



## **Preparing for Kindergarten What Students Need to Know and Do**

Calgary Classical Academy

Welcome to the Kindergarten program at Calgary Classical Academy. There are simple things you can do now to prepare your child for our academically rich, classical programming and make the most of their school year. Please review this communication to help get your child school ready. We do not expect students to have mastered all of these skills and will continue to work on them in school during their Grade Two year. The intention of this document is to provide an approximate developmental level to guide parents and teachers as they prepare for their children to begin in our classes.

### **Getting School Ready**

#### **1. Digital Detox**

CCA is a smart phone free environment, and the use of technology is limited, and purposeful at every grade level. There is substantial evidence that technology is causing great harm to our children. Please consider a digital detox for your family over the summer months to help prepare them for school at CCA. Here are some readings and resources that will help you:

[How a Digital Detox Could Improve Your Child's Behavior Problems](#)

[Digital Detox: How to Limit Screen Time for Kids](#)

[Digital Detox: The Two-Week Tech Reset for Kids by Molly DeFrank](#)

#### **2. Read Aloud Together**

Take time together reading books of all genres. As you read, ask basic comprehension questions about what is happening, and ask your child to make predictions about what will happen next. Practice each day, until they can sit and engage for at least 15 minutes. Model how to sound out and practice rhyming words together to get your child accustomed to listening for vowel and consonant sounds. Focus on basic CVC words and rhyming families (eg. the cat with the hat sat on the mat). Reading frequently helps children grow their vocabulary.

<https://www.readingrockets.org/reading-101-guide-parents>

<https://heggerty.org/product/abc-letter-cards/>

#### **3. Don't Forget Math!**

Parents often focus heavily on reading literacy and forget to develop mathematical literacy. Work on counting in sequence up to 20 and beyond. Work on counting individual items. Show them the base 10 system and encourage them to seek out numbers all around them. Sort objects,



like small toys by color, size, and other characteristics. Show them common number lines, such as a ruler and how it works. Playing dice games, such as Yahtzee to help build subitizing skills. Teach about money by grouping and counting coins and bills. Bake with them to introduce them to instructions and key concepts like weight, volume, and fractions.

#### **4. Communication and Talk Time**

We have noted a marked increase in the number of students exhibiting communication disorders and developmental delays in speech and language. Work on communication skills and vocabulary building by engaging your child in frequent reciprocal conversations across a variety of contexts to hone the necessary skills. Encourage eye contact and reciprocal listening. Refer to this reading on [Communication Milestone for pre-Kindergarten](#) as to what to look for to gauge your child's readiness. If you have concerns, please take your child to their family doctor before school begins so a continuum of supports can be established.

#### **5. Outdoor Play and Observation**

Play outside in a variety of contexts. Take the time to cultivate their curiosity and sense of wonder of the natural world, and to sharpen their skills of observation. Frequent outdoor play and adventures will allow them to develop the necessary [gross motor skills](#) to prepare them for kindergarten. Learn to ride a bike without training wheels, practice balancing and climbing in a playground or a forest.

#### **6. Engage Fine Motor Skills**

It is important your child develops strong and nimble fingers to perform common classroom tasks. Please ensure they know how to properly hold a pencil and have begun to work on basic letter and number formation. Home art projects will teach them to grip and use everything from pencils to paintbrushes. Teach them how to cut safely and properly carry scissors, use play-doh, string small beads, or practice sorting small objects with tweezers.

#### **7. Practice Pre-Writing Skills**

Letter formation of upper- and lower-case letters and proper pencil grip will be instructed in Kindergarten. Before coming to school, teach your child to recognize his/her first and last name in print. If you teach them to print their name, please do so properly using a combination of a first uppercase letter, followed by lowercase, rather than in all uppercase letters (eg., Daniel vs DANIEL). Have your child practice drawing and coloring on flat (table) and vertical (easel) surfaces. Have them practice tracing a variety of lines with their finger and then a writing tool - straight, zig-zagged, and curved lines and shapes and complete activities like numbered dot to dots, and mazes.

#### **8. Foster Independence**

Practice a morning routine that will mirror what to expect on school mornings. Your child should be able to dress, be fully toilet trained and use the restroom, know how and when to use



facial tissues, and properly wash his/her hands without assistance. Work on tying shoe laces. Get them accustomed to scratchy uniform pieces to build resilience, meaning resist the urge to cut out clothing labels. Working through sensory issues using a gentle, but firm approach will help in future. Have a picnic and practice using a lunch box. Teach them how to pack and unpack a backpack and to hang up their clothing, and neatly place their shoes together. Most importantly, make sure your child knows important family information, like their full name, birthday, home address, and phone numbers.

### **9. Following Simple Directions**

Children entering Kindergarten should be able to follow a complete set of two to three simple directives with minimal support. Practice this by instructing your child on how to get dressed, put on shoes and a jacket, put away toys and books, or how to sit down at a table for a meal. Reinforce that your child should complete a task *the first time* an adult, like a parent or teacher asks something reasonable of them.

### **10. Expect Deference and Respect**

Students should be able to use words like “please” and “thank you” when speaking with adults and peers. We believe that children thrive in a structured, calm, and well ordered, teacher led environment, marked by deference and respect for all. Establishing this expectation in your home and across contexts before school starts will help ensure a welcoming and safe classroom for all and that all children have their right to learn protected. The level of parental support required is outlined in our parent commitment forms.

## **Alberta Education - Kindergarten Curriculum, Competency Progressions**

<https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca/curriculum/en>

New Learn Alberta - Literacy Curriculum:

<https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca/curriculum/en/f/litk>

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/3402194/lit-progressions.pdf>

New Learn Alberta - Numeracy Curriculum:

<https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca/cdn/progression-pdfs/Numeracy%20Progressions%20-%20EN.pdf>

New Learn Alberta - Competency Progressions:

<https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca/curriculum/en/f/com1>



## Summary of CCA Kindergarten Expectations Upon Entry:

### Gross Motor Skills

- Can walk up and down the stairs safely

### **Fine Motor Skills**

- experience with holding and using scissors, glue, holding pencil, coloring

### **Early Literacy**

- practice holding books and turning pages
- read books to children
- practice rhyming and identifying rhyming
- Singing the ABC's, recite the alphabet.
- Some knowledge of letter identification and letter sounds
- Writing own name and recognizing it (capital letters, lowercase if able)

### **Early Numeracy**

- Counting to 10, to 100
- able to count to 20 and recognize numbers between one and 20.
- Knowing concept of more and less
- Student should be able to recognize the common shapes and colors to categorize
- Names of basic 2-D shapes (circle, triangle, square)
- Understanding and curiosity about number in the world

### **Self-Care and Independence**

- Toileting - independent including recognizing when they need to use the toilet
- Clothing - outdoor wear and inside clothing (\*zipping up a coat, zipping up pants and doing up the top button on pants, etc.)
- Eating: independence with container lids, etc.
- Backpack - zippers
- Understanding of how to dress themselves (including putting on shoes) and properly use the toilet.

### **Social and Emotional Readiness**

- Able to separate from a parent or caregiver without getting overly upset
- Interact kindly and fairly with other kids
- Students should be able to share supplies and respect the space of peers
- Pay attention for at least five minutes with the ultimate goal of 15 minutes, to a task an adult is leading, such as listening to directions for an activity or discussing the day's weather during circle time
- Completing short tasks (5 minute task) with independence



[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/kindergarten\\_readiness\\_social\\_and\\_emotional\\_development](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/kindergarten_readiness_social_and_emotional_development)

Highlights from the above link:

- Getting along with others (parents, teachers and peers)
- Following directions and basic instructions from a teacher
- Identifying and regulating one's emotions and behavior
- Thinking of appropriate solutions to conflict
- Persisting on task
- Engaging in social conversation and cooperative play
- Correctly interpreting the behaviors and emotions of others
- Feeling good about oneself and others.
- Basic self regulation skills

### **Concept Development and Language Development**

- The following website explains concept development. In Kindergarten the main concepts introduced involve position, size, and quantity (at different ages, different vocabulary and detail is expected to develop).

<https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/understanding-language/understanding-concepts/>

### **Virtue and Character Development**

To prepare for the academic rigor, and enriching curriculum, and intentional moral formation according to virtue ethics at CCA, it is recommended strongly (based upon common experience, short term studies, and longitudinal studies) that:

1. Students entering kindergarten be prepared by having varied direct experiences with the natural world (outdoor time, hikes, camping, stargazing, athletics, etc).
2. Students entering kindergarten have minimal exposure to or zero exposure to screens and social media.
3. Students entering kindergarten be heavily exposed to rich encounters with great literature filled with virtuous characters, traditional forms of music, such as classical music, nursery rhymes, and folk music.
4. Students entering kindergarten be prepared by having regular, interactive family time.
5. Students entering kindergarten be prepared by having regular, healthy routines, whereby most tasks become like second nature and automatic.
6. Students entering kindergarten be prepared by having regular conversations with adults, especially with parents and at meal time, asking questions probing the how and why behind different experiences and things observed.



Kindergarten is an exciting, formative time in the life of a child. We hope that these tips will help you as you prepare your child for the school year ahead!

Welcome to the CCA family! Thank you for trusting us with your child's education.

Best Regards,

The CCA Kindergarten Teachers  
Colleen Parks, Principal Educator