

Unit 1

Learn Every Day about School

Unit Overview: The children will become familiar with school and what it means to go to school. They will develop social skills by learning about cooperation and trust. They will learn about rules and understand why rules are important in society. In addition, children will meet the people who work at a school. As the children participate in the daily schedule and routine, they will feel more comfortable about being at school.

Vocabulary

- art
- blocks
- bullying
- cafeteria
- germs
- journey
- learning center
- media center
- routine
- water table
- whiteboard



Objectives for This Unit

Domains

The child will

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Arts & Creativity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use more than one medium to create artwork; ○ Participate in creative movement and music activities. |
| Cognitive Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Solve a simple problem; ○ Engage in symbolic play with other children. |
| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learn vocabulary associated with going to school; ○ Follow two-step directions. |
| Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognize the first letter in her name; ○ Learn the rudiments of connecting words and ideas to form sentences. |
| Mathematics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begin to identify and recognize patterns. |
| Personal Health & Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begin to learn about basic hygiene and ways to stay healthy in a school setting; ○ Perform simple self-help skills. |
| Science Constructs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make predictions. |
| Social & Emotional Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognize that people differ and that we respect those differences; ○ Learn that words can hurt and that unkind words and actions (bullying) are not tolerated at school. |
| Social Studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be introduced to music from other cultures; ○ Understand that music is often very different across cultures. |

DLL Tip

Create a picture schedule using photos of your classroom activities, and then use the same pictures to make a book for family members of dual language learners so they can help their children understand what to expect in a school where a new language will be spoken. Ask for families' help so you can add the schedule words in the home languages. Then practice talking about the school day with each dual language learner.



Resources for the Teacher

Books

School Days: 28 Songs and Over 300 Activities for Young Children by Pam Schiller

The Anti-Bullying and Teasing Book for Preschool Classrooms by Barbara Sprung, Merle Froschl, and Dr. Blythe Hinitz

The GIANT Encyclopedia of Preschool Activities for Four-Year-Olds edited by Kathy Charner and Maureen Murphy

Books to Read to Children

Curious George Takes a Job by H. A. Rey

Curious George's First Day of School by Margaret Rey and H. A. Rey

If You Take a Mouse to School by Laura Numeroff

Making Choices and Making Friends by Pamela Esperland and Elizabeth Verdick

Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten by Joseph Slate

The Best Teacher Ever by Mercer Mayer

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Music

"Rules," *Learn Every Day* music CD by Sharon MacDonald

Websites

Learn about healthy eating:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov>



Special Needs Adaptations

Special Need

Adaptation

Visual
Impairments

- Give the child some time to examine the items you have selected for each center. If the child has residual vision, make sure he can see each item and is seated where glare from the window or other lighting will not affect his vision.

Hearing
Impairments

- To help build vocabulary, you may want to talk about a particular item related to a lesson. If so, hold the item so that the child understands that it is the subject of your discussion. If necessary, use sign language to help the child understand the name for each item.

Cognitive Delays

- As you talk about a new activity, use picture and object cues whenever possible. For example, if you ask, “How did you get to school today?” show the child pictures of a car and a bus. After you have talked about how the child got to school, ask her to tell you or show you by pointing to the correct picture. Review often what the child has learned to reinforce what you have talked about.

Motor Delays

- When asking the questions, provide pictures for a child with severe motor delays. If he can’t speak, he may be able to point or turn his head toward the picture he needs.

Speech/
Language Delays

- Reinforce vocabulary by talking with the child about how items are used in everyday routines. If the child is unfamiliar with an item, demonstrate its use. Children should learn not only the names of items that they see at school, but also how those items might be used every day.

Emotional/
Behavior Issues

- When you sing a new song, especially one that uses a familiar tune, explain that sometimes we sing a familiar song and put different words with it. Some children, especially those with autism, become upset when familiar things are changed or arranged differently. Before singing new lyrics to a familiar tune, such as “Welcome Class” (Lesson 1), explain, “Today, we are going to be using a tune we know, and we will add new words to it.”

Lesson 1

My Daily Routine

Welcome Class

Things to Prepare

- Make a “Welcome Class” Poster
- Create a daily schedule picture cards
- Cut out colored squares for transition
- Create a classroom jobs chart
- Print children’s names on cards
- Cut green paper into large leaves
- Mark block outlines on storage shelves

Large Group

Begin the day by welcoming all the children to the classroom. Sing “Welcome Class” to the tune of “Three Blind Mice.”

Materials Needed

- ▶ Assorted collage materials
- ▶ Camera
- ▶ Feely box/bag
- ▶ Foam letters
- ▶ Heart stickers
- ▶ Index cards
- ▶ Jobs chart
- ▶ Photos of children in class activities

Parent Request

- ▶ Baby photos of children for Lesson 3
- ▶ Family photos
- ▶ Parent handprints

Featured Book(s)

- ▶ *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

Send Home

- ▶ Copy of daily schedule for parents

Welcome Class

by Clarissa Willis

*Welcome class.
Welcome class.
I’m glad you’re here.
I’m glad you’re here.
We’ll make new friends, and then we’ll play
And help each other along the way.
We’re going to learn new things today.
I’m glad you’re here.
I’m glad you’re here.*



Print the words on a piece of poster board or on a whiteboard, and read them to the children. Explain that when we say *welcome*, we mean that we are happy someone is here. Explain to the children that you want them to feel safe and happy when they are at school.

Sing the welcome song again, and invite the children to sing along.

Talk about daily routines. If possible, create picture cards that show the daily schedule. Put them in order, and talk about each thing that happens during the day. Introduce the terms *first*, *second*, *next*, and so on.

Transition Tip

Explain that everyone will transition to center time by colors. Depending on how many groups you have (for example, four groups of four or five groups of four), place

enough squares of each color in a jar. Invite children to pull out a color. Color-code each center so that children can transition to centers based on the colored square they pull out. Explain that, in the future, they will pick the center they go to first, but for today you want to help them.

Small Group

To ease separation anxiety, read a book about being away from family, such as *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn. Discuss the story with the children; then, put a heart sticker on each child's hand. Tell them the sticker is to remind them of how much their family loves them. When the children feel lonely or scared, remind them to look at their stickers and put them up to their cheeks. Ask family members to send in a tracing of their handprints or a family photo for the children to post in their cubbies.



Children crave order and routine. Discuss the jobs that need to be done around the classroom, and create a jobs chart. You can create a permanent display, such as an apple tree or a simple line chart; you can also change the chart to match the current learning theme. Print the children's names on small cards, and post each name under or next to the corresponding job on the jobs chart. Young children should keep a job for the entire week; older children can change jobs every day. The jobs might include line leader, door holder, table setter, book monitor, and calendar helper. Job sharing is a great way to involve children with special needs.



Center Time

Art Center

Invite the children to trace around their own hands and draw a heart in the center. Remind the children about the raccoon in the story *The Kissing Hand* from small group time. Encourage the children to use available materials to decorate and enhance their heart-in-hand drawings.

Have the children help create a colorful bulletin board by posting either photos of themselves that were brought from home or photos taken with a digital camera. Invite the children to print their names on index cards to put under their pictures; remember that not all children will be able to write their names, so you may need to help. At this point, invented spelling is OK—the important thing is for the children to participate.

Block Center

Encourage the children to build a large tree using blocks and green paper cut in the shape of large leaves. Remind the children of the raccoon who went to school in a tree in the story *The Kissing Hand*. Provide small animal toys, and encourage the children to act out parts of the story.

Point out the shelf labels showing where the blocks are stored. At clean-up time, help the children match the blocks to their outlines on the shelves. Discuss the different types of blocks and the many uses they have in play and construction.



Discovery Science Center

Place an item from each center in a basket or bag. Ask the children to reach inside and try to tell what one of the items is by touch alone. When the children have identified all of the items, ask them to help you put them away. Discuss how putting toys away is an important part of the daily routine. Add some humor to this activity by pretending you don't know where things go. Put a block in the home living center refrigerator or put a basket of vegetables in the sand and water center. When the children laugh and point out your errors, ask them to direct you to the proper places for the toys. It is helpful to refer to the toys as "our toys" so that children understand that they have responsibility for taking care of things in the classroom.

Math Center

Provide photos of children involved in activities similar to the ones the children experience each day at school: arriving at school, morning snack, large group, small groups, center time, lunch, outdoor play, closing circle, and getting ready to go home. Invite the children to sort the photos according to how they experience the day. Ask the children: "What comes first? What is the first thing you do each day? What happens after large group? What happens before lunch?" Encourage the children to work, either individually or in pairs, to sequence the photos. This activity may be modified if necessary by using fewer photos.

Print four copies of each child's individual photo (can either be brought from home or taken at school). Mount the photos on card stock or other stiff paper for durability; if you do not have card stock, simply use them the way they are. Encourage the children to play a typical game of Go Fish using the photos.

Sand and Water Center

Place foam letters in shallow water. Encourage the children to explore and identify the letters. Challenge them to float the letters side by side to spell their names, as well as their classmates' names.

Remind children to wash their hands before and after playing in the water table. Ask them if they know why it is important to wash their hands. Remind them that hand washing prevents them from spreading germs to their friends. Explain that germs are tiny organisms that spread illness; by washing their hands, they are washing those germs down the drain.



Home Stretch

Send home a copy of the daily routine, and ask the children to talk about it with their families.

Closing Circle

Review the daily schedule. Ask the children what happens first in the day, what happens before lunch, after lunch, and at the end of the day.

Lesson 2

My Teacher and Others Who Help Me at School

Things to Prepare

- Print out before and after classroom pictures
- Make a three-column rules chart
- Add paper and pencils to centers
- Add books about school to classroom
- Create a word wall with children's names at children's eye level
- Provide unlabeled photos of children

Materials Needed

- ▶ Before and after classroom pictures
- ▶ Collage materials (sand, small pebbles, sequins)
- ▶ Colored squares and jar
- ▶ Fabric scraps
- ▶ Photos of children
- ▶ Yarn

Featured Book(s)

- ▶ *The Best Teacher Ever* by Mercer Mayer
- ▶ *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate

Featured Song(s)

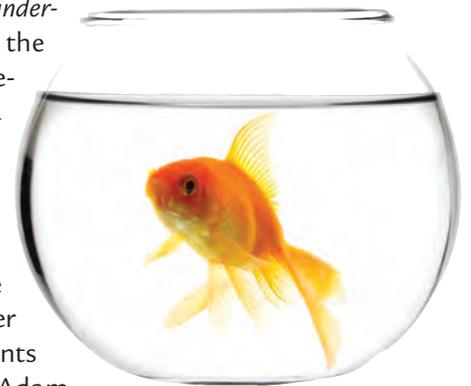
- ▶ *Learn Every Day* music CD, "Rules," Track 1

Send Home

- ▶ Note about child's favorite musical selection

Large Group

Read a book about starting school, such as *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate, to the children. Discuss the ways Miss Bindergarten prepares for a new year, such as putting together a bouquet of fall leaves and bringing in a goldfish, rolled-up posters, and shoeboxes full of surprises. If possible, show pictures to the children of the way your classroom looked before you prepared it for the new school year. Have students describe the differences between the before photos and the after photos. Point out how Miss Bindergarten's students are getting ready for school, too. For example: "Adam Krupp wakes up. Brenda Heath brushes her teeth. Christopher Beaker finds his sneaker." Discuss with the children how they prepared for the first day of school. Perhaps they went shopping for new clothes and school supplies. Talk about the routines they follow in the morning to get ready for school: get up, get dressed, eat breakfast, brush their teeth, walk to the bus stop, and so on.



Transition Tip

To help children understand how to pick a center, repeat the same transition activity as the day before, where each child draws a colored square from a jar and goes first to the center assigned to that color.

Small Group

Introduce the song “Rules” (Track 1) from *Learn Every Day* music CD. First, read the words to the children, then play the song. Make a chart with three columns and label them “Home,” “School,” and “Community.” Ask the children to help you name the rules in the song that fit each category. Write their responses in the appropriate columns.

Rules

by Sharon MacDonald



*It's so hard to remember the rules,
The ones we have in homes and schools.
Keep our hands to ourselves.
Put the blocks back on the shelves.
It takes a long time to learn the rules.
It's so hard to remember the rules,
The ones we have in homes and schools.
Look for cars when crossing the street.
Know which place is your seat.
It takes a long time to learn the rules.
Sometimes it gets so very confusing
To remember all the rules we're using.
Sometimes I wish that I could see
The best way for me to be.*

*It's so hard to remember the rules,
The ones we have in homes and schools.
Say, "Please," "Thank you," and "Hello"
To all the people that you know.
It takes a long time to learn the rules.
It's so hard to remember the rules,
The ones we have in homes and schools.
Take turns when you play with toys.
Keep things quiet—keep down the noise.
It takes a long time to learn the rules.
Sometimes it gets so very confusing
To remember all the rules we're using.
Sometimes I wish that I could see
The best way for me to be.*

Center Time

Art Center

Set out a variety of art materials, such as paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, yarn and fabric scraps, and glue. Invite the children to draw pictures of their teachers, encouraging them to decorate the pictures using the supplied materials.

Provide stiff paper and tactile materials, such as colored sand, small seashells, large sequins, or small pebbles. Help the children print your (the teacher's) name in glue on the stiff paper and use the tactile materials to decorate it. Help the children identify the letters in the name and their associated sounds.



Dramatic Play Center

Add school books, pencils, backpacks, and other school-related items to the center. Place a small table and chair in the area along with writing implements, such as a pad of paper and pens. Encourage the children to “play school” even though they are at school.

Add dress-up clothes, and encourage the children to dress up to act out the roles of teacher and students. Ask the children whether the way they are acting is really how a teacher acts. Ask them how they would run the classroom if they really were teachers.

Literacy Center

Create a word wall located at children’s eye level, with the children’s names. Encourage the children to visit the area and attempt to read and print the names there. Provide unlabeled photos of the children. Challenge the children to match the photos to the names on the word wall.

Talk about the people who help at school, such as the principal, cafeteria workers, teacher’s assistant, bus driver, media-center director, music teacher, coach, and other support staff. Cut out some pictures of people who help at school, and invite each child to select a picture and talk about what that person does to help.



Music Center

Explain that rules are an important part of going to school. Play the song “Rules” (Track 1) from the *Learn Every Day* music CD. Invite the children to sing along. Encourage them to dance while the song plays.

Outdoor Activities Center

Play a game of Follow the Teacher as you would play Follow the Leader. Lead the children in an adventurous path over, under, and through the playground equipment. As you do, emphasize playground safety and rules: “Help each other as we go up, up, up, this ladder. Remember that we always go down the slide. Stand far away from the tire swing when other children are swinging.”

Home Stretch

Encourage the children to tell their families about the people who help them at school.

Closing Circle

Read a book about teachers, such as *The Best Teacher Ever* by Mercer Mayer. Remind the children that you are always there to teach them, help them, and play with them.

Lesson 3

My Friends at School

Things to Prepare

- Cut out circles with beginning letters of children's names
- Make copies of the children's baby photos
- Create name templates

Large Group

Sing this song to help the children develop social skills and color recognition.

Do You Know My Friend?



(Tune: "Do You Know the Muffin Man?")

*Do you know my friend (LaKeisha)
My friend (LaKeisha), my friend (LaKeisha)?
Do you know my friend (LaKeisha)?
She's wearing a yellow shirt today!*



While singing this song, encourage the children to look at and identify the children named and the color of the clothing item mentioned. Invite the children to turn to the person sitting beside them and tell them something about themselves. Explain that one way to make friends is to take time to listen to others.

Materials Needed

- ▶ Copies of baby photos from parents
- ▶ Current photos of children
- ▶ Name templates
- ▶ Paper circles with beginning letters
- ▶ Rhythm instruments

Parent Request

- ▶ Baby photos of children
- ▶ Send in a favorite musical selection

Featured Book(s)

- ▶ *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate

Transition Tip

Allow children to choose centers freely. Encourage them to move to centers in pairs or small groups of friends. Make sure everyone is included.

Small Group

A class is a group of children who work and learn together. Explain that as a class, they will need to work together to make things happen. Make a list of some ways they can work together in the classroom and on the playground. Then, make a list of what they do at home to work and learn together with their families. Compare the two lists. What things are similar? What are different?

Prior to this activity, solicit family members to send in baby photos of the children. Make copies so the originals can be returned. Invite the children to share their baby photos with the group. Ask them to describe their pictures, or ask them questions to encourage language, such as, "What were you wearing in this picture?" or "Who

else is in the picture with you?” Explain to the children that they will play some games using their baby pictures. Place current photos of the children faceup on the table. Place their baby photos in a pile facedown. Ask one child at a time to choose a baby picture and match it with the current photo on the table. Once the children are familiar with the pairs of photos, invite them to play a memory game using all the photos.

Center Time

Art Center



Provide white bulletin-board or butcher paper and scissors. Have the children work together to trace around each other’s bodies on the bulletin-board or butcher paper. Remind the children of how a class works together to make things happen. Invite the children to cut out their shapes and decorate them with crayons, markers, and colored pencils. Tell the children that they will use their outlines in the literacy center activity.

Encourage children to draw a picture of one of their friends. Extend the learning by asking them to draw a picture of something they enjoy doing with that friend. Label the pictures.

Fine Motor Center

Provide the children with a variety of items, such as counters, paper clips, buttons, pebbles, and so on. Let them use the items to spell out their names. Allow them to spell freely, or provide them with a template. Encourage them to practice spelling their names using the template. The children can also trace the letters in their names with glue and add objects to create a tactile nameplate.



Literacy Center

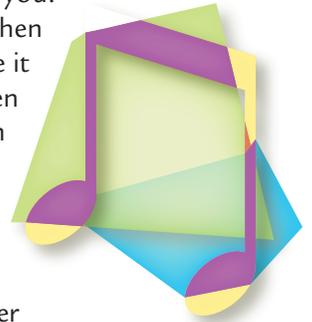
Remind the children of the story *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten*. Read the story again, concentrating on the rhyming words. Point out to the children that each character’s name rhymes with something he is doing, such as “Adam Krupp wakes up.” Ask the children to think of other words that rhyme with the character’s name. For example, *cup* and *pup* rhyme with *Krupp*. Help the children create rhymes using their names, making up nonsense words if necessary. Create a class book of rhyming names.

Music Center

Send a note home asking families to submit a favorite musical selection that reflects their culture or a selection that their child enjoys at home. Remind families that the music must be appropriate for the classroom. Start by sharing a musical selection that reflects your own culture or is special to you.

Explain why you like the music; share what you think of when you hear it. Tell children the title or type of the music, where it is from, and the names of the musicians. Ask the children whether the music reminds them of anything. Invite children to clap or dance to the music.

Next, begin to share the music the children brought in. Provide rhythm instruments to play along. What do they notice about the music? Is it fast or slow? Have they ever heard this type of music before? Does it remind them of other music they have heard in the classroom or at home? Invite children or other family members to teach some dances. Children can also create their own dances to accompany the music.



Outdoor Activities Center

Begin by inviting the children to stand in a circle. Explain that they are going to play a movement game to help them learn each other's names. Ask what needs to be done in order for everyone to be safe and have fun during the game. Suggest that everyone use kind and friendly voices, wait for their turn, listen carefully, and move safely. Practice the chant a few times so children are comfortable with the format.

With children standing in a circle, ask for a volunteer to start. Begin by chanting, "Outstanding Olivia makes a move. What move did Outstanding Olivia make?" The person whose name is called then makes a movement. The other children will copy that movement and say, "Hurrah!" to Olivia. Take turns around the circle until each person has had a turn. Remember to use an alliterative adjective for each child: Outstanding Olivia, Joyous Joey, Kind Kendra, and so on.

Sing the final sentence, "Hurrah for our class!" all together with your arms raised in the air. Remember that the children will participate at their own levels. Some will jump and make large movements, while others may simply wave. The purpose of this activity is for children to have fun, build a sense of trust in the group, and learn each other's names. Everybody should feel accepted and respected.

Closing Circle

Around a designated area, scatter circles of colorful construction paper on which you have printed the first letter of each child's name. Play some music while children mingle, looking at all the letters. When the music stops, invite each child to stand next to the closest letter. Then, invite each child to say the letter's name and the sound it makes. Remind children that they can ask for help if necessary.

Home Stretch

Encourage children to share the song they have learned about rules and to talk to family members about how some rules are different at home than at school. Invite the children to tell their families about new friends they have made at school.

Lesson 4

My Choices

Things to Prepare

- “School Is Great” poem chart
- Chart to post children’s class rules
- Ask local dentist for donations (toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, etc.)
- Pictures of people doing a variety of jobs

Large Group

Introduce the poem “School Is Great” written by Kimberly P. Johnson. Read the poem to the children, and then talk about each verse. Explain that this poem is about making good choices.

“School Is Great”

by Kimberly P. Johnson

*School is the kind of place
where I can always learn
I try to watch and listen
And then I wait my turn!
When my teacher finally tells us
that the time has come to share
My hand pops up so quickly
Reaching for the air
“Teacher, teacher, over here
please do call on me
School is the kind of place
That I really want to be!”
She smiles and then
she points my way
To hear just what
I have to say!
She nods her head and
Claps out loud. . .
I think I make
My teacher proud!*



Materials Needed

- ▶ Cash register
- ▶ Donated materials from dentist
- ▶ Magazines with pictures of food
- ▶ Paper, fabric, and plastic shopping bags
- ▶ Pictures of people doing a variety of jobs

Featured Book(s)

- ▶ *Curious George Takes a Job* by H. A. Rey
- ▶ *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff
- ▶ *Making Choices and Making Friends* by Pamela Espeland and Elizabeth Verdick

Featured Song(s)

- ▶ Favorite songs from home

Tell the children that one way to make sure they make good choices is to come up with some rules for behavior in the room. Remind the children of the class discussion about rules from Lesson 2. Ask them to share what they know about rules. Ask the

children to think of some rules for the classroom that will remind them to make good decisions. If the children's statements begin with *No*, help them think of a positive way to rephrase them, such as instead of "No hitting," say, "Use gentle hands"; instead of "No running," use "Walk inside, please," and so on. Make a list of the new rules on chart paper. Review each rule again, and have a short discussion about how the children can follow them.

Transition Tip

Ask the children to choose a center. Remind them that if a center is full, they should select another one. Explain that any choice of centers is a good choice because there is so much to learn as they play.

Small Group

Present the children with several scenarios. Ask them to decide what would be the best choice in each one, and discuss with them the reasons for the choice.

A group of kids you think are really cool are picking on another kid and calling him mean names. They want you to join them, and they threaten to call you mean names if you do not. You do not want to be left out, but you think picking on the other kid is unfair. What do you do?

You are walking home from school with your mom, and you're really hungry because you forgot to bring your lunch that day. You pass by a fruit stand, and the fruit looks so good you can almost taste it. "They will never miss just one apple," you think to yourself. And no one is looking. What do you do?

A classmate you do not know very well looks sad and is playing alone in the block center. You have not chosen a place to play yet. What do you do?

Give the children opportunities to make up their own situations, and continue the role playing.



Teach children kind words and kind actions to use when talking and playing with others. Help them understand that teasing and making fun of someone are not ways to be kind.

Center Time

Art Center

Explain to the children that another way to make good choices is to work together on group projects. Invite each group of children that visits the center to work together to create a mural to decorate the classroom. Encourage the children to decide what the mural will show, what materials will be used to create it, and how it will look. Offer a lot of support and guidance. Emphasize that everyone must work together. When the murals are done, have a group discussion about the process. Ask if there were any problems in creating the murals; if so, how were they solved?

Invite the children to use their pictures from the discovery science center activity to make a collage of foods they consider to be good for you. Remind the children that foods full of sugar, like cakes and candy, are usually not good for you. Help the children think of good foods that fulfill that sweet tooth without adding any more processed sugar to their diets—such as apples, pears, plums, and bananas.

Discovery Science Center



Ask children if they know how the choices they make will affect their health. One of those choices is how they take care of their teeth. Ask what things are good for teeth and what things are bad. Ask the children what they think will happen to their teeth if they do not brush them. Finally, ask the children how they can keep their teeth in good shape. If possible, ask a local dentist or orthodontist to donate different types of toothbrushes, toothpastes, dental floss, x-rays, and teeth molds. Allow the children to explore the materials freely, but remind them to keep everything out of their mouths. Talk about how the items, such as the toothbrush and floss, keep teeth clean and help the dentist take care of teeth.

Provide children with food magazines to browse. Ask them to point out pictures of foods that appeal to them. Talk about whether the foods would be good for them. Explain that good foods are foods that provide important nutritional ingredients without a lot of salt, sugars, and fats. Invite the children to cut out photos of the foods they think are good for them and to make a “Good Foods” collage in the art center.

Dramatic Play Center

Provide plastic toy food and empty, clean grocery-store items that reflect good and poor food choices. For example, good choices would include fresh fruits and vegetables; whole-grain cereals and breads; water; and proteins that are low in fat such as turkey, chicken, and pork. Poor choices would be reflected by bags of potato chips, french fries, candy, and highly processed meats like lunch meats and hot dogs. Have the children sort the good food choices from the poor food choices. Talk about each one: How does that food taste? How is it prepared? Is it good for you? Why or why not? Create a food store in one corner of the home living center. Provide small baskets full of “natural” (plastic) foods: carrots, green beans, potatoes, lettuce, peas, oranges, watermelons, and bananas. Set up a cash register and provide the children with fabric shopping bags. As you facilitate play in this area, use questions children might hear in a store such as, “Did you find everything you needed today?” or “How would you like to pay for that?”



Literacy Center

Even though they are very young right now, children are growing every day. Explain that growing up and learning many things is important because one day the children will get to decide what they want to do for a living. Read a book about being

grown-up such as *Curious George Takes a Job* by H. A. Rey. After reading the story, show the children pictures of people doing a variety of jobs. Ask the children what they want to be when they grow up. Talk about how much education is required for the jobs. Explain that most of the jobs require that you finish high school, but some jobs require more education. For this education, you might have to go to college or a trade school. Because of this, it is very important for you to pay attention in school so you can learn as much as possible. Invite the children to draw pictures of what they want to be when they grow up.

Alternative: Use any two puppets to demonstrate good and poor choices. Use them to have conversations about a typical classroom scenario, such as playing well together. Use one puppet to express the acceptable way of inviting others to play (asking them, playing alongside for a while, getting a teacher involved), and use one puppet to demonstrate the poor choice of behavior (yelling for attention, grabbing someone and pulling them). Stop and ask the children what they think about the puppets' behavior. Which is the better way to behave? Encourage the children to offer advice to the puppet that made poor choices, while the puppet listens intently and then promises to give the suggestion a try. Reenact the scenario with both puppets making good choices.

Outdoor Activities Center

Sometimes children rely on adults to solve problems. But when they are asked to figure things out (with your support), they do amazingly well! For example, if a group of children comes to show you that a plastic bat is broken, ask them to think of how they could fix it. What could they use to fix it? How should they do it? The same technique can be used if the problem is more interpersonal. Sometimes it can get pretty confusing on the playground, and children may complain, "No one is listening to the rules!" Ask the children to identify the problem and what they want, and then ask them to think of reminders to help everyone remember the rules of the playground. When two children are fighting over a toy, hold it for them and give them a moment to calm down. Then, invite each child to tell her version of the story while the other listens. Encourage children to suggest solutions that will satisfy them both. Perhaps there is a similar toy inside that can be brought out, or a timer can be used to define each child's turn.



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Closing Circle

Read *Making Choices and Making Friends* by Pamela Espeland and Elizabeth Verdick. Remind the children of the good choices they have made in the course of the day. As an alternative, read *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff. Ask the children to tell you why a mouse at school might not be a good choice.

Home Stretch

Ask families to give the children chances to make good choices at home. For instance, children can decide if they want peas or green beans for dinner; they can also decide if they want to play soccer or catch in the backyard with the family. Make sure families understand the importance of offering a choice between two good options.

Lesson 5

My School

Things to Prepare

- Make or purchase gingerbread boy cookies
- Create bingo cards of items found in and around the school
- Tape small handheld pencil sharpener together so children cannot open it
- Identify examples of patterns in the classroom
- Write each child's name on a paper bag

Large Group

Prior to large group time, purchase or make gingerbread boy cookies. Hide clues around the school that will lead the children on a hunt for the Gingerbread Boy. This will allow the children to get a tour of the building while they are engaged in a fun activity. Hide clues in the cafeteria, the library, the office, and so on. Each clue should lead to the next place in the school, with the last clue leading back to the classroom.

Begin large group by telling the story of the Gingerbread Boy. You can read any of the many books about the Gingerbread Boy if you are not familiar enough with the story to tell it by heart. After you read the story with the children, tell them that you are sure you saw a gingerbread boy running around the school that morning. Pull the first clue from where you have hidden it nearby, and read it to the children. Take them on a tour of the building as you follow the hidden clues; solicit other staff members to introduce themselves as you enter each area. End the game by returning to the classroom, where the children will find a gingerbread-boy cookie and milk waiting for them, along with a note from the Gingerbread Boy welcoming them to the school (all prepared ahead of time by you, of course).



Alternative: Take a tour of the school with the children. Talk about each place you visit. To help children get to know the people who work at the school, invite three or four staff members into the classroom to talk to the children about what they do at school.

Transition Tip

Invite children to walk with a friend to the center of their choice. Remind them that each center has only a certain number of spaces available, and when that center is full, they must select another one.

Materials Needed

- ▶ Camera
- ▶ Catalogs from school-supply companies
- ▶ Electric pencil sharpener
- ▶ Gingerbread boy cookies
- ▶ Paper bags
- ▶ Paper plates
- ▶ School-item bingo cards
- ▶ Small handheld pencil sharpener
- ▶ Stickers

Featured Book(s)

- ▶ *Curious George's First Day of School* by Margret and H. A. Rey
- ▶ *The Gingerbread Boy* (any version)

Featured Song(s)

- ▶ Favorite songs from home

Small Group

Ask the children to remember details about their journey around the school that morning. Make a list of the things they can remember. Prompt them with questions if needed, such as, “Who did we meet in the office? What’s the place called where the food is cooked? Who cleans up after us and takes out the trash?” Prior to the activity, draw a simple map of the school. Place stickers on each area to indicate where the children visited, and create a dotted line to show the path they took on their hunt for the Gingerbread Boy.

Alternative: Create bingo cards featuring items found in and around the school: a chair, the front door, the playground, a book, the hallway, a classroom door, a pencil, and a pencil sharpener. Instead of naming the objects, describe each one first by how it is used, then by how it looks. Play the game until all of the children have covered their entire cards.

Center Time

Block Center

Encourage the children to create a replica of the school with the unit blocks. Provide small figures of children to populate the school, along with career figures such as teachers, bus drivers, custodians, and cooks. Encourage the children to act out real or pretend scenarios. Listen carefully, and comment on what they are doing. For instance: “Jeremy, I see that you have a little boy standing all alone over here while the rest of the children are playing on those blocks. What’s happening with this little boy? Why is he all alone?”

Explain that some schools, especially middle and high schools, have two or more floors. Challenge the children to build a tall tower of “floors” by balancing one block on two others, and so on. Remind the children to build only as tall as their own shoulders. Encourage the children to pause often to count how many floors they have. Create an experience chart to keep track of how high their schools go before the blocks fall down.



Fine Motor Center

Encourage the children to use a Lego® baseplate (the large, square, thin one) and small Lego® bricks to create a map of the room. If necessary, show them how to create an outline of the room using the Lego® bricks. Then, challenge them to fill in the areas inside the room using more bricks. Talk about each area and the activities that happen there. If you have Lego® wheels, the children also can create a school bus to drive around the perimeter of the classroom. Add some Lego® people, and encourage the children to act out typical classroom scenes. Older children may be up to creating a map of nearby classrooms or even the entire school. Encourage children to make signs that label the rooms in their building or the learning centers in their classrooms.

Alternative: Invite the children to take turns sharpening the school pencils and colored pencils using a small handheld sharpener (tape it together to make sure it is child safe). If necessary, demonstrate the twisting wrist motion needed to make the sharpener work properly. Allow the children to also use a wall- or desk-mounted crank-style sharpener and an electric one. Ask the children which method of sharpening they prefer. Ask which sharpener is easiest to use.

Literacy Center

Add catalogs from school-supply companies and scissors to the center. Invite the children to cut items from the catalogs and glue them to a paper titled “Things I Find at School.” Encourage them to match the items they see in the catalog with actual items in the classroom.

Read *Curious George’s First Day of School* by Margret and H. A. Rey. Ask the children to compare George’s school with their school. What things are the same? What things are different? Which school do they like best?

Math Center

Show the children examples of patterns in the classroom, such as the windows and the wall spaces between them, the books on display, and the floor tiles. Give the children beads and string, and then make a bead pattern for them to copy. Take a walk around the school with the children to look for patterns. Line children up in a pattern, and then invite a child to line everyone up using a different pattern. If possible, take photos of the patterns you find, and make a pattern book in the literacy center.

Create a memory game by printing cards with symbols representing things the children see every day in their school: buses, pencil sharpeners, pencils, crayons, books, clocks, chairs, and tables. If possible, take photos of the actual items to use on the cards. Show the children how to use the cards to play a typical game of memory. As the children play, talk about the various items and the roles they play in the children’s school lives.



Outdoor Activities Center

Write each child's name on a paper bag, and hand out the bags. Talk about the kinds of things children might collect, such as unusual stones, odd-shaped pieces of bark, dried weeds, fallen leaves, seedpods, and so on. Invite children to take their time to explore the playground or local park area. Remind them that everyone is looking and, if they see more than one of a particular item, to leave some for the other children. Children love the treasure-hunt atmosphere and are excited over each find.

As children discover items, talk to them about their finds. Encourage them to name and describe the things they find. After your collection walk, sit together in a sunny area to do a sorting activity. Together, sort the objects onto paper plates or into separate piles. First, set up a category. For example, ask the children to sort all of the big things on one plate and all of the small things on another plate. Place one of each

type on the plates as a guide. As children sort, help them talk about their sorting choices. Ask them to share why they are putting something on a certain plate. Then put all the objects in one big pile and sort them using other categories, such as color or texture. Keep changing the sorting categories as long as the children are interested.



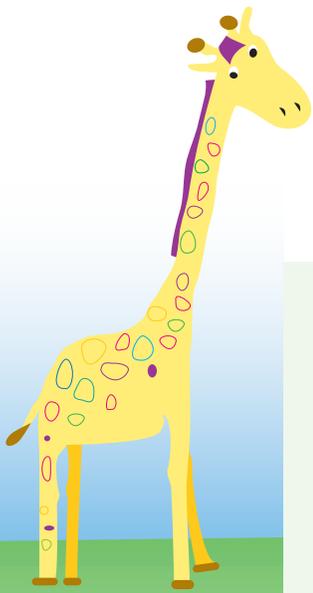
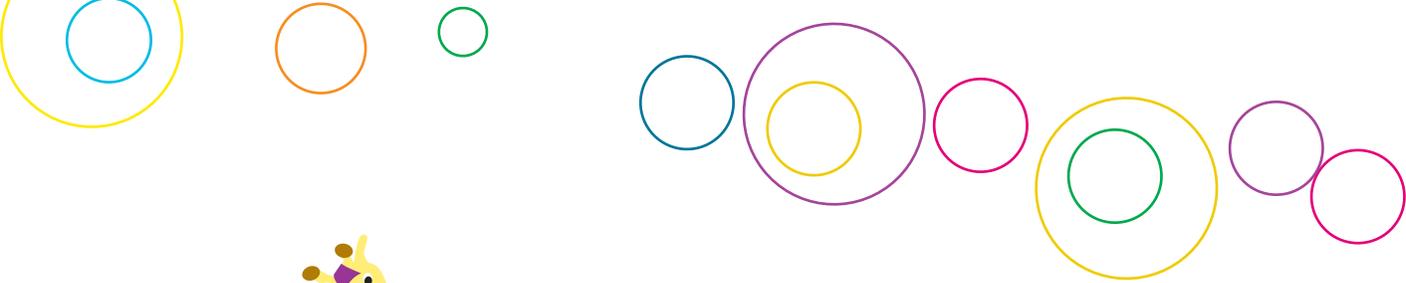
Home Stretch

Make black-and-white copies of the school map from the small group activity. Encourage the children to show their families the route they took through the school and to talk about the people they met along the way.

Closing Circle

Ask the children to name two or three people they met on their school tour. If time permits, invite each child to share an item from their outdoor activity.





Extend the Learning

My Book about School

Materials

- Camera
- Pen or marker
- Paper
- Photo albums

What to Do

1. At the beginning of the year, photograph all the places that will be important to the children in your class. (For example, if the children's PreK program is located in an elementary school, there are many new and strange things for the children to discover.) Some examples of what kind of photos to take include the outside of the building; where the children get on and off the bus; the playground; the principal, secretary, and custodians; the cafeteria, gym, and halls; and each center in the classroom.
2. Put the photos in a photo album and keep it on a bookshelf. This book has many uses: explaining the various places the children will go, the people they will see, the rules for these places, and what goes on there.
3. Ask the children to make up their own stories about the photos. Write the stories on paper and make a book. This book can help new children who start in the middle of the year. Often the "old guys" will get the book out to give the new child "orientation!"

Song

This Is the Way We Go to School



(Tune: "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush")

This is the way we go to school, go to school, go to school.

This is the way we go to school,

So early in the morning.

This is the way we walk to lunch, walk to lunch, walk to lunch.

This is the way we walk to lunch,

So early in the morning.

Make up verses and motions for other school activities, or let the children improvise their own verses.

—Tracie O'Hara, Charlotte, NC