

# Explore & Learn

## Lessons and Activities

PK, TK, and VPK Instruction

Where Do We Live?

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# Our Community Park



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Illustrated by Giorgia Broseghini





My city is filled with people on the go doing many different jobs. It also has many places to visit and things to do.

I think my favorite place of all is our community park. Check it out!



This is Ms. McGee and Mr. Baker. They meet each other here almost every day to talk and play chess. They are teaching me how to play, too!





Kids like me play on this playground at the community park. The bridge to the tower is my favorite part. I feel like I'm in a castle!

My friends love to swing up high and pretend they are giants looking over the park.





My big brother loves to play baseball. His team plays a game every weekend on the park's baseball fields. My whole family cheers for him and his team!





My sister's sport is soccer. Some people, like my dad, call it football. My sister plays forward for her team. My family sits on the sidelines of the soccer pitch at the park to watch her play. We cheer extra loud when she scores a goal!





After every game, we go to the snack shack at the park. My sister gets a hot dog, and my brother gets nachos. Mami, Papi, and Abuela order coffee. It's a snow cone for me!





On some summer nights, there are concerts at the park amphitheater. We sit on the stone benches and listen. Sometimes my favorite mariachi band performs. It's my favorite because Papi plays the trumpet!





There is also a lot of open area at the community park. People fly kites, have picnics, read books, and bask in the sun on the big, grassy fields. They enjoy the park however they can.

The community park belongs to everyone!





Lots of animals love the community park, too. Birds nest in the trees, and there are little bugs everywhere. Rabbits come out in the early mornings and evenings. People walk their dogs through the fields. Little mice and other small animals see everything that goes on at the park!







I wish everyone had a park like ours. There is so much to see and do. We love our community park!



## Notes for the Grown-ups

This book allows for a rich shared reading experience for children who are early and developing readers. The 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:

Talk together about ways in which the park in this book might be similar to a park in the child's own community.

Visit a community park and enjoy all it has to offer!

Discuss why some cities and towns might build and maintain community parks.

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

Encourage the child to draw a picture of themselves in a community park.



# Where Do We Live?

## Teacher's Guide





## Day 8 Preparation and Materials

### Morning Meeting

- **Materials:** *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1); red rectangle cutout
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share the red rectangle cutout from Day 1.

### Literacy

- **Materials:** *Teach Letters and Sounds* routine (card 2); copy of *Our Community Park*; chart paper

### Literacy Explorations

- **Materials:** clay
- **Preparation:** Tear a palm-sized piece of clay for each student. Ensure that each Literacy Exploration center is prepared.

### Physical Development

- **Materials:** *Mail Carrier* vocabulary concept card; upbeat music
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share music.

### Phonological Awareness

- **Materials:** two connecting cubes or blocks per each student

### Mathematics

- n/a

### Social Development

- **Materials:** *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16); crayons
- **Preparation:** Prepare to distribute student-created social stories.

### Fine Motor Development

- **Materials:** *Sky Writing* routine (card 12); Number 8 (page 12 of *Student Activity Book*)

### Social Studies

- **Materials:** *School and Park Picture Cards* (pages 95–96); T-chart
- **Preparation:** Cut apart the *School and Park Picture Cards*. Prepare a T-chart with the labels *School* and *Park*.

### Creative Explorations

- **Materials:** Copy of *Our Community Park*; *Community Park Map* (page 13 in *Student Activity Book*); pencils; crayons
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share the brainstormed list of community park components from the Literacy lesson.

### Music and Movement

- **Materials:** “To the Rescue” audio recording (totherescue.mp3) and lyrics (page 94)
- **Preparation:** Prepare to share audio recording of the song.

### Closing Circle

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



If you have access to the digital manipulatives, you may choose to use the digital letter formation tools in place of the noted materials during the Fine Motor Development lesson.



## Morning Meeting



1. Follow the *Morning Meeting* routine (card 1).
2. Display the red rectangle cutout, and tell students it is a rectangle—a shape with four sides and four corners. Have students count the sides and corners.
3. Tell students they are going to search for rectangles in the room. They should stand by the object quietly when they've found one. Call on individual students to share what they found.
4. As each student shares, have the rest of the group draw the outline of the object in the air and count the sides to check if it is a rectangle.

### ★ ★ Free Play

Free Play is a fundamental part of the *Explore & Learn* day. See page 13 for free play ideas related to this unit.



## Literacy



### 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 *Our Community Park*. Say, "Yesterday we read this book, *Our Community Park*. While we read today, think about the question, *Why do we need community parks?*" Write the question on the board.
3. Read the book aloud, pausing to ask the following questions:
  - On pages 6–7, ask, "Why do some parks have playgrounds?"
  - On pages 12–13, ask, "Why do some parks sell food?"
  - On pages 14–15, ask, "Why do some parks have concerts?"
  - On pages 16–17, ask, "Why do some parks have open areas?"
4. After the reading, point to the question on the board, and ask, "Why do we need community parks?" Accept a variety of the student responses.
5. Tell students, "Parks are for everyone! If you were designing a park, what would your park include?" Provide the sentence frame, *If I design a park, I will include \_\_\_\_*. For example, you may say, "If I design a park, I will include a water fountain."
6. Have students turn and talk to partners to share their ideas with them. Then, have students share aloud. Record responses on chart paper. These ideas will be used during the Creative Explorations lesson.



## Literacy Explorations

15-20  
minutes

small groups



centers

Meet with one group to deliver Small-Group Lesson 3 (page 16), while the rest of the students complete self-chosen centers. For more information about independent learning centers, see page 17.

## Physical Development

10-15  
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together, and share the *Mail Carrier* vocabulary concept card. Have students share their connections and experiences. Ask, “What are some things mail carriers deliver?” Have students brainstorm ideas.
2. Say, “I am going to play some music. We are going to pretend to be mail carriers. Think about the types of things you will deliver. You can drive the mail truck or walk up to people’s homes to drop off the mail like the last time we played. You might also wave to a neighbor or bend down to pet someone’s dog!” Show movements along with the new actions (e.g., wave to a pretend neighbor as you walk by or bend down to pet a pretend dog).
3. Say, “When the music stops, you will freeze! Stop right where you are, and freeze like a statue. When you freeze, your brain tells your body not to move. Your brain controls your body. When the music starts again, you can keep delivering the mail.”
4. Play music, and have students practice moving and freezing several times. During the pauses, praise students for controlling their bodies and staying focused.

## Phonological Awareness

10-15  
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together, and hold up two cubes that are connected. Say, “Words are made of sounds. Beginning sounds are called onsets, and ending sounds are called *rimes*. This card shows the word *road*. Let’s break the word *road* into beginning and ending sounds to find the ending sound, or rime.”
2. Say, “The onset of *road* is /r/ (disconnect and hold out the first cube with your right hand), and the rime of *road* is /ōd/ (hold out the second cube with your left hand).”
3. Hold out the second cube. Ask, “What sound does this cube represent?” (/ōd/) Say, “You found the rime, /ōd/!”
4. Connect the two cubes, and choose another word. (*tool*) Have students repeat the word, segment it into onset and rime, then state the rime.
5. Distribute two connecting cubes to each student. Continue the activity with several other words, allowing students to manipulate the cubes as they segment the words.
  - shop—/ōp/
  - guide—/īd/
  - park—/ark/
  - game—/ām/

### ★ ★ 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 say, “Let’s tell some math stories. Pretend we’re at the snack shack at the community park. I bought one juice box.” Hold up your pointer finger on your right hand. Continue, “My mom also bought one juice box.” Hold up your pointer finger on your left hand. Ask, “How many juice boxes did we buy?” (two) Have students share ideas for how they figured out the answer to the question.
2. Share several more number stories, having students use their fingers to represent the items in the stories. Pause as you tell the stories, discussing how students should use their fingers to show what is happening.
  - Sam bought two hot dogs. Cam bought three hot dogs. How many hot dogs did they buy in all?
  - Sam bought three ice cream cones. He dropped one. How many are left?
  - Cam bought four bottles of water. She drank two. How many are left?
  - I have two soft pretzels and one cookie. How many snacks do I have in all?
  - Cam has three carrots and two celery sticks. How many vegetables does she have in all?

## Language Development Support

Share and discuss pages 12–13 from the book *Our Community Park* to provide context and visuals for the number stories.



## Social Development



1. Gather students together, and show the social stories they have been writing.
2. Emphasize that even though we are not finished yet, sharing your progress with someone can be a great way to celebrate what you have done so far, and think about what you still need to do. Have students share what they have worked on so far with partners. Then have partners share plans for what they will work on today.
3. Have partners say *thank you* to one another, then move to their individual workspaces and continue to work on their social stories. Encourage students to add more details. Support the remaining students in completing step 5 of the *Writing Social Stories* routine (card 16) by scribing their stories.



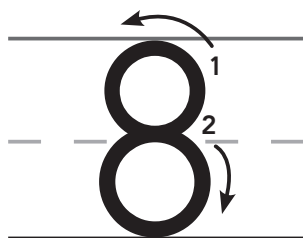
## Fine Motor Development

10-15  
minutes

independent work



whole group



1. Have students move to their workspaces, and say, “Today, we will be writing the number 8. This number can be tricky because we have to curve four times.”
2. Follow the *Sky Writing* routine (card 12) to make 8. As you model making the lines in the air, say, “Curve around, curve back, curve up, curve down.” Have students practice.
3. Model writing 8 in clear view of students. As you make the movements with your writing tool, say, “Curve around, curve back, curve up, curve down.”
4. Have students complete *Number 8* (page 12 of *Student Activity Book*). As students work, monitor for proper pencil grasp, pressure, and paper positioning, correcting as needed.

### Scaffolded Support

Provide multi-sensory ways of practicing the number 8, such as sand trays or create textured number mats.



## Social Studies

15-25  
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together, and display the T-chart you prepared. Read the labels *School* and *Park* aloud, and ask, “What are some things you would see at a school? What are some things you would see at a park?” Have students turn and talk to partners.
2. Display each *School* and *Park Picture Card* (pages 95–96), one at a time. Have students name the item in each picture. Model sorting the picture according to where it belongs in the community. For example, you might think aloud, “This is a picture of a pencil. Would I use a pencil at school or at the park? A pencil is for writing and drawing. I’m more likely to do that at school. So, I will add this to *School*.”
3. Choose a student to select a card and sort it. Support students by asking, “What is this? Where would you see this in the community? How do you know?” Have the group confirm the student’s sorting with thumbs-ups.
4. Continue the activity until all cards have been sorted.

### Extension Idea

Challenge students to think of other locations in the community. Have students brainstorm objects that could be found in those locations.





## Creative Explorations

15-25  
minutes

whole group



independent work

1. Gather students together, and display the brainstormed community park components from the Literacy lesson. Say, “We came up with a lot of things that you might see in a community park.” Read the brainstormed list aloud.
2. Display pages 2–3 of *Our Community Park*. Say, “Now you get to design a park that includes all the things you want!” Have students turn and talk to partners, sharing two things they will include in their parks.
3. Have students move to their workspaces and begin adding things to their *Community Park Map* (page 12 in *Student Activity Book*).
4. After five minutes, ask, “How will people get from one place to another in your park?” Encourage students to add roads or walkways to connect the things they included in their parks.

### Scaffolded Support

Have copies of *Our Community Park* available for students to consult as they work.



## Music and Movement

10-15  
minutes

whole group

1. Gather students together. Play the audio for “To the Rescue.” Encourage students to join in when they are comfortable.
2. Tell students they are going to add movements to match the lines of the song.
3. Sing the first two lines of the song. Ask students to share ideas for a movement that matches those lines. You may make a final selection by choosing yourself or asking the class to vote. Practice the first two lines of the song, adding the movement.
4. Repeat with the remaining lines of the song. Sing “To the Rescue” with the movements as a whole group.

## Closing Circle

5-10  
minutes

whole group

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.



# mail carrier



**a community helper who  
delivers letters and packages**



# mail carrier

## Related Words

delivery mailbox stamp

## Sentence

The **mail carrier** delivered cards to my house on my birthday.

-----

## Engage

- ★ How are mail carriers important to their communities?
- ★ When you want to send a letter to someone, what steps do you need to follow?
- ★ Reread the sentence. Can you think of other occasions when a mail carrier might deliver special mail?
- ★ Look at the picture. What do you think is in the packages that the mail carrier is delivering?







# Feeling Nervous

Cam E. Chameleon is dressed in her most impressive cape. Cam loves to dress up, and today her family is going to Hero Dress-Up Day at the library. Cam is extra excited because Ray's and Siam's families are going to meet them there!

As they get close to the library, they see a lot of cars. The whole parking lot is full, and they have to park far away. When they finally arrive, all they can see is an ocean of people. It looks like everyone from the whole town is here.

Being around lots of people makes Cam feel nervous. Her body shakes a bit, and her throat feels tight. She even feels a little sweaty. Cam hugs her mom's leg to help her calm down. **When Cam gets nervous, she likes to stay close to people she knows well.** Her dad spots Ray's and Siam's families, and they wriggle their way through the crowd to greet their friends. Now that Cam is around her friends, she feels less nervous. Her body starts to calm down.

Cam, Ray, and Siam are all playing when Cam realizes she isn't sure where her family is. She starts to feel nervous again. Ray and Siam comfort her and tell her they will help her look for her parents. Cam knows she has to be brave and stay calm.

Before long, the friends see Cam's mom. She is chatting with a work friend. Cam runs to her mom and gives her a huge hug. She looks at her friends and says, "Thank you for helping me find my parents."

Cam knows that she feels more comfortable when she is around people she knows well. It helps her stay calm and be brave even when she feels nervous. She is happy she had her friends to help her today!

## Key Words

calm  
comfortable  
excited  
friends  
nervous  
shakes  
sweaty  
tight



Listen

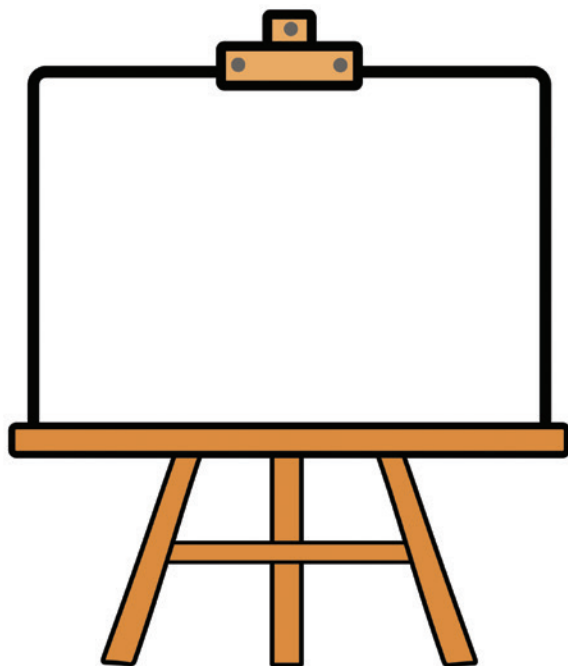


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# School and Park Picture Cards

Make copies of these cards for the Day 8 lesson.





## School and Park Picture Cards *(cont.)*

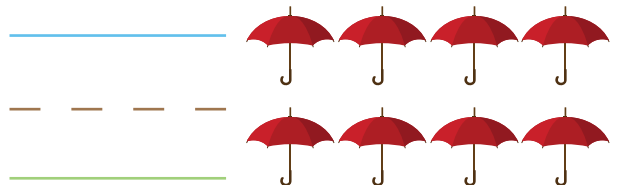
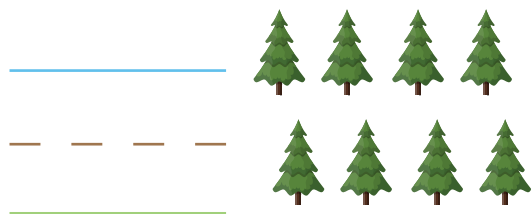
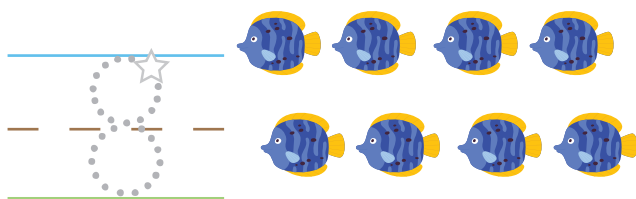
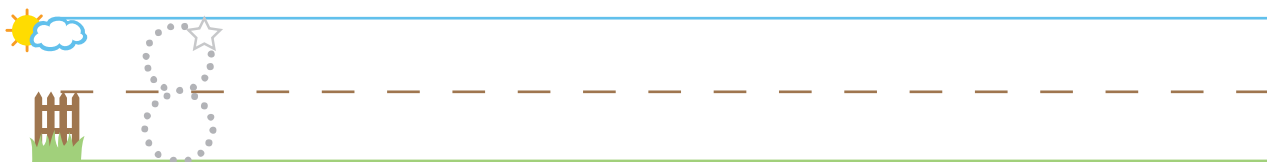
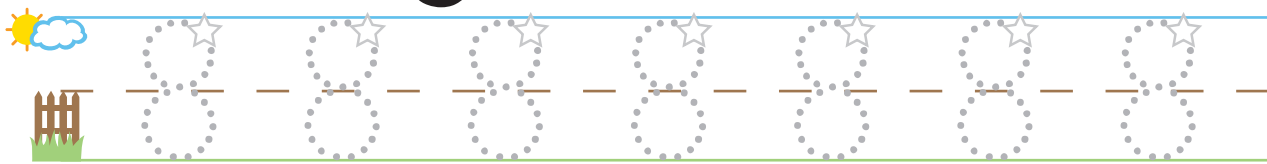
Make copies of these cards for the Day 8 lesson.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Number 8

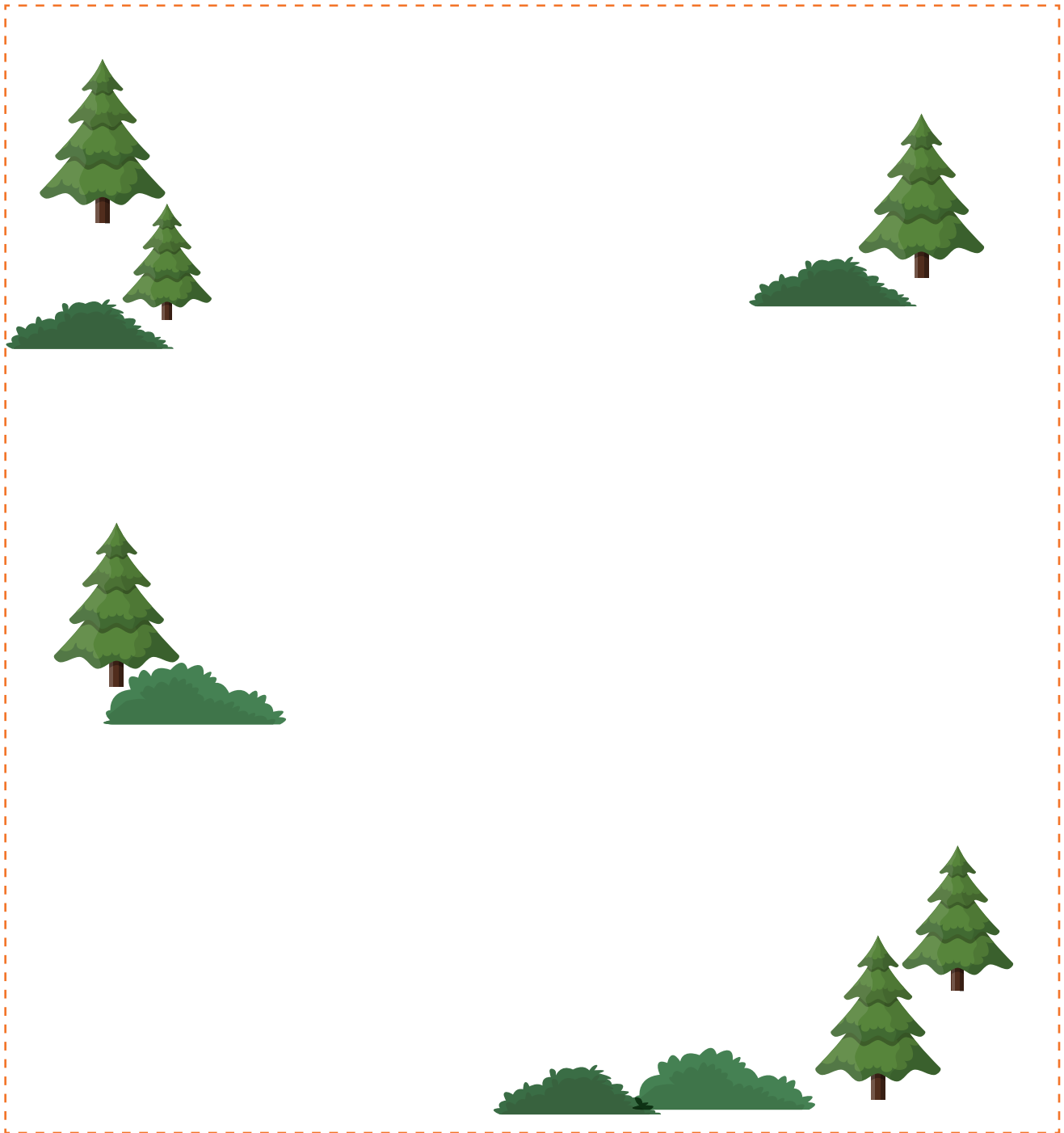


Adults, read this aloud: Start at each star. Trace each number. Then, write your own numbers.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Community Park Map



**Adults, read this aloud:** Make a map by drawing things you would include in your own park.



# 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 |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|
|              |                        |                  |                 |                |           |              |
|              |                        |                  |                 |                |           |              |
|              |                        |                  |                 |                |           |              |
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|              |                        |                  |                 |                |           |              |
|              |                        |                  |                 |                |           |              |
|              |                        |                  |                 |                |           |              |



## 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  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Building Relationships</b> | Builds, sustains, and expands relationships.  | Builds and sustains relationships.  | Starting to build and sustain relationships.                            | Starting to build relationships with support.                          |
| <b>Social Awareness</b>       | 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.              |
| <b>Decision-Making</b>        | 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.                                 |
| <b>Working Memory</b>         | 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. |
| <b>Attention</b>              | 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.                           |
| <b>Self-Control</b>           | 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.             |