Family Handbook:

Georgia's Pre-K Program

BRIGHT from the START

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Dear Pre-K Family Member:

Thank you for enrolling your child in Georgia's Pre-K program. As a Georgia resident choosing to have your child participate in this educational initiative funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education, you can be proud that Georgia is leading the nation in providing preschool options for children. The purpose of this handbook is to help you understand this unique educational initiative, to explain the goals and objectives of the program, and to offer suggestions that will help your child be successful in the Pre-K program and throughout his or her educational career.

We also want you to know we value your input. Please contact your Pre-K Provider or our office with any questions or comments. Also visit the Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning website for more information. We appreciate your interest in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

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Goals of Georgia's Pre-K Program

Georgia's Pre-K Program provides appropriate activities and learning experiences that help prepare young children for school. The term school readiness means that children are socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively prepared for success in kindergarten.

Georgia's Pre-K Program helps children become independent, self-confident, enthusiastic learners. Participation in the program encourages children to develop good habits and daily routines.

Georgia's Pre-K Program encourages teachers to adopt child-centered instructional practices based on the interests and the skill levels of each child. Research shows that children benefit most when instruction is child-centered. Child-centered instruction allows teachers to facilitate learning in a rich environment that fosters children's initiative, exploration, and collaborative interaction with other children and adults.

To ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten, families will be provided information and assistance in preparing for and gathering the documentation necessary for their child's enrollment in kindergarten. Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning provides summer activity kits that will allow parents to continue preparing their children for kindergarten.

You are encouraged to become involved in what your child is learning and experiencing in Pre-K, because your participation contributes to your child's success in school. A parent is a child's first and most important teacher.

Eligibility and Enrollment Requirements

Georgia's Pre-K is a public/private partnership. A child may not be denied from registering or enrolling in the program, but parents must complete certain requirements for the child to attend.

Children are eligible to attend Georgia's Pre-K for one year only.

In addition to the proof of age and residency documentation you have already provided, families will be asked to provide the following documents. All documents must be on file for your child to remain in Pre-K:

- Certificate of Immunization (DHR Form 3231) within 30 days of program entry
- Certificate of Ear, Eye, and Dental Examination (Form 3300) within 90 days of program entry
- Alternate contact information

Alternate contact information is not only required by state law; it is essential in the event of an emergency. Remember to keep this information updated by notifying your Pre-K provider of any changes.

Health Requirements for Pre-K

All children enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program must have hearing, vision, and dental examination certificates (DHR Form 3300) on file within 90 calendar days of program entry.

Immunizations (DHR Form 3231) must be up-to-date or affidavits must be on file within 30 calendar days of program entry. The local Health Department or your child's

physician can provide information on affidavits.

Children without current Forms 3231 and 3300 may not remain in the program. Check with your provider if you need assistance in obtaining these certificates.

Support Services

Support services are a vital component of the success of Georgia's Pre-K Program. Bright from the Start provides children and families with access, if you request it, to services that will better prepare your child for school.

If you meet certain eligibility requirements, you may qualify for health services, transportation, food, and extended day child care services. Please contact the Pre-K Project Director at your school or child care learning center for additional information regarding eligibility requirements.

The director may ask for information about your family income or other government services you receive. Supplying this information is not required for entrance in Pre-K, but may be required to help them determine your eligibility for some services. This information will be kept confidential. It will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in providing financial assistance or auditing records.

Your Pre-K program may also have a Resource Coordinator (RC), who will help you in accessing services and making sure your child's Pre-K experience is successful.

Examples of assistance provided by RC's, upon request:

- Information on job skills training or job openings
- Parent workshops on a variety of topics
- Linking families to agencies for help in obtaining health services, housing, utilities, food or clothing
- Information on literacy and GED classes
- Information on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Referral to other agencies for assessment and/or treatment of any issues that might hinder children's learning in school
- Kindergarten readiness information and workshops

If your Pre-K Program does not have a Resource Coordinator to provide these services to you, please ask your director for information about a Georgia Child Care Resource and Referral Agency near you. You may also locate the nearest child care resource and referral agency online at www.gaccrra.org or by calling 1-800-466-5681.

Transportation Services

Transportation is an optional service. Check with your provider to determine the availability of this service and the eligibility requirements.

Food Services

A range of fees for meals typically exists within a Pre-K program. Fees can vary depending on the provider's affiliation with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), school nutrition programs, or other supplementary sources of funding for meals. Ask your Pre-K provider to explain the fee structure for meals

during the 180 day Pre-K school year and non-Pre-K program days (holiday and vacation times). Refer to the current school year Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines on the Bright from the Start website, or ask your provider for a copy to review for recommendations of maximum food charges. Check with your provider to determine if your family qualifies for assistance in this area.

Extended Day Services

Extended day services are not included in Georgia's Pre-K Program. The provider hosting your Pre-K class may offer these services for an additional fee. Refer to the current school year Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines for a recommendation of reasonable fees. Check with your provider to determine if your family qualifies for assistance in this area.

Reasonable Fees Associated with Georgia's Pre-K Program

The 6.5 hour core instructional program is provided at no charge to the parents. If you choose to participate in extracurricular activities, fees may be assessed. These include, but are not limited to: insurance, school photographs, T-shirts, uniforms, extended day services, meals, etc.

Be sure to ask your Pre-K provider for a fee schedule explaining all applicable charges, including the child care learning center's policy for holidays and vacation days.

What You Can Expect

Classroom Settings, Learning Areas, Teaching Methods

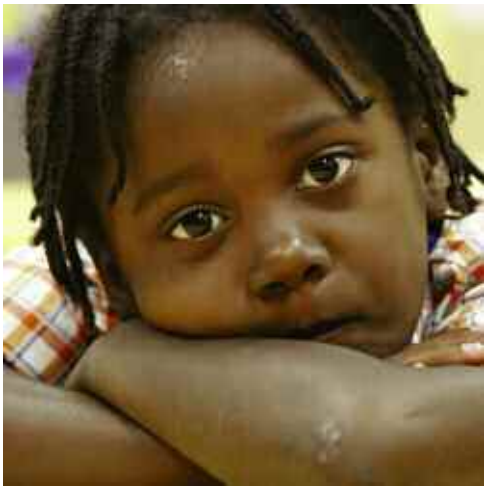
Pre-K Classrooms have learning areas or "centers" set-up in the classroom, and each center is supplied with books, materials, and learning activities. Typical learning centers in a Pre-K classroom might include math, blocks, reading, art, science, dramatic play, writing, and music. The learning centers are designed to promote various developmental skills in seven areas:

- Language and Literacy
- Math Development
- Science Development
- Social Studies Development
- Creative Development
- Physical and Health Development
- Social Emotional Development.

The Pre-K classroom has ample space to accommodate individual, small, and large group instruction. The Georgia Pre-K Content Standards provide the basis for instruction in the Pre-K classroom. You can find a copy of the Georgia Pre-K Content Standards on our website, www.decal.state.ga.us, under Pre-K – Teachers - Content Standards.

Teachers interact with children and move about the classroom to facilitate learning experiences. You can find a copy of a daily schedule posted in the classroom. The Pre-K schedule allows for daily story times, outside time, rest time, instruction in the learning centers and in large and small groups. You might find your Pre-K child engaged in building a farm in the block center as a result of visiting a real farm, or

observing butterflies hatch in the science area and then painting or drawing a picture of a butterfly in the art center.



Curriculum

A school or child care learning center that is part of Georgia's Pre-K Program will use a curriculum that has been approved by Bright from the Start. Each curriculum is used to support children to reach age appropriate learning goals. All approved curricula are aligned with Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards. Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards ensure that children develop skills in language and literacy, math, science, social studies, creative, health and physical, and social and emotional areas. You can ask your child's teacher for a copy of the Georgia Pre-K Content Standards or refer to our website.

The School Calendar Year

Georgia's Pre-K Program operates for 180 days per year. The calendar is determined by the provider and may vary within any given community. The core instructional program is 6.5 hours per day and may begin as early as 7:30 a.m. Families enrolling children in the program must agree to send the child the full 6.5 hours of instructional time, five days per week for the entire 180 days.

Attendance

Regular school attendance is a component to a child's academic success. Children who do not attend on a regular basis, are routinely late, or rou-

tinely leave the program early may be disenrolled. In addition, children who are late, leave early, or are absent for ten consecutive days without a medical or other reasonable explanation must be disenrolled from the program. Your provider will give you assistance in this area, if requested.

Behavior

Children may be disenrolled from the Georgia Pre-K Program if they are hurting themselves or others and/or are chronically disruptive to the extent that they are not benefiting from the Pre-K program. Families will be given assistance in obtaining resources to help the child benefit from the program, including assessment referral and treatment options. Disenrollment of a child for behavior reasons is the last step taken after all other attempts to help the child within the program have been exhausted.

Staff/Child Ratios

Each Pre-K classroom will have one lead teacher and one assistant teacher. The only exception to this requirement is during the one-half to one-hour rest period when only one adult is required. Classes are limited to 20 children, providing a ratio of 1:10.

Family Involvement

Orientation

Your Pre-K provider will conduct a parent orientation within the first 20 days of the program. The orientation will include more specific information about the curriculum they use, Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards and general program information.

Field Trips

Whenever possible, teachers are encouraged to plan field trips both inside and outside the classroom environment to familiarize children with their community and broaden their educational experiences. The number of field trips will vary between programs. Field trips are part of the Pre-K program and are free of charge for the children. Parents who participate in field trips may be charged a fee.

Graduation

Bright from the Start does not recommend "graduation" for four-year-old children as an appropriate activity. More appropriate activities include, but are not limited to: a field day, an open house, family/child picnic, dinner, etc. If offered by your Pre-K Program, graduation ceremonies or other end of the year programs and practice for such should not be conducted during the 6.5 hour Pre-K day.

Your Involvement

Whenever possible, families should actively participate in the Pre-K program and maintain open communication with the Pre-K program staff. Research shows that active family participation in children's learning experiences contributes to success in school. Volunteering in the classroom is highly recommended, because it helps the children and is informative and rewarding for families.

Contact your Center Director or Principal to find out about opportunities to volunteer your time, talents, and experiences in your child's classroom.

Georgia's Pre-K Assessment

Georgia's Pre-K Program has implemented a new statewide assessment for our four year olds. The Work Sampling System (WSS) will be used to assess the level of performance for each child in the program.

The WSS is an assessment completed in the classroom by the teacher as children engage in their routine daily activities throughout the school year. Teachers observe and record student performance every day. They collect samples of a student's work that show development and growth over time. Teachers will use this data to complete a WSS Developmental Checklist and a Georgia Pre-K Progress Report for each child.

The WSS Developmental Checklist includes fifty-five performance indicators under seven domains of learning (language/literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, social/emotional development, health and physical development, and creative expression). The indicators within the seven domains of learning are directly correlated with the Georgia Pre-K Content Standards. The Georgia Pre-K Content Standards guide the instruction in the classroom and are correlated with the Kindergarten Georgia Performance Standards. Information from the checklist is used to determine each individual child's performance levels and school readiness and reported on the Georgia Pre-K Progress Report.

Family/Teacher Conferences

A minimum of two family/teacher conferences will be offered to families during the school year. During this conference the Georgia Pre-K Progress Report will be shared with families. While sharing the Georgia Pre-K Progress Report with families, the teacher will provide information about your child's performance in language/literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, social/emotional development, health and physical development, and creative expression. Georgia's Pre-K Program Content Standards are included in the next section of this manual. They can be used as a discussion guide during teacher conferences about your child's progress.

Reading Aloud

Bright from the Start suggests that you read to your child as often as you can. Time spent reading to your child and encouraging your child to read will strengthen your child's school success. Together, at home and at school, you can help your child be an explorer, a discoverer, a problem solver, and an inventor. Visit the Bright from the Start website, www.decal.state.ga.us, for a listing of recommended children's books.

Pre-K Parent Post

Pre-K Parent Post is a publication for you and your child. Each issue gives you ideas about how to connect what your child is learning at school with what you are doing at home. Each publication includes information on child development and activities for children and families that support the development in each of the learning domains discussed earlier in this handbook.

Governor's Book

Your child will receive a copy of a book selected by the Governor and First Lady during the Pre-K year. Each year the Governor and First Lady choose a book to share with Pre-K children and their families, because they understand the importance of young children being exposed to reading at a young age. Children who share these experiences with their families will develop a love for reading. Children who are surrounded by language, not just at school but also at home, will naturally develop a desire to learn the words they will eventually need to read, speak, and write. Let this be one of many books available for you and your family to read together.

Summer Transition Kits

At the end of the Pre-K year, your child will receive a kit containing materials and activities. You will receive suggestions from your Pre-K provider on how to use the kit to keep your child engaged and learning through the summer. Kits include a book, suggested reading list, and activity calendar that will be fun and instructional for you and your child.

Preparing for Kindergarten

While you provided hearing, vision, and dental examination certificates as part of the Pre-K enrollment process, you will most likely need updated certificates to enter Kindergarten. A hearing, vision, and dental examination must be completed within one-year prior to enrollment in kindergarten for all Georgia's public schools, as indicated in Rule 290-5-31 Eye, Ear, and Dental Examinations of Children Entering Public Schools. Any child admitted without a valid certificate must present one within 90 calendar days of program entry.

Family Guide to Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards

Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards provide the foundation for instruction in classrooms as teachers use these goals to plan activities for your child. Below you will find a variety of activities you can use at home to extend your child's learning within these same standards. For a complete listing of the Content Standards, visit our website at www.decal.state.ga.us.

Language and Literacy

Children will develop skills in listening for a purpose

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Follow along and respond appropriately to music and movement activities such as the "Hokey Pokey" Respond verbally to books and stories Listen to books or stories on cassette tape at the listening center	Play some classic games like "Simon Says" or "Mother, May I?" Give 1-step commands at first and then progress to 2 or 3 steps. "Simon says *turn around* then *clap your hands* then *touch your toes*." Read a favorite story together and ask your child to give a signal each time he hears a particular word. For example, "Clap your hands when you hear me say the word *bear*."

Children will learn to discriminate the sounds of language

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Identify common environmental sounds or animal sounds Clap hands for syllables in names or other familiar words Substitute different beginning sounds for common words Repeat finger plays and poems such as "Humpty-Dumpty"	Go outside and identify sounds you hear. Teach your child some hand clapping chants or jump rope rhymes you remember from childhood. Play silly rhyming games and substitute sounds. Recite nursery rhymes together. Emphasize the rhythm and rhyme that you hear.

Children will develop an understanding of new vocabulary

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Create a story for a wordless book Help create a language experience chart after participating in a field trip	Talk to your child while you are engaged in household activities like cooking, gardening or fix-it chores. Explain what you are doing and tell them the names of the tools you are using. Spatula, spade or wrench will soon become part of your child's growing vocabulary. Discuss the day's events after your return from a outing or special event.

Children will develop expressive language (speaking) skills	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Ask questions for information and to solve problems Engage in turn-taking conversations Tell real or make-believe stories	Give your child lots of opportunities to engage in conversation with adults. Let them order for themselves in a restaurant or answer the telephone using phrases you have rehearsed ahead of time. Create silly stories together while you are riding in the car or while you are waiting at a restaurant.

Children will develop strategies that will assist in reading	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Use puppets or flannel board to retell a story Identify letters when using alphabet play dough cutters Discuss the characters in a story	Practice reading environmental print – street signs, store names, favorite foods. Cut out logos from the ad section of the newspaper or the grocery store circular. Paste them on paper or put them in a photo album to make a book that your child will love to read often. Discuss books with your child after reading them together. Ask "How" and "Why" questions to extend their learning. Use newspapers and magazines for letter find activities. Children love to find and circle letters in their names.

Children will develop age-appropriate writing skills	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Use scribble writing and letter-like forms Copy word cards at the writing center	Invite your child to "write when you write." Let your child write on old calendars, order forms, check registers or grocery lists. Provide a "grown-up" pen or pencil. Encourage all forms of writing, from scribbling to forming letters.

Mathematics

Children will develop an understanding of numbers

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Count in finger plays or rhymes Match blocks with animals in the block center in one-to-one correspondence Count sets of objects during group time or independent play Participate in putting together large floor puzzles.	Build one-to-one correspondence by letting your child set the table. Show him how to put one plate, one cup and one fork at each place. Develop the concept of part to whole by doing puzzles. Make your own puzzles by cutting apart magazine pictures and gluing them back together again. Encourage counting frequently in daily routines, such as counting the forks as you put them away. Create games around counting common objects, such as counting the number of doors, windows, telephones in your home Choose books from your local library that encourage counting, such as 'Splash" by Ann Jonas.

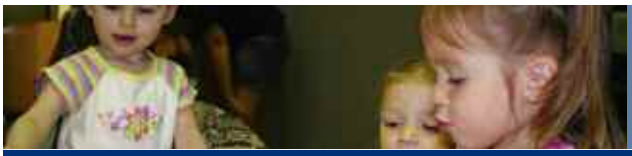
Children will sort and classify objects

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Sort the counting objects into groups according to color or size Sort through a box of classroom buttons and makes up rules for organization	Let your child help put away flatware by sorting all the knives, forks and spoons. Have your child help sort laundry before you wash by putting all the socks in a pile, all the shirts in a pile, and all the towels in a pile. Let your child play with collections of similar items, such as a box of shells or buttons. Have your child tell you how they chose to group and organize them

Children will create and duplicate simple patterns	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Snap, clap or stomp a rhythmic pattern Create a pattern using manipulatives toys, such as peg boards, or color block. Recognize patterns in the environment	Point out the way items are arranged at the grocery store. "Look, here is where all the cereal goes. And all of the frozen food is over here." Let your child help you put away groceries according to a plan – all the cans together, all the boxes together, all the refrigerated items together. Play some music with a strong beat and clap hands and knees in an alternating pattern. Or face each other and clap your hands together and then clap your own hands. Say the pattern together, "Clap, together, clap, together, clap, together." Add a third motion to increase the difficulty – clap, together, knees, clap, together, knees."

Children will develop a sense of space and understanding of basic shapes	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Find common shapes in the environment Combine the unit blocks to make new shapes Use positional words such as over, under, behind	Make a SIGN BINGO game by drawing shapes on a piece of paper – circle, square, triangle, octagon. Then watch for those shapes in signs as you ride along. When you spot a triangular YIELD sign, color in the triangle or color the octagon when you see a STOP sign. Play games with your child at the table. Ask your child to move the napkin or fork over, under or beside the plate.

Children will develop measuring skills	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Measure water in the sensory table Place objects in order according to size Use classroom objects to measure the length of a table or shelf	Cook together and allow your child to measure ingredients. Or put a set of measuring cups and spoons in your child's tub. Encourage him/her to fill and empty the cups. Ask which holds more? Pour from one cup to the other. How many small cups does it take to fill a bigger cup? Provide your child with objects such as paperclips to measure items in your household. Whose shoe is longer? Dad's or brother's?



Science

Children will use processes of science to increase understanding of the environment	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Observe collections of natural items in the science area. Identify objects by touch	Go on a nature walk and collect small items as you walk along. Try to collect several samples of each item – leaves, rocks, or twigs. When you get home, ask your child to look carefully at each rock, for example and find ways that they are different – shape, color, size. Talk about how different items feel while you are on an outing or shopping. Ask your child to find objects that might be soft? furry? or rough?

Children will learn about health science	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Identify healthy foods Sort the plastic food in the dramatic play area into groups of fruits and vegetables Discuss safety rules for the playground	Talk about the different colors of healthy foods. Make a simple chart and have your child color in a square for each food she eats during a day –a brown square for cereal or a green square for broccoli. At the end of the day, have her decide if she "ate a rainbow." Talk about ways to stay safe before going on outings to stores, restaurants or playgrounds.

Children will learn about earth science	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Draw a picture of the weather outside Read an outside thermometer and record observations in a weather journal	Look at the night sky for several weeks around the same time and locate the moon. Is it behind a tree, over the garage, or across the street? Does it change places? Does it seem higher or lower in the sky? Does it change shape? Invite your child to draw a picture showing all the different ways he has seen the moon. Talk to your child about the weather. Does it feel hot, cold, or windy? Or is it cloudy or rainy?

Children will learn about life science	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Observe the life cycle of insects or amphibians Use picture cards and match animals with their offspring Assist with planting a tree or other plant	Look under rocks or around the foundation of your house to discover the tiny crustaceans called "roly polies" or "pill bugs." Put them in a plastic jar lid with some soil and a small rock and watch them move around. Talk about what all living things have in common – they move, breathe, eat. Ask your child why he thinks they are called "pill bugs." (They curl up in a ball when they are touched.) After an hour or so, put them back where you found them. Check out books from your local library about animals, plants and other science concepts. Let your child plant seeds or small plants in your garden and watch them grow.

Children will learn about physical science	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Describe how water flows through a tube in the sensory table Describe the difference between liquid and solid objects	During bath time, provide several different objects for your child to play with in the tub – a rubber duck, a metal spoon, and a plastic bowl, for example. Talk about why some sink and some float. Do some "experiments" to see if you can change what they do. Fill the bowl with water, for example, to see if it will sink. Put an ice cube in a bowl and watch it melt. Check it every few minutes and discuss the changes your child sees. Or, make homemade Popsicles by adding your child's favorite drink to ice cube trays and placing plastic wrap over the top of the tray and inserting a Popsicle stick. Let your child predict what will happen and then observe the tray every thirty minutes to check for changes.

Social Studies

Children will develop an awareness of family, school and community	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Participate in classroom jobs and contribute to the classroom community Identify community workers in the puzzles, stories or pictures on the wall Pretend to be a store salesperson or mail carrier during dramatic play	On a trip to the grocery store, point out the different jobs people do – bag groceries, scan the food, or stack the vegetables. Emphasize the jobs that they do – not the titles. For example, "That man is cutting up the meat and putting it in packages so we can buy it." Go out and meet the person who delivers your mail (or cleans the street or helps people cross.) Help your child write a thank you note to them for the jobs they do. Assign your child regular household jobs. Talk about how everyone in the family should help make the home a comfortable place to live.

Children will develop respect for differences	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Read a story about a child with a disability or about people from other cultures. Learn some words of other languages Taste a snack from another culture	Look through magazines and cut out "people pictures." Point out differences in skin color, hair color or style. Use positive words to talk about each color – warm brown, clear blue, etc. Visit outdoor festivals or ethnic celebrations. Try out new foods and recipes. Read books together like Everybody Cooks Rice by Norah Dooley or Bread, Bread, Bread by Ann Morris.

Children will develop geographic thinking	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Draw a simple map of classroom or school Build a familiar street with blocks Identify objects that are near and far Take a walking field trip to explore the community	Hide a small treasure and give your child directions for the search using positional/directional words. "Go out the door and across the porch. Look under the tree." Point out landmarks along a familiar path – from home to school, for example. "Next the bus will turn right at the Blockbuster sign." Help your child make a simple map of her room. Draw the outline of the room on a piece of paper. Point out the windows and doors. Invite her to draw her bed and other furniture in the room. Help her with locations. "Your bed is right here, under the window." For added fun, draw the furniture on a separate piece of paper and cut out. Then she can rearrange it to make a new room.

Creative Expression

Children will explore creative expression through visual art	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Use markers, paint, crayons, modeling clay, collage materials, play dough Explain a painting or drawing to another person Show interest in illustrations in books or pieces of artwork in the environment	Give your child markers or crayons and a variety of surfaces to draw on – newspaper, waxed paper, foil, pages from an old phone book, cardboard, or Styrofoam. Make some homemade paint from food color and water or food color and liquid starch. Or add water to backyard soil for a wonderful "mud paint." Put some shaving cream on a tray and finger paint to music. Visit a museum or art gallery and talk to your child about what they see. Explain what an artist is. Let your child become an artist at home.

Children will participate in music and movement activities	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Create a movement that responds to the beat of a record Use props to respond with expression to music of various tempos Sing a song with the group during circle time.	Help your child learn about different kinds of music. Find the jazz station on the radio and listen together for a while. Talk about the sounds of the instruments and how the music makes you feel. Then try a different station with a different style of music. Roll a section of newspaper tightly and tape it together in several places to form a stick. Cut it in half to make a pair. Turn on some lively music and encourage your child to play his drumsticks on a variety of surfaces around the house – the kitchen table, the back of the sofa, his own knees. What makes the best drum? Sing songs together. Sing in the car, at home or outside. Recall some from your own childhood.

Children will use drama	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Use props to retell familiar stories Participate in different forms of dramatic play Use symbolic materials to represent real objects	Fill a cardboard box with old scarves, hats, purses and other dress up props. Invite your child to dress up and act out a favorite slogan, song or jingle. Practice making faces together in front of a mirror. Who can make the scariest face? Who can look the most surprised? Use your hand or another object to pretend it is a phone. Carry on a pretend phone conversation with your child.

Social and Emotional

Children will develop confidence and positive self-awareness

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Describe self using several basic characteristics Make choices during independent play Become aware of the uniqueness of each individual	Make an "I Can" can with your child. Cover a clean can with paper and decorate it. Each week, write a new skill on a strip of paper ("I can hop on one foot," " I can feed the dog," "I can sing a new song") and place it in the can. Look through photos with your child often. Point out how she has grown and changed over time.

Children will develop develop curiosity, initiative, self-direction and persistence

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Become involved with classroom materials without teacher prompting Select additional materials to complete a project Complete a challenging puzzle	Make plans for independent "time alone" play. Talk with your child afterwards and encourage him to tell you about what he did. Give your child some choices throughout the day. "Should we get out the LEGOS or the play dough now?" "Would you like noodle soup or tomato soup for lunch?"

Children will increase the capacity for self-control

In the classroom, your child may…	Ideas to support your child at home
Provide ideas to make the classroom run smoothly Follow simple rules Understand and follow the daily schedule Use words to express frustration	Remind your child that every place has its own rules. Practice being quiet in the library, and waiting your turn at the bank or the ice cream store. Take turns speaking or listening. During dinner let each person take a turn "in the spotlight" to share something about their day. Listen while your child speaks.

Children will develop interpersonal and social skills	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Greet the teacher or other adults when arriving at school Give assistance to peers who are trying to solve a problem such as zipping coats or tying shoes Cooperate with other children during dramatic play or in building block structures	When reading with your child, talk about how the book characters feel. Point out their facial expressions, their actions and their words. Say "show me how you look when you're disappointed," or "how do people look if they're excited?"

Physical Development

Children will participate in gross-motor activities	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Peddle and steer a tricycle Walk on a balance beam Climb a slide ladder Walk, gallop, jump and run in rhythm to simple tunes and music patterns	Show your child how to roll socks together to make a ball and practice tossing them into an empty laundry basket. Make a bean bag by filling a small zip-lock bag with beans or rice and taping securely closed. Encourage your child to balance the bean bag on different parts of her body. Can she walk with it on her shoulder? Jump with it on her head? Play the mirror game. Face your child and ask him to copy your movements – put hand on head, touch nose, etc. Then switch places and you copy his movements.

Children will participate in fine-motor activities	
In the classroom, your child may…	**Ideas to support your child at home**
Tear paper or tape Use a paper punch Use writing tools Use scissors and art materials String beads or put pegs into boards Work with play dough	The kitchen is a great place to develop the fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination needed for handwriting. Give your child lots of opportunities to use tongs, tweezers, spatulas, hand juicers, and clothespins. Learn to use chopsticks together if you don't already know how. Provide writing utensils for your child daily. Give them reasons to write. Can you help me write this recipe or make a list for the store? Let your child cut magazines or newspapers before you recycle. String O-shaped cereal on lengths of yarn and hang over an outside bush or tree limb for the birds and squirrels to enjoy. Make snacks with pretzel sticks and cheese cubes. Spear the cheese with the pretzel and enjoy. Make homemade play dough with your child: ½ cup salt, one cup flour, one tablespoon cream of tarter, one tablespoon oil, one cup water, and food color. Combine ingredients in saucepan. Heat gently, stirring all the time. When dough has good consistency, take it off the heat and allow to cool.

Parent Tips

Reading aloud to your child is the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading. Choosing many different types of books will expose your child to new concepts, vocabulary and interests. Listed below are some recommended books that represent various types of literature. Visit your local library for other books to enjoy with your child. A complete listing of recommended books for children can be found on the department website: www.decal.state.ga.us.

Alphabet Books

Alphabet books introduce your child to the letters and connect the beginning letter sound with pictures.

- *Dr. Seuss' ABC*, Dr. Seuss
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, Bill Martin, Jr., and John Archambault
- *Eating the Alphabet*, Lois Ehlert

Counting Books

These books emphasize counting and connect the numerals with a corresponding number of items.

- *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*, Eileen Christelow
- *Anno's Counting Book*, Mitsumasa Anno

Concept Books and Informational Books

These books teach concepts that children will review in school such as colors, shapes, opposites, or sizes and provide information to help in understanding the world.

- *Red, Blue, Yellow Shoe*, Tana Hoban
- *Boats*, Anne Rockwell

Poetry/Rhymes

These books contain rhymes and repeated verse. Learning to hear rhymes is an essential step in developing the skills needed for reading.

- *Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young*, Jack Prelutsky
- *Hickory Dickory Dock and Other Nursery Rhymes*, Carl Jones
- *Over in the Meadow*, Ezra Jack Keats

Predictable/Repetitive Books

In these books, a word or phrase is repeated throughout the book forming a pattern. Children quickly recognize the patterns and are able to read along.

- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Bill Martin, Jr.
- *Are You My Mother?* P. D. Eastman

Picture Books and Wordless Books

Picture books have easy to understand stories and can include contemporary stories and traditional literature.

Wordless books encourage language development as children create their own stories using the pictures.

- *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, Laura Numeroff
- *The Snowy Day*, Ezra Jack Keats
- *The Mitten*, Jan Brett
- *Good Dog*, Carl A. Day
- *School*, E. McCaully

Additional Information

Additional information about Georgia's Pre-K Program is available through your Pre-K provider. Information is also available through the world-wide web at the following address: www.decal.state.ga.us.

In addition to specific programmatic information, such as the Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines and site listings, you will find a number of Best Practices lessons you may use to help your child learn at home what they are learning in Pre-K.

THE ABC'S OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

A lways consider the child's feelings – avoid embarrassing a child.
B e alert and observant. This is perhaps the most effective way to prevent problems before they occur.
C hoose your words carefully when problems do arise.
D iscipline yourself. In other words, control your temper.
E xcessive flattery as a technique to motivate or control is ineffective.
F irmness and fairness should abide.
G ood humor goes a long way.
H andle problems without threatening.
I gnore those behaviors that are just ploys to get attention.
J oin your child by the hand to supervise them as you walk or cross the street.
K eep this simple idea in mind – children are not problems, but rather may have problems.
L ead and train children in everyday activities.
M ake positive statements as much as possible.
N ever underestimate the power of your appearance and behavior.
O ptions are important to children.
P roximity – stay close as an effective preventative approach.
Q uiet activities can be just as much fun as noisy ones.
R outines and rules should be consistent and clear.
S how children you are up for the challenge of parenting.
T ry to predict what would confuse or distract children.
U se natural consequences to unacceptable behaviors.
V alue your child and spend as much one-on-one time as possible together.
W atch the amount of attention you give to individual children.
X -pect to have fun.
Y elling is not effective with children.
Z oom in and handle problems quickly.

www.terrifictransitions.org

The Year Before Kindergarten

So, your child starts kindergarten next year…

In the year before kindergarten you should be laying a foundation for your child's transition to kindergarten. You can begin the process by:

- Identifying the school that your child will be assigned to next year, or in some cases, choosing which school your child will attend.
- Call your county school board office information line. This number can usually be located in the government pages of the phone book.
- In some states, parents may enroll their child in the school of their choice or a magnet school. Find out if this is an available option for you.
- Visiting the school or schools that your child might attend. Bring your child with you on those visits.
- Begin connecting with other families. Find parents with children who will enter kindergarten at the same school next year. This is a good time for you to get to know the other adults. You can support each other in an emergency situation, take turns waiting at the bus stop, or car-pool.

Obtaining the following information from the school:

- A list of entry requirements (immunizations, documentation, child's age, physical, etc.)
- An enrollment form
- School calendar and times of operation
- Information about after-school programs (if available)
- Transportation information (pick-up location, hours, telephone number of the county transportation office, rules)
- Dates for kindergarten registration and/or screening
- What meal options are provided, requirements for free and reduced lunches, and the cost of meals
- A description of the kindergarten program.

www.terrifictransitions.org

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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