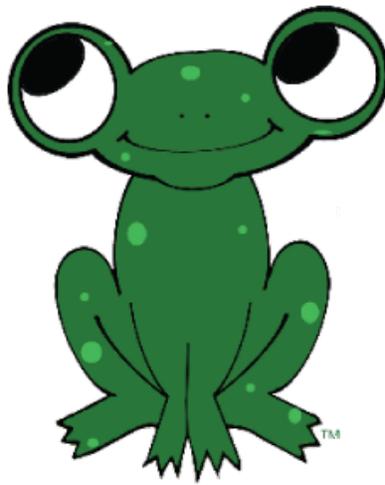


Ready Freddy Kindergarten Club

Sample Content



Office of Child Development
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

Ready Freddy[™] Kindergarten Club

A Parent-Child Kindergarten Transition Curriculum

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Purpose:

The transition from preschool or home to kindergarten is a big event! For many children, kindergarten represents their first experience with formal education outside of the home; for others, it means getting to know new teachers, new friends, a new building, and a new set of rules. The transition sets the tone for how well children will do in school, but almost half of children who start kindergarten have difficulty with the transition (Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000). Without proper transitions, children can experience high levels of anxiety and exhibit “early and persistent school failure, behavior problems, low levels of parent involvement, and a widening gap in their academic achievement.” (Schulting, Malone, and Dodge, 2005)

Involving parents *before* kindergarten is one of the most promising ways to help children make a smooth transition to kindergarten that will get them off to the right start in school (Pianta, Rimm-Kauffman, & Cox, 1999; Henderson & Berla, 1994).

The Ready Freddy™ Kindergarten Club Curriculum is designed to help both children and parents get excited and prepared for the transition to kindergarten.

Organization:

The curriculum is divided into six sessions. Each session focuses on a different topic important to helping families transition to kindergarten and to promoting academic success. For example, the focus of Session 1, “Get Ready, Freddy”, is about the importance of recognizing that every child has unique strengths and needs and that parents have a role in advocating for their children (see the overview on pg. 3).

Each session has the following components:

- An **Introduction** for explaining the focus of the session to parents and children
- A **Parent-Child Activity** for encouraging quality parent-child interactions and modeling activities that promote school readiness and academic success
- A **Parent Activity** for providing parents with the information they need to support children’s transition to kindergarten and lay the foundation for long-term parent involvement
- A **Child Activity** for exposing children to the kinds of experiences and expectations they’ll encounter in kindergarten
- A **Read Aloud** for demonstrating how to promote children’s love for books, content knowledge, and vocabulary by reading stories
- A **Take Home Activity** for encouraging parents to continue and practice at home what was discussed during the session

Quick reference guide:



= Purpose of the session or activity and points to get across to parents and children



= Questions and comments that can help prompt parents' and children's actions and thinking



= Skills, attitudes, and knowledge that the activity helps to strengthen



= Materials to gather and the basic procedure for the activity

To get started:

Getting started is as easy as 1, 2, 3...

1. Read the purpose and background information for the session you are going to lead, so you are ready to answer questions.
2. Look over the overview for that session and the detailed plans for each activity and gather the materials needed.
3. Read, think about, and practice the kinds of questions and comments you can use to support parents' and children's actions and thinking.

Overview

Session	1	2	3	4	5	6
Theme/Concept	Get Ready, Freddy	Setting & Achieving Goals	Sharing & Friendship	Reading & Writing	Numbers	Freddy's Ready
Introduction (15 Minutes)	<p><i>Ready Freddy Book</i></p> <p>Importance of Transition</p> <p>Each child is unique, parent knows best</p>	<hr/> <p>Working together to accomplish goals</p>	<p>Importance of social-emotional development</p>	<p>More than ABCs</p> <p>Importance of Oral Language</p>	<p>More than counting</p>	<p>→</p> <p>You're off!</p>
Parent-Child Activity (30 Minutes)	My Self-Portrait	"Frogs on a Log" Cooking Activity	Partner Art	Little Story Tellers	Number Card Games	"My School" Junk Sculptures
Parent Activity (30 Minutes)	<p>Parent Icebreaker</p> <p>* ABC's of my child</p>	<p>Parent Icebreaker</p> <p>* School Readiness Checklist</p> <p>* Family Readiness Checklist</p>	<p>Parent Icebreaker</p> <p>My School Success Supports</p> <p>Sharing and Caring</p>	<p>Parent Icebreaker</p> <p>Letter Guessing Game</p> <p>Writing Tips</p>	<p>Parent Icebreaker</p> <p>I'm Thinking of a Number Game</p> <p>Math is All Around Us</p>	<p>Parent Icebreaker</p> <p>* ABC's of my child</p> <p>What's my role?</p>
Child Activity (30 Minutes)	<p>"Freddy" Frog Toss with names</p> <p>Frog Colors Guessing Game</p> <p>Five Little Frogs</p> <p>Wide-Mouthed Frog</p>	<p>Frog Chant</p> <p>Where's My Lily pad?</p> <p>Lily Pad Hop</p> <p>Frog Colors Guessing Game</p> <p>Five Green and Speckled Frogs</p>	<p>Who Made the Frog Jump off of the Lily Pad?</p> <p>Frog Chant</p> <p>Frisky Frogs</p> <p>Lily Pad Hop</p> <p>Five Green and Speckled Frogs</p>	<p>"Freddy" Frog Toss with Letters</p> <p>Wide-Mouthed Frog</p> <p>Five Little Frogs</p> <p>How Do You Spell...?</p> <p>Original Song: "A Frog Song"</p>	<p>Who Made the Frog Jump off of the Lily Pad?</p> <p>Frisky Frogs</p> <p>Where's My Lily Pad?</p> <p>Five Green and Speckled Frogs</p> <p>How Many Frogs?</p>	<p>Frog Chant</p> <p>Five Green and Speckled Frogs</p> <p>How Do You Spell...?</p> <p>Wide-Mouthed Frog</p> <p>Original Song: "Freddy Goes to School"</p>
Ready Readers Read (15 Minutes)	<i>Finklehopper Frog</i> by Irene Livingston	<i>A Frog Thing</i> by Eric Drachman	<i>It's Mine!</i> by Leo Lionni	<i>Tuesday</i> by David Weisner	<i>Frog in the Bog</i> by Karma Wilson	<i>Miss Mingo and The First Day of School</i> by Jamie Harper
Take Home Activity	What kind of frog are you?	Look at all I can do!	Playground Trip	Imagine!	Number-Board Game	School Scavenger Hunt



Session 1: Get Ready, Freddy!



Topic: *Each child is unique; Parents know best!*

This session is designed to help parents and children appreciate that every child is unique. It also helps parents to feel confident about their child's strengths and to identify their child's weaknesses related to school readiness. Because parents know their child's skills, abilities, and interests better than any teacher, they must be involved in school. Parent involvement helps ensure that all children are challenged and supported so that they will reach their full potential.

As children enter kindergarten, they are all expected to be on their way towards mastering academic skills. For example, children entering kindergarten should be able to count to 10, name the letters, and name colors. However, children vary in their skills and interests. One child might be able to draw elaborate pictures, while another loves to sing. One child might know his numbers because he loves to play board games, while another never sits still and can climb up any structure on a playground. If parents communicate this information to teachers, teachers can use it to help their children grow. For example, hopscotch might be the way to help the "climber" learn about numbers, music could help the "singer" learn to spell new words, and the "drawer" might be ready to start writing letters.

Overview:

15 Minutes	Introduction	
	Importance of <i>transition</i> to Kindergarten and parent involvement in that transition	
30 Minutes	Parent-Child Activity	
	"My Self-Portrait"	
30 Minutes	Parent Activity	Child Activity
	Parent Icebreaker ABC's of My Child	Circle Time music and Frog Color Guessing game
15 Minutes	Ready Readers Read	
	Book: <i>Finklehopper Frog</i> by Irene Livingston	
	Take Home Activity: What kind of frog are you?	



Session 1: Introduction



Purpose:

- Welcome parents and assure them that they are doing something important for their child's academic success.
- Explain what transition means and why it is important for them to be proactively involved.
- Emphasize that every child is different and that it is the parents' job to help their child's teachers figure out his/her strengths and needs.



Materials and Procedure:

- Read *Ready Freddy Goes to School*.
- After reading *Ready Freddy*, introduce the Freddy puppet and ask the children to describe Freddy.
- Have children move to another area and begin setting-up for the parent-child activity.
- Talk to parents about the purpose of the session.



Questions and Comments:

- Ask questions that will encourage children to attend to details and make inferences: "What color is Freddy?"; "What do you notice about his eyes?"; "What do you notice about his mouth?"; "How old do you think he is?"; "Where do you think Freddy lives?"
- Share with parents some of the information from the purpose on pg. iii and pg. 11.



Skills and Attitudes Targeted:

Parents:

- Confidence in being involved in school and talking to teachers about their child
- Recognition of child's skills, abilities, and interests
- Appreciation of child's strengths

Children:

- Recognition that every child is different and unique



Session 1: Parent-Child Activity

“My Self-Portrait”



Purpose:

- Encourage parents to have their child think about what makes him/her unique.
- Demonstrate how parents can help their child draw pictures without drawing on the child’s paper.
- Encourage parents to have their children pay attention to details.
- Demonstrate that children’s pictures don’t need to look the same or be “perfect” to be art.



Questions and Comments:

- Tell parents there is a “Hands off!” rule; they should let the child draw without physical help.
- Ask children to look in the mirror and describe what they see: *“What are you wearing today?”*, *“What do you notice about your eyes?”*, *“Tell me about your hair.”*
- Prompt parents to expand children’s comments by using lots of adjectives: *“Yes! You have pink barrettes in your hair.”*; *“Your shirt has stripes. The stripes go side to side...they are horizontal.”*; *“Your eyes are shaped like squished circles...like ovals!”*
- Encourage parents to describe with words and gestures how their child can draw different parts of their bodies: *“Make a circle for your head.”*; *“You can use a rectangle for your arm.”*; *“Start here and draw a straight line all the way down.”*



Skills and Attitudes Targeted:

Parents:

- Using language and gestures to help their child meet goals

Children:

- Recognition that every child is different and unique
- Attention to details
- Names of body parts (head, neck, fingers, etc.)
- Colors of objects (yellow shirt, blue pants, etc.)
- Confidence in drawing (a pre-writing) ability



Session 1: Parent Activity



Purpose:

- Introduce parents to each other, create camaraderie, and establish pattern of communication.
- Demonstrate that an individual's experiences in school are "unique."
- Discuss expectations of and challenges for children as they enter school.
- Demonstrate the kinds of information parents can share with teachers in order to support academic success.



Questions and Comments:

- Tell parents that the six-sessions are designed to highlight activities, strategies, and dispositions that are important for children and their families in preparing for kindergarten and long-term academic success.
- Praise parents for their participation and acknowledge that their involvement demonstrates their desire for their child to be successful in school.
- Emphasize that kindergarten has changed over the years--with new research, we have learned that children are capable of and can do more than previously known. This has increased the standards and expectations for early childhood learning.



Skills and Attitudes Targeted:

Parents:

- Awareness of the information they possess about their child that others do not
- Understanding of the importance of their role in their child's transition to kindergarten
- Comprehension that the transition to kindergarten sets the tone for children's academic success
- Comfort in talking in front of others and group experience



Session 1: Child Activity



Purpose:

- Encourage children to recognize differences.
- Encourage children to pay attention to the details that make animals and people unique.



Questions and Comments:

- Before beginning, show and tell children how they should sit: *“Sit right on your bottom with your legs crossed and your hands in your lap. Stay right in your spot so everyone can see.”*
- As you move from one song/poem to the next, use transition statements to help the children see the connections. For example, as you move from Freddy Frog Toss to the Frog Colors Guessing Game say, *“Each of you is different. You have different names, like different things, and look different, too! Just like you, not all frogs are the same. Each frog is special too!”*



Skills and Attitudes Targeted:

Children:

- Confidence in talking in front of others
- Use of descriptive adjectives: color words, size words (big, small, tiny), texture words (speckled, bumpy, smooth)
- Listening Skills
- Appreciation for and enjoyment of songs, poems, and stories
- Turn-taking

Session 1: Ready Readers Read

Finklehopper Frog by Irene Livingston



Purpose:

- Model good book reading strategies for parents.
- Encourage discussion about differences and why it is ok to be different.
- Promote an appreciation and love for books.
- Develop children’s vocabulary and thinking skills. (e.g., making predictions)



Questions and Comments:

- *Before*
 - Tell parents that as you read you are demonstrating ways to help children learn from stories and read-alouds. Encourage them to watch and listen to the kinds of things you do before, during, and after reading the story.
 - Tell the children that the author is the person who writes the story and the illustrator draws the pictures.
- *During*
 - Change your voice, point to pictures, add synonyms, and use gestures to define words. For example, say the word “people” after *folks* on the first page. Point under the counter to define the word *beneath* on the page in Mrs. Chimpanzee’s store.
 - Encourage children to use the illustrations to figure out the story. For example, on the page where the dog laughs at Finklehopper say, “*Look at Finklehopper’s face. How do you think he is feeling?*”
- *After*
 - Invite children to discuss what makes them special.
 - Tell parents that at home reading is a time for bonding as much as learning.