle all numbers that end in *0*.
- Point to each number circled. Say the number to start slowly counting by 10s.
- Each time you say a number, count a little faster, until your child can count by 10s fairly quickly by heart.
- Try the same activity a different week for skip counting by 5s.

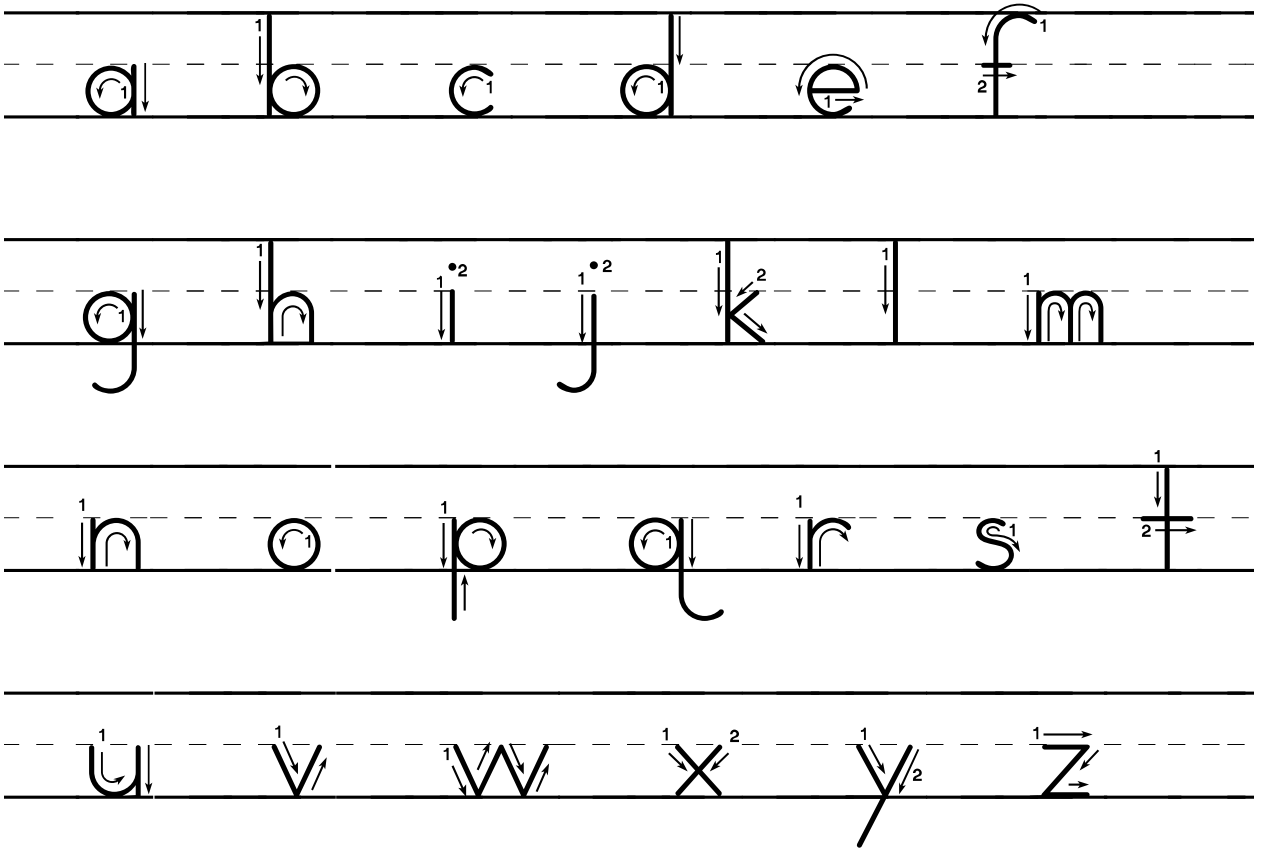


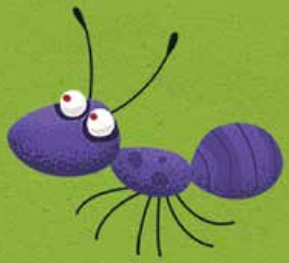
2, 4, 6, 8—Counting is Really Great!

- Open the Activity Book to page 21. This time, study the even and odd numbers on the mat.
- Have your child circle numbers *1, 3, 5, 7,* and *9*, and put an x through *2, 4, 6, 8,* and *10*.
- On a different day, have your child circle all the even numbers through 20, and then 30.

Letter Writing




a b c d e f
g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t
u v w x y z



Learning Resources®