

Facilitator's Talking Points

Use This Companion Tool With the PowerPoint Presentation*

These talking points are suggestions of what to say. Feel free to use your own words. [Words in Brackets] = Directions, comments, and next steps.

Tips to Create a Positive and Welcoming Learning Environment For Families

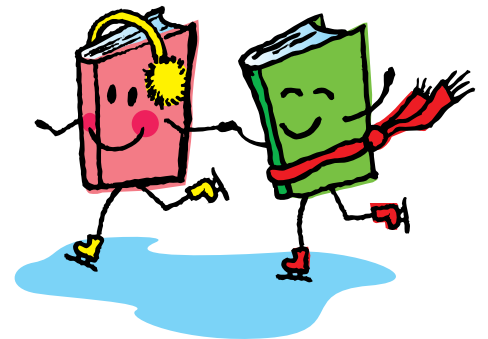
- Welcome participants one-by-one as they walk in and take their seats.
- Be cheery. Ask them individually about their children, how many do they have, if they go to preschool, what kinds of things do they like to do at home.
- Say something that shows the participant you value their attendance.
- Make sure participants feel respected and comfortable.
- Listen actively when participants express themselves.
- Encourage families to share their ideas, experiences, and questions with you.
- If you are under time constraints, let participants know that you value their contributions and you will be happy to stay and continue the discussion at the end of the meeting or follow-up with them.
- Use positive body language and words.
- Make compliments when participants share stories. For example, "thank you for that example," or "thank you for sharing," or "that was a wonderful example!"
- Thank them at the beginning and end of your presentation for coming. Let them know you commend them for their commitment to help their children get ready for school.

Step I. Facilitator Greeting: (2 minutes)

[Turn on lively music of your choice a few minutes before the session is to begin. Once the song ends, turn off the music and welcome the participants. Introduce yourself as the host for this event.]

Talking Points:

- **(Slide 1):** Welcome to our Kindergarten Readiness workshop. Thank you for showing your commitment to your children's learning by joining us today. My name is _____, and I will be your host for this event.



* Access PowerPoint at:
<http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/programs/kindergarten-readiness/>

Facilitator's Talking Points cont.

- **(Slide 2):** Today we will talk about ways to help your child prepare for kindergarten. We will talk about what your child's day will be like in kindergarten and the skills children are expected to have to help them learn in kindergarten. We'll talk about the pre-reading skills your children need to help them learn to read, as well as ways you can support your child's learning at home.
- How many of you have had children enrolled in kindergarten before? How many of you are parents of a kindergartener for the first time? Did you know that there is at least one thing all of you have in common? No matter how many children you have, getting them to kindergarten is one of the great milestones in a parent's lifetime. Leaving your child at kindergarten for the first time can be quite an emotional experience.

Step II. Ice Breaker: (3 minutes)

[Introduce the Ice Breaker by reading the talking points below. They are from All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, by Robert Fulghum.]

Talking Points:

- I would like to begin our session by reading excerpts from a book that was very popular years ago. The title of the book is All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, by Robert Fulghum. Some of it goes like this, "All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life – learn some and think some... draw and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together ..."¹

1. Copyright © 1986, 1988, 2003 by Robert Fulghum

Step III. Share a Memory (2 minutes)

[Briefly share a personal memory about how it was when you or a family member were in kindergarten. Was it a smooth transition? Were there any hurdles to overcome? Was kindergarten the same as it is now? Who taught you how to read?]

Talking Points:

- **(Slide 3):** Reading from this book always reminds me of how it was when I (or a family member) was in kindergarten. I remember that _____. The best part about kindergarten was _____. The main person who helped me (or a family member) learn how to read was _____.

Step IV. Ask Parents to Share a Memory (5 minutes)

[Ask participants to share their kindergarten experiences. Ask them if they think their child's kindergarten experience will be the same. Let parents share from their seats, then review the handout, "A Day in the Life of a Kindergartener."]

Facilitator's Talking Points cont.

Talking Points:

- What do you remember about going to kindergarten?
- Thank you for sharing. Let's look at your handout. It's called "A Day in the Life of a Kindergartener."

Step V. Review Handout: "A Day in the Life of a Kindergartener" (5 minutes)

[Read the handout out loud. Make comments and respond to questions. Let parents know that the core standards skills for kindergarteners are listed in the handout. Remind parents to have reasonable expectations and to ask for help if they have concerns.]

Talking Points:

- **(Slide 4):** Kindergarten has changed. It is not about eating cookies and milk anymore. Your handout, "A Day in The Life of a Kindergartener" covers what your child's day will be like when starting kindergarten.
- Your child will... [Read aloud the handout to the audience]
- All public schools are required to teach the beginning skills involved in reading, writing, spelling, and math in kindergarten to ensure that all children are ready to start a career or attend college by the time they finish high school. Those skills are called core standards. They are listed in your handout.
- Are there any questions or comments about what your child's day will be like in kindergarten? Kindergarten can be a little overwhelming for some children. Your child might need some time to adjust to the schedule. You can help your child adjust by being a good listener with positive actions and words of support. Read the school newsletters and respond to teacher's notes sent home. Participate in school activities and talk to the teacher to stay informed.
- If the kindergarten program seems too high or too low for your child, or if you have concerns about your child's development, or if your child seems stressed, discouraged, or afraid, talk to the teacher or the school principal about your concerns. They will know what to do.

Step VI. Review Handout Checklist: "Is Your Child Prepared for Kindergarten?" (8 minutes)

[Give parents 5 minutes of the 8 minutes to read and mark their checklist.]

Talking Points:

- **(Slide 5):** Now that we have talked about what your child's day will look like, let's look at your next handout, "Is Your Child Prepared for Kindergarten?" This handout provides a checklist to give you an idea of where your child is in his or her development. It lists the type of skills children generally have coming into kindergarten. Know that teachers do not expect all



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children to have the same level of skills coming into kindergarten. Not all children learn at the same pace.

- Take 5 minutes and check off the skills your child has. Indicate what level of the skill you think they have.

[Give parents 5 minutes to read and mark the checklist then continue with talking points.]

- Does this list help you understand the type of skills expected?
- Teachers are not expecting your child to know how to read when they begin kindergarten. They are expecting your child to know how to focus, follow directions, and to have some pre-reading skills.
- If you found your child does not have skills on the checklist, you can help your child learn those skills by practicing at home.
- When you practice with your child at home, try to make it an enjoyable experience! Do not call it homework.
- Be your child's main encourager. Cheer them on as they try new things.

Step VII. Model a Fun Activity by Reading a Story (5 minutes)

[Demonstrate how to practice a fun activity at home by reading a story from an attention-getting picture book of your choice that covers pre-reading skills such as the sounds of the alphabet, words that rhyme, or any basic concepts that build vocabulary. Read the story the way you would read it to a child.]

Talking Points:

- There are many fun activities that you can do at home to help your child practice the skills they need to learn for kindergarten. One of the ways is to read your child stories. Research tells us that simply reading to your child 15-20 minutes every day will help your child become a successful reader. Reading to your child is one of the best ways to help him or her get ready for school.
- Let me read you a story to demonstrate what I mean. The name of the book is _____.
- ... And that's the end of the story.

Step VIII. Introduce the Pre-Reading Skills (3 minutes)

[Read aloud the six pre-reading skills in the "Pre-Reading Skills for Reading Success" handout.]

Talking Points:

- **(Slide 6):** Reading stories like the one I read helps your child build his or her pre-reading skills. Pre-reading skills are the skills your child needs to learn to read and write. At the beginning of kindergarten, teachers will use part of their instructional day to work on strengthening their students' pre-reading skills.
- Take out your handout about the pre-reading skills.
- There are six pre-reading skills that children must learn in order to learn to read. They are ...

[Quickly read each pre-reading skill category and definition aloud to the audience. When appropriate, reference a pre-reading skill that was in the story you read.]

Facilitator's Talking Points cont.

- Did you hear that pre-reading skill when I read the story earlier? What pre-reading skills did you hear when I read the story?

Step IX. Review Handout: "Helping Your Child Prepare for Kindergarten" (5 minutes)

[Introduce the "Helping Your Child Prepare for Kindergarten" handout. Read some of the activities listed out loud. Remind non-English-speaking parents that it is okay for parents to practice learning activities with their child in their native languages. Tell them about dual-language materials they can check out from the library. If you have time, model an activity of your choice from the handout and have parents participate.]

Talking Points:

- **(Slide 7):** Now let's look at your handout, "Helping Your Child Prepare for Kindergarten." This handout has many examples of how you can provide everyday fun, stress-free activities to help your child get ready for kindergarten. We call the activities in this handout "Read, Talk, Play" because that's what you do in the activities listed. You read, talk, and play to help your child learn and get ready to succeed in school.
- Let's look at some examples of the activities in the handout that you can do at home. You can _____.
- For the parents who are here that do not speak English, know that it is okay to practice these activities with your child in your native languages. The skills and concepts that your child needs to learn are the same in any language. The important thing is to encourage the joy of reading and learning. You can go to the library and check out bilingual materials. They have bilingual audio books for children and story books with both English and your native languages on the same page.
- Looks like we have time to play a game. Here's a fun game to play. It goes like this _____.

Step X. Wrap-Up Session and End with a Reminder (1 minute)

Talking Points:

- Remember to read to your child every day. Get them excited about reading! It is one of the best ways to get your child ready for kindergarten. Take the time to support your child's reading development at home. Take the time to help your child learn and succeed. Let's Raise Readers!

(Slide 8): [Thank everyone for attending and offer to answer any questions in the large group or individually.]

