

Explore & Learn

Lessons and Activities

PK, TK, and VPK Instruction

Where Do I Grow and Learn?

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Ready for School



Dona Herweck Rice

Illustrated by Amanda Morrow

Hooray! Hooray!
I have school today!



I will see my teacher. I will play
with my friends.

This is going to be a great day!



We'll start with Morning Meeting
and Calendar Time. My friends and
I will sit on the mat.



Ms. Young will pick someone to
read the calendar and weather.
Maybe it will be me!



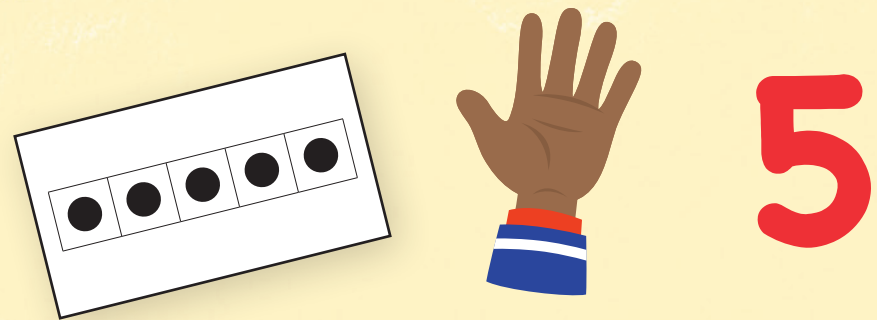
Next, Ms. Young will read to us. I hope she'll read about the mouse, the pigeon, or our friend, the chameleon.



I like them all!



Math comes next. We are learning about number 5.



Five fingers on my hand.
Five toes on my foot.
Five freckles on my nose.
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!





Recess time! Shay and I will run for the big red ball. We are trying to set the record for bounces in a row. I think we can do it today!

Do we have art or music next?
Maybe we will have both! I can
finish my picture of Mocha, and
we can play our tambourines.





I can't wait!
I can't wait!
I can't wait!
I LOVE school!

"Mom, are you ready to go?"



"Sweetie? I think we
should wait until morning,
don't you?"



Notes for the Grown-ups

This book allows for a rich shared reading experience for children who are early and developing readers. The dialogue and images help new readers to tell the story, either as they read or as they are read to. What a valuable tool for building the confidence new readers need to embark on the adventures that await them while reading!

To extend this reading experience, do one or more of the following:

Ask the child to share the events of their own school days.

Talk about school when you were young and share together how school is the same and different.

Draw pictures of your favorite part of the school day.

After reading, come back to the book again and again. Rereading is an excellent tool for building literacy skills.

Imagine together what school would be like if animals had their own school.

Where Do I Grow and Learn?

Teacher's Guide



Day 7 Preparation and Materials

Morning Meeting

- **Materials:** *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1); blocks; butcher paper; crayons; tape
- **Preparation:** Cut small squares of drawing paper, and color half pink and half a variety of previously taught colors. Tape a colored square to each block. On the butcher paper, draw a simple picture of a common classroom object. Place the blocks on top of the picture so the colors are facing up and the picture is fully covered.

Literacy

- **Materials:** *Teach Letters and Sounds* routine (card 2); copy of *Ready for School*

Literacy Explorations

- **Materials:** *Interactive Writing* routine (card 4); copy of *School Days*; sentence strips or sticky notes; tape (if using sentence strips)
- **Preparation:** Ensure that each Literacy Exploration center is prepared.

Physical Development

- **Materials:** jump rope
- **Preparation:** Tie one end of the jump rope securely to the leg of a chair or table.

Phonological Awareness

- **Preparation:** Locate the *School Compound Word Cards* from Day 5.

Mathematics

- **Materials:** *Cube Net* (page 180); square-shaped objects; cube-shaped objects; tape; crayons
- **Preparation:** Prepare a copy of *Cube Net* for groups of six students by cutting along the perimeter of the image. Gather a variety of square-shaped objects (e.g., square drawn on paper, square cutouts, sticky notes, a wire bent into the shape of a square) and cubes (e.g., sugar cube, building block, number cube).

Social Development

- **Materials:** *Teach Other Languages* routine (card 15), *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16); *Ways to Say I Share* (page 179); crayons
- **Preparation:** Review how to say *I share* in multiple languages (page 179), and determine which languages you want to share. (Based on your student population, you may want to research how to say *share* in their home languages as well.) Locate the student-created social story books from Day 5.

Fine Motor Development

- **Materials:** child-safe scissors; construction paper

Science

- **Materials:** *Crayons and Pencils* (page 23 of *Student Activity Book*); crayons; pencils; tray; chart paper
- **Preparation:** Prepare a T-chart on the chart paper with the labels *Same* and *Different*. Place various crayons and pencils on a tray.

Creative Explorations

- **Materials:** chart paper; crayons; markers; scissors
- **Preparation:** Cut the chart paper into large puzzle pieces, enough for each student in the class. The pieces can be different shapes, but all should be about the same size.

Music and Movement

- **Materials:** *Teach a New Song* routine (card 17); “Time for School” audio recording (timeforschool.mp3) and lyrics (page 181)
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share the audio recording of the song.

Closing Circle

- **Materials:** *Closing Circle* routine (card 18)

Morning Meeting

10-15
minutes

1. Follow the *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1).
2. Place the picture covered in colored blocks you prepared in the center of the circle. Tell students that they will remove blocks one at a time to reveal a mystery picture.
3. Have students take turns removing one block at a time, naming the colors on the blocks as they move them. Have students make a pile of pink blocks.
4. As students remove blocks, have them guess the picture. When all blocks have been removed, have students name the object you drew.



Free Play

Free Play is a fundamental part of the *Explore & Learn* day. See page 101 for free play ideas related to this unit.



Literacy

20-30
minutes

Alphabet Knowledge Warm-Up

1. Gather students together, and follow the *Teach Letters and Sounds* routine (card 2) to teach the letter of the day. Choose which letter to teach based on your scope and sequence. (See page 39 in the *Management Guide* for more information.)

Whole-Group Lesson

2. Display the book *Ready for School*. Say, “Yesterday, we previewed the book *Ready for School* by looking at the pictures and making predictions. Today, we are going to read the words in the book.”
3. Read the book aloud, pausing to ask questions, such as “Why is the girl so excited to go to school? What does the girl like to do at school? Who does the girl see at school?”
4. After reading, ask students to share their favorite parts of their school days with partners.

Extension Idea

Have students create schedule cards for their favorite parts of the school day. Use students' cards in addition to or instead of your classroom visual schedule.



Literacy Explorations

15-20
minutes

small groups



centers

Meet with one group to deliver Small-Group Lesson 2 (page 104), while the rest of the students engage in self-chosen centers. For more information about independent learning centers, see page 105.

Physical Development

10-15
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together, and review the *Playground* vocabulary concept card. Tell students that often students play on playgrounds at recess. Encourage students to make connections to things they like to do at recess or outdoor games they like to play. Explain to students that jumping rope is a game that some students play at recess.
2. Tell students that they will be playing an indoor version of jump rope today. Show students the jump rope tied to a table or chair leg that you prepared. Model holding the loose end of the jump rope, and gently swing it from side to side. Explain to students that they will be jumping over the rope.
3. Have students form a line behind the rope and take turns jumping over the rope as you gently swing it back and forth. You can increase the challenge by increasing the height of the rope or the speed of your movements.

Phonological Awareness

10-15
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together, and say, “Today, we will say compound words and split them apart.”
2. Do a segmenting activity with the *School Compound Word Cards* from Day 5. Display the cards depicting compound words one at a time. For example, you may display the *paintbrush* card. Ask students to pretend they are pulling the word apart with their hands and tell you the two words that make up *paintbrush*. (*paint, brush*) Confirm students’ answers by showing them the individual cards.

Scaffolded Support

Display all the cards depicting individual words in clear view of students (*book, bag, paint, brush, paper, clip, chalk, board*). Show the cards depicting compound words one at a time, and have students select the words that form the compounds.



★ ★ Teacher-Choice Read-Aloud

Per the pacing plan suggestions on page 38 of the *Management Guide*, after the phonological awareness activity is a good time in the *Explore & Learn* day for a teacher-choice read-aloud.



Mathematics



Whole-Group Lesson

1. Gather students together, and display a square cutout. Ask students to identify the shape. Hold up a cube and ask, “What shape is this?” Accept a variety of responses. (Students may say *square*, *rectangle*, or *cube*.)
2. Say, “When this shape is flat, it is called a square, but this is not flat. It is 3D, or three-dimensional, so it is called a *cube*.” Repeat the word *cube*, and have students pronounce it.
3. Display one at a time the squares and cubes you gathered, and have students identify if they are squares or cubes. Sort the objects into two groups.
4. Explain that a cube is made of squares. Show the square faces of one of the cube-shaped objects.

Small-Group Practice

5. Form groups of six students, and have them move to their workspaces. Hold up a *Cube Net* (page 180) you prepared, and ask students how many squares they notice. (six) Explain that they will turn the six square faces into a cube. Distribute crayons and the cube nets you prepared, and instruct groups to have each student color one face of the cube.
6. As groups finish coloring, circulate to fold and tape each *Cube Net*.
7. Encourage groups to examine and discuss their assembled cubes.

Social Development



1. Gather students together, and review how to say *share* using American Sign Language.
2. Follow the *Teach Other Languages* routine (card 15), referencing *Ways to Say I Share* (page 179) to teach the word in a few languages.
3. Have students move to their workspaces and continue to work on their social stories. Support several students with step 5 of the *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16) by scribing their stories.

Fine Motor Development

10-15
minutes

whole group



independent work

1. Gather students together, and remind them of the importance of using scissors safely.
2. Display a pair of child-safe scissors in clear view of students. Say, “I use my writing hand to use scissors. Hold up your writing hands.” Allow students time to hold up their hands as you hold up your own.
3. Say, “I will use my thumb, index, and middle fingers to hold my scissors.” Hold up your hand with these fingers up, and have students do the same.
4. Model with the pair of scissors as you say, “My thumb goes in the smaller hole on top, and my index and middle fingers go in the larger hole on the bottom.”
5. Model with the pair of scissors as you say, “I will carefully and slowly pull my thumb up and my index and pointer fingers down to open the scissors. I will bring my fingers back together to close the scissors.”
6. Display a sheet of construction paper in clear view of students. Model with the scissors as you say, “When I cut paper, I hold my scissors with my writing hand and the paper with my other hand. I use my fingers to open the scissors and put the paper between the blades. I am careful to keep my fingers away from the blades. Then, I close the scissors to cut.” Model cutting a few strips from the sheet of construction paper.
7. Have students move to their workspaces, and distribute a pair of child-safe scissors and a sheet of construction paper to each student. Instruct them to cut thick and thin strips.

Science

15-25
minutes

whole group



independent work

1. Gather students together, and display the tray of crayons and pencils you prepared. Have students identify the objects.
2. Display the T-chart you prepared, and read the labels *Same* and *Different*. Ask students, “What is the same about pencils and crayons?” Record their ideas in the corresponding columns of the T-chart. Ask students to tell how pencils and crayons are different. Record responses on the chart. Prompt students to think about the colors, sizes, shapes, and purposes of the tools when discussing similarities and differences.
3. Have students move to their workspaces, and guide students as they complete *Crayons and Pencils* (page 23 of *Student Activity Book*). Explain that they need to listen to directions to complete the paper. Read the following directions to students, one at a time. (Allow students to complete each part before reading the next direction.)
 - Circle the short pencil.
 - Add stripes to the long pencil.
 - Circle the thin crayon.
 - Color in the thick crayon.

Extension Idea

Show students the tray of pencils and crayons. Invite volunteers to come forward to find the item you describe and complete the directions. (For example, “Put the purple crayon on the easel,” or “Find a broken pencil and put it by the door.”)



Creative Explorations

15-25
minutes

1. Gather students together, and ask, “What do you love about school?” Have students share their responses with partners, then invite students to share with the whole group. Tell students, “Today we will create a puzzle that represents what each student in our class loves about school.”
2. Have students move to their workspaces, and prepare puzzle pieces, crayons, and markers. Remind students to draw things that they love about school, such as books, blocks, art, the playground, or friends.
3. When students finish decorating their puzzle pieces, have them place their pieces on the floor. Have students work together to assemble the puzzle.

Music and Movement

10-15
minutes

1. Gather students together, and follow the *Teach a New Song* routine (card 17) to teach “Time for School.” (The lyrics are provided for your reference on page 181.)
2. After students learn the song, explain that the word *succeed* means to accomplish something you have been trying to do. Ask, “How does school help you succeed?” Emphasize to students that learning in school can help them succeed at things they want to do.

Closing Circle

5-10
minutes

1. Follow the *Closing Circle* routine (card 18).
2. If time allows, choose an extension activity from the routine card.

Card 1

Morning Meeting

Objective: Students will build community through safe, predictable routines.

Materials: Daily Picture Schedule Cards ([schedulecards.pdf](#); *optional*)

Gather and Greet

1. Signal to the whole group that it is time to gather for the morning meeting. You may choose to use a song as a transition.
2. Gather students together in a circle. Remind students about personal space and the importance of keeping their hands and feet to themselves.
3. Have students greet each other. You may choose to do a whole-class greeting with a song or have students pass one of the following greetings around the circle by greeting the peers next to them:
 - high five
 - elbow bump
 - fist bump
 - wave

Our Day

4. Share the plan for the day. This can be done by reviewing the *Daily Picture Schedule Cards* together or through a morning message—a short note addressed to the class that includes one or two main events that will take place during the day. The daily learning objectives are included in the *Teacher's Guide* for your easy reference.

Theme

5. Have students engage with the theme, color, shape, and/or phrase of the week. Ideas are included in the daily lesson plans in the *Teacher's Guide*.

Card 2

Teach Letters and Sounds

Objective: Students will learn the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent to support reading readiness and emergent writing skills.

Materials: *Letter Cards* ([lettercards.pdf](#))

Preparation: Choose which letters to teach based on your scope and sequence. (See page 39 in the *Management Guide* for more information.) Prepare to share the selected *Letter Cards*.

Name It

1. Display the selected *Letter Card*, and say, "This is the letter _____. This is a capital _____ (*point to the capital letter*), and this is a lowercase _____ (*point to the lowercase letter*)."
2. Point to the *Letter Card*, and say, "What letter is this?" (*Students respond with the letter name.*)

Say It

3. Say the sound the letter represents, and discuss how the sound is formed. Have students repeat the sound several times.

Write It

4. With your finger, trace the capital letter on the card. Narrate your movements, describing the starting point and the types of lines you are forming.
5. Ask students to hold up their pointer fingers and form the lines of the uppercase letter on flat surfaces. Have students repeat the sound the letter makes while they are forming the letter.
6. Repeat steps 4–5 with the formation of the lowercase letter.



student



**a person who goes to school
to learn**

student

Related Words

learner

pupil

scholar

Sentence

The **student** was excited to learn about animals during science.

Engage

- ★ How many students are in our class?
- ★ Is there something you have learned this year that makes you feel proud to be a student at our school?
- ★ Reread the sentence. You are a student. What are you excited to learn about in school?
- ★ Look at the picture. Who helps a student to learn?



Making Friends

Cam E. Chameleon starts her day feeling a little nervous but excited, too. Yesterday, Ms. Lee shared that a new friend named Siam would be joining the class. Cam has no idea if the new student is going to be kind or even like her. But she hopes that she and Siam can become good friends.

Cam's dad notices on the drive to school that Cam has some big feelings. Cam tells her dad about Siam joining the class. Cam's dad lets her know that people often feel many different things when change happens—especially nervous and excited. He suggests that she can use all that big feeling energy to make Siam feel welcome. **After all, being a friend is the best way to make a friend!** Cam thinks hard about that for the rest of the drive. When she gets to school, she has the perfect plan. Cam knows that having a plan can help her do what she needs and wants to do.

Ms. Lee introduces Siam to the class at their morning meeting. Cam smiles at Siam so that he knows she is friendly. When Ms. Lee tells the class it is time for free play, Cam is ready to put her plan into action. Cam goes to the blocks and starts building, and she makes eye contact with Siam. When Siam sees her, Cam waves to him and smiles. Then, she calls him over and asks him if he wants to share the blocks with her. Siam's face fills with joy. Siam LOVES building blocks. He eagerly sits down to build with Cam. To show Siam she wants to be his friend, Cam asks Siam how he feels being in a new class. She listens to what he has to say. **Then, she hands him her favorite block because sharing is a good way to make friends, too.**

Cam's plan works out even better than she imagined. Cam feels so good that she made a friend by being a friend. And it is fun to have a friend who likes blocks as much as she does!

Key Words

change
feelings
friends
plan
share
smiles
waves

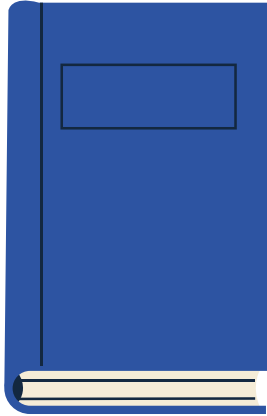


Listen

tempub.digital/el_story8

School Compound Word Cards

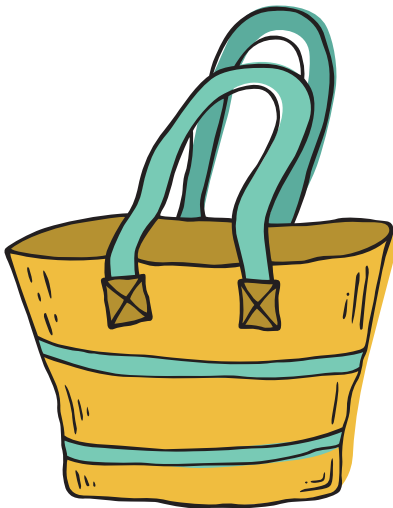
Make a copy of these cards for the Days 5 and 7 lessons.



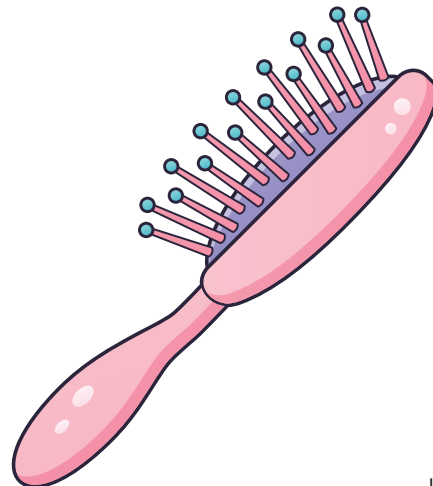
book



paint



bag



brush



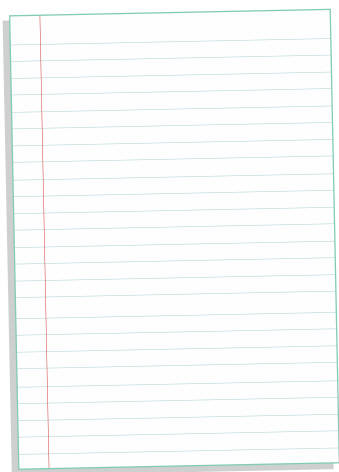
bookbag



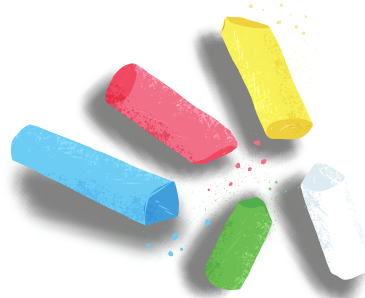
paintbrush

School Compound Word Cards *(cont.)*

Make a copy of these cards for the Days 5 and 7 lessons.



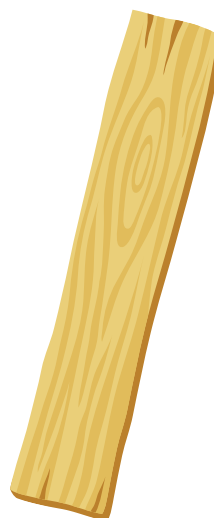
paper



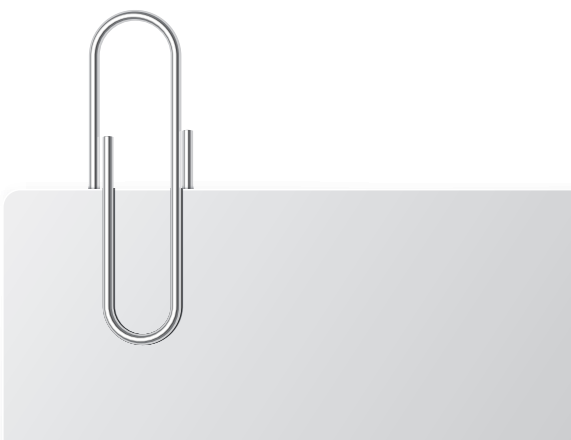
chalk



clip



board



paperclip



chalkboard

Ways to Say *I Share*

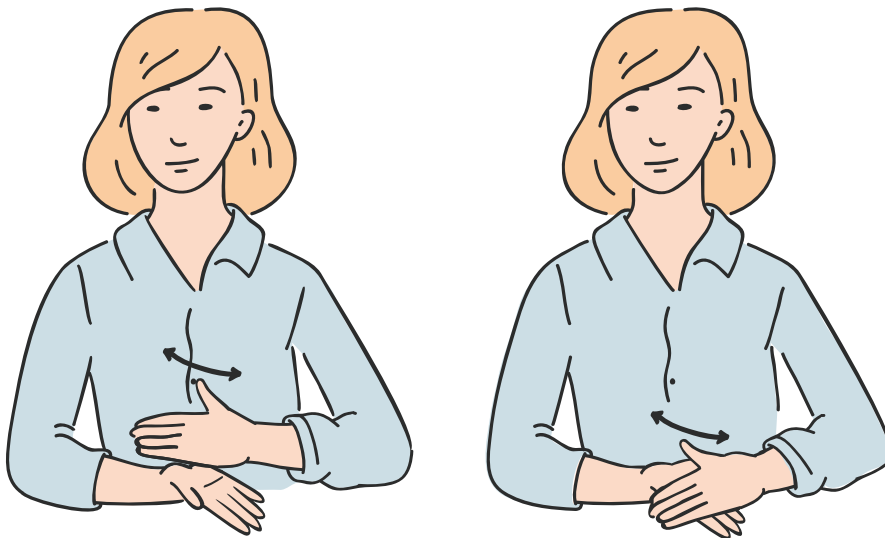
Use this as a reference for the Days 6, 7, and 9 lessons.

I Share in Different Languages

Language	Word	Pronunciation
Arabic	أشارك في	a-schawrk fi
Mandarin	我共享	whoa-gon-schahh
Portuguese	eu compartilho	ew com-par-tee-lyew
Spanish	Comparto.	kohm-par-toh
Vietnamese	tôi chia sẻ	thoi chea sahy

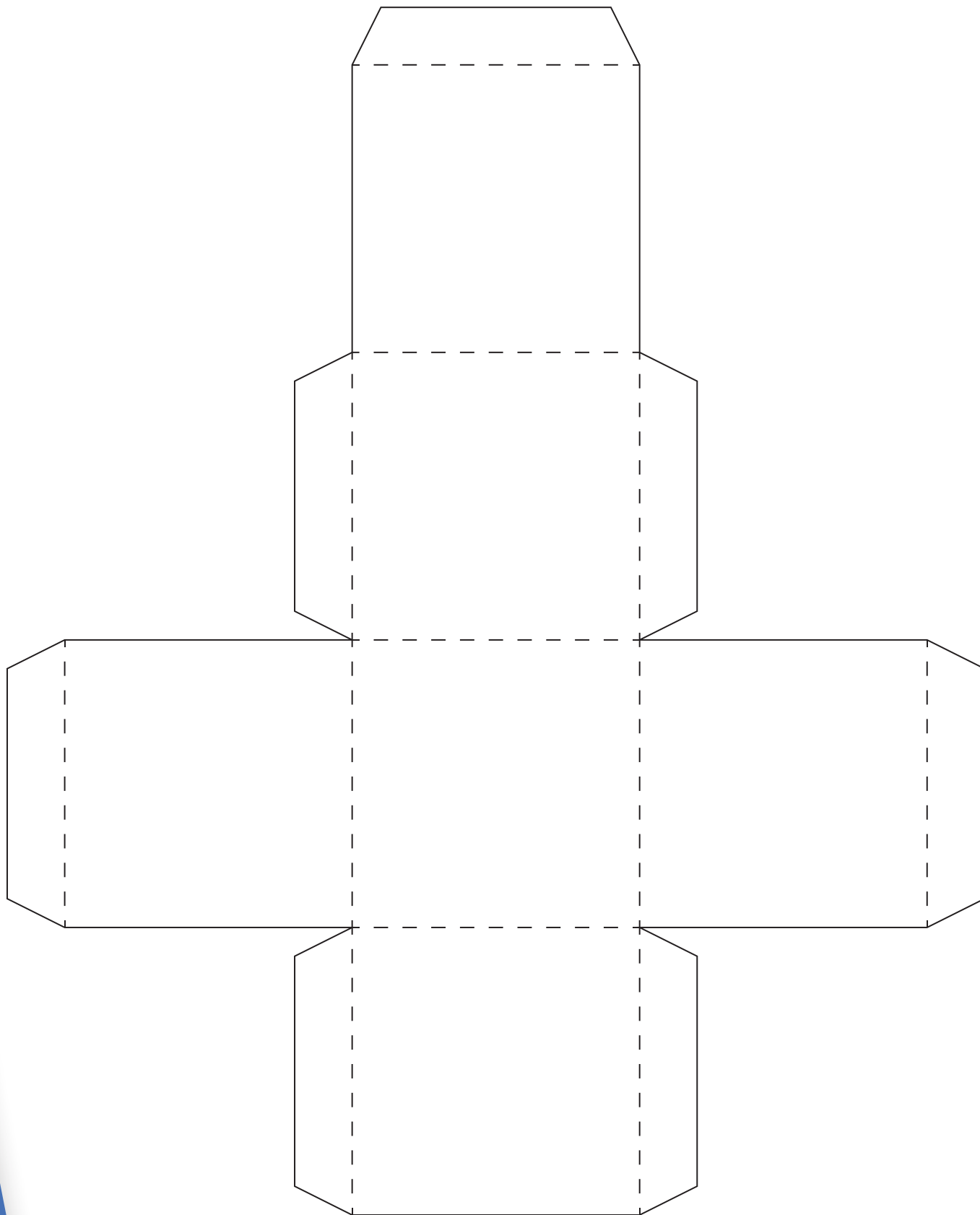
I Share in American Sign Language (ASL)

Say *I* by pointing to your chest with your pointer finger. Say *share* by opening your non-dominant hand flat, and placing it perpendicular to your body, with thumb pointing up. Make a loose T-shape by placing your dominant hand flat underneath your non-dominant hand. Move your non-dominant hand back and forth.



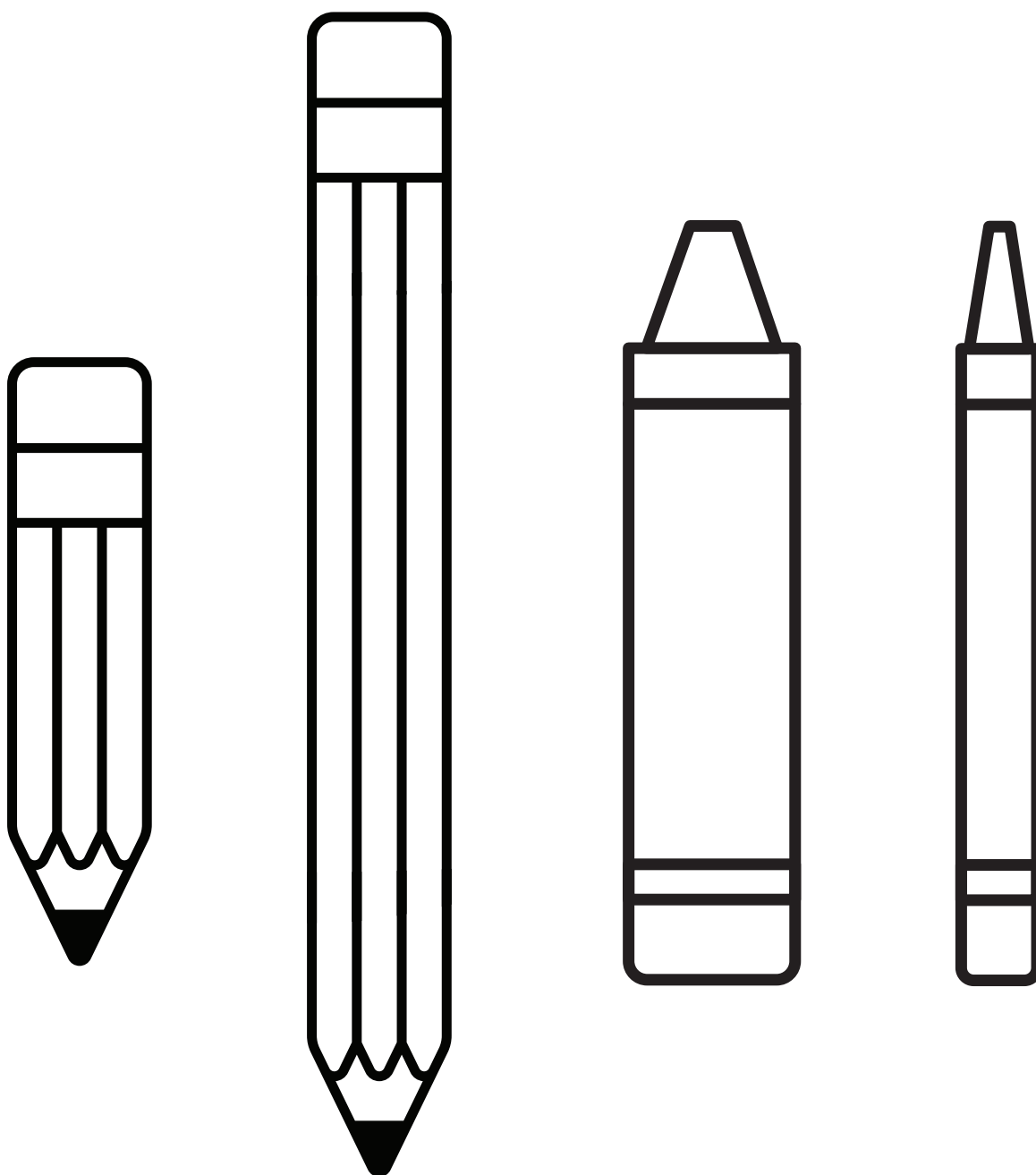
Cube Net

Make copies of this page for the Day 8 lesson. Cut along the perimeter of the image to prepare the cube net.



Name: _____

Crayons and Pencils



Adults, read this aloud: Listen as your teacher gives directions for how to mark each picture on the page.

Social Development and Executive Functioning

Social development and executive functioning include skills and competencies that are essential to getting along with others and managing cognitive processes to regulate behavior. Developing these skills is essential in early childhood as young learners set the foundation for healthy identity development and strong interpersonal relationships.

There are six components that will be assessed in this area:

- **Building Relationships**—Building relationships is the ability to establish and maintain relationships with peers and adults. This involves communicating with others, working together to achieve shared goals, and navigating social situations that may involve differences or conflicts.
- **Social Awareness**—Social awareness is the capacity of early learners to become aware of the needs, desires, and perspectives of others. This involves feeling empathy and showing care for others. Students use cues and situational context to learn that other people's perspectives may be different from their own. Social awareness also involves understanding and navigating social norms.
- **Decision-Making**—Decision-making involves the processes through which prekindergarten students gather information and make choices that balance their own needs and rights with others' needs and rights. When making personal choices and engaging in social interactions, students consider different ideas and solutions. They also reflect on and evaluate the consequences of their decision-making.
- **Working Memory**—Working memory is the capacity to hold information in mind for a short amount of time. Young learners draw on working memory to process information and complete tasks. This includes focusing when gathering information, organizing thoughts and information, following multistep directions, and problem-solving.
- **Attention**—Attention involves the ability to take in information from the environment and select and focus on one or more things. Students at this level are developing their abilities to sustain attention for increasing lengths of time. Attention involves focusing sufficiently to understand information or perform a task and ignore distractions.
- **Self-Control**—Self-control is the ability to manage one's own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions. This includes regulating emotions in various social situations, delaying gratification, and controlling impulses to make thoughtful and intentional choices.



Social Development and Executive Functioning Checklist

Date: _____

Teacher Directions: During each two-week unit, use this checklist to indicate each child's level based on your observations. Use the following symbols, and include notes about their work when possible.



Advancing



Meeting



Emerging



Beginning

Student Name	Building Relationships	Social Awareness	Decision-Making	Working Memory	Attention	Self-Control

Social Development and Executive Functioning Rubric

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use the *Social Development and Executive Functioning Checklist* to summarize these skills throughout this unit. Based on your notes and annotations on the checklist, determine at which level the student is working for each criterion. Circle or highlight the rating for each component.

	Advancing	Meeting	Emerging	Beginning
Building Relationships	Builds, sustains, and expands relationships.	Builds and sustains relationships.	Starting to build and sustain relationships.	Starting to build relationships with support.
Social Awareness	Considers the needs, desires, and perspectives of others when making choices.	Is aware of the needs, desires, and perspectives of others.	Starting to be aware of the needs and desires of others.	Starting to be aware of the needs of others with support.
Decision-Making	Considers multiple ideas when making choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Makes choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Starting to make choices that balance own needs and rights with others.	Starting to make choices with support.
Working Memory	Recalls information to follow multi-step directions and solve problems.	Recalls information to follow multi-step directions.	Starting to recall information to follow directions.	Starting to recall information for short amounts of time with support.
Attention	Focuses and sustains attention for increasing periods of time.	Focuses and sustains attention.	Starting to focus and sustain attention.	Starting to focus on one thing with support.
Self-Control	Manages own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions in various social situations.	Manages own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions in routine situations.	Starting to manage own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions.	Starting to manage own feelings and thoughts with support.