



The Child Care Connection

Child Care Support Services

Summer 2026 Newsletter

Kindergarten Readiness Tips

How to Help Your Child Thrive

Starting kindergarten is an exciting milestone that marks the beginning of a child's formal education. However, this transition can feel overwhelming for both children and parents. Preparing your child for kindergarten success involves more than just learning the alphabet; it also includes developing social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills.

By focusing on key areas of child development, you can ensure your child enters school with confidence and enthusiasm.

Key Takeaways

- Kindergarten readiness includes academic, social, emotional, and physical skills.
- Engaging in early learning activities at home can enhance cognitive development.
- Encouraging independence helps children feel confident in a structured school environment.
- Establishing a routine before school starts makes the transition smoother.

How to Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten

1. Strengthen Early Learning Skills

While formal academics aren't required before kindergarten, developing early literacy and numeracy skills can provide a strong foundation.

Here are some fun ways to promote learning at home:

- Read daily** – Reading aloud improves vocabulary, listening skills, and imagination.
- Practice letter recognition** – Point out letters in books, signs, and packaging.
- Encourage counting** – Count objects around the house, like snacks, toys, or steps.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes** – These improve memory and phonemic awareness.
- Introduce writing tools** – Have your child practice drawing, coloring, and tracing letters.

2. Develop Social and Emotional Readiness

In kindergarten, children interact with peers, follow rules, and handle new emotions. Help your child build social-emotional skills by:

- Practicing sharing and turn-taking** – Play simple board games or group activities.
- Encouraging independence** – Allow your child to make small choices, like picking out clothes.
- Teaching patience and self-regulation** – Help them practice waiting their turn in conversations or activities.
- Identifying emotions** – Read books about feelings and discuss different ways to express emotions.

3. Improve Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Fine motor skills help with writing, while gross motor skills aid in physical coordination. Encourage development through:

- Fine motor activities** – Coloring, cutting, using playdough, and buttoning clothes.
- Gross motor exercises** – Running, jumping, skipping, and climbing to strengthen muscles.
- Hand-eye coordination** – Playing catch, stringing beads, and doing puzzles.

4. Encourage Self-Care and Independence

Children in kindergarten are expected to complete basic self-care tasks. Prepare them by practicing:

- Using the restroom independently** (including washing hands).
- Dressing and undressing** (zipping coats, putting on shoes).
- Eating without assistance** (opening lunchboxes, using utensils).
- Following simple instructions** (such as cleaning up toys).

5. Establish a Routine

A predictable routine helps children feel secure and prepared for school life. Before kindergarten starts, implement:

- A consistent bedtime** – Aim for 10–12 hours of sleep each night.
- A structured morning routine** – Get dressed, eat breakfast, and brush teeth at the same time each day.
- Scheduled learning time** – Even short daily activities, like reading or drawing, build focus and learning habits.

6. Foster a Love for Learning

Kindergarten is about exploration and discovery! Encourage a positive attitude toward learning by:

- Asking open-ended questions** – “What do you think will happen next in the story?”
- Letting your child explore interests** – Whether it's dinosaurs, space, or music, find ways to incorporate learning.
- Making learning fun** – Use games, songs, and hands-on activities to keep engagement high.

Signs Your Child May Need Extra Support

Every child develops at their own pace, but some signs such as struggles with speech development, fine motor skills, separation anxiety or following routines and transitions may indicate they need extra help before starting kindergarten. If you have concerns about your child's developmental milestones, don't hesitate to seek expert advice.

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TRAINING

Milestone Mission: Charting the Growth Course

August 18, 2026 | 5:30-7:30 PM

Location: TBD

Join us on your Milestone Mission to identify key developmental milestones for Infants and Toddlers.

You'll learn how to use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to help determine what typical development is and what might be considered at risk for a delay. Resources and materials will be shared for communicating concerns with families and planning lessons to support areas of need.

Contact Renee to register (607) 432-0061 x119 | rroof@charitiesccdo.org.

Ongoing Financial Management

September 17, 2026 | 5:30-7:30 PM

Location: TBD

In this course, participants will learn how to establish solid financial record keeping practices for their child care businesses. This will include developing an accounting system, learning the difference between income and expenses, learning proper documentation and record keeping for all revenue and expenses, and establishing baseline revenue and expenses for their individual child care programs. Contact Kim to register (607) 432-0061 | kahearn@charitiesccdo.org.

Annual Mandatory CACFP Training

October 1, 2026 | 5:30-7:00 PM

Location: TBD

This years theme for the annual training is “Snack Attack!”. All CACFP Participating providers are required to attend this training for this calendar year. Contact Kim to confirm your attendance at this required training (607) 432-0061 x 128 | kahearn@charitiesccdo.org.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK!

You may have heard that there are some changes happening on the child care team. I have assumed the role of Program Director; Renee will be taking on a new role as Infant Toddler Specialist, Vicki is still your go-to for all things CACFP, and Kasey is here to help us all! We are in the process of adding a registrar and child care specialist to round out our team. The one thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to support all child care programs in Otsego County. Throughout this year we plan to offer more trainings, networking events, and overall support for your business.

We are encouraging our Family and Group Family Providers to enroll in our Empire State Family Child Care Collaborative (ESFCCC). This is a free service that allows you access to business support and coaching, free child care management software to help streamline daily operations and reduces your administrative workload, and comes with a variety of additional benefits. Most importantly, enrolling in ESFCCC will give you more time to focus on the reason you got into child care in the first place, providing a safe, caring, and fun place for children!

Please reach out if you are looking for specific training topics, or have ideas for networking events!

Kim Ahearn

Staff Development and Professional Growth

Job-embedded professional development is learning based on reflection and engagement grounded in daily teaching practice. Caregivers will learn and grow the most when professional development is individualized to each caregiver's specific learning needs. This can be accomplished through ongoing coaching, observations, portfolios, peer learning teams, and reflective supervision.

As your CCR&R agency, we can support you by observing your teaching practices, sharing self-assessment tools, guiding you to reflect on your strengths and areas for growth, sharing new strategies to address challenging areas, and helping you to build a portfolio that documents new learning applied in your classroom/program. If you are interested in participating in individualized professional development, please contact Renee or Kim.

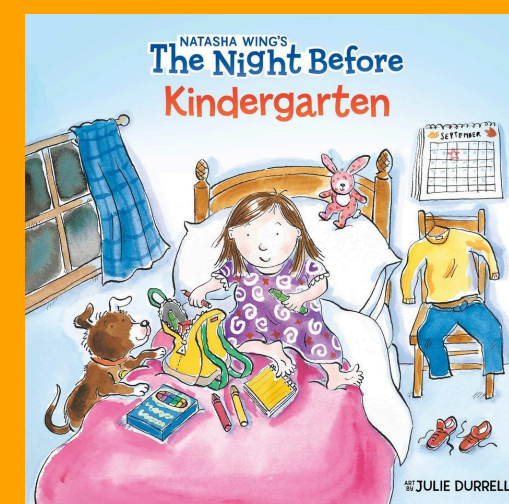
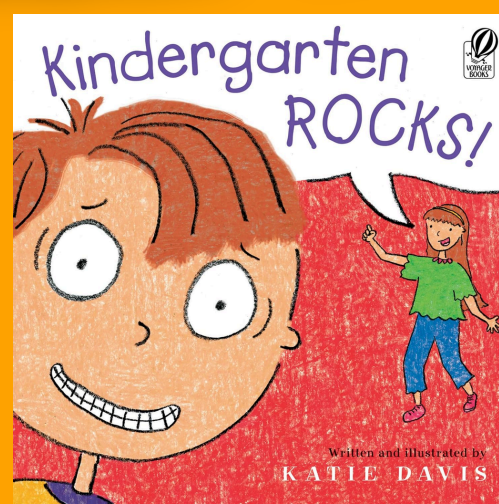
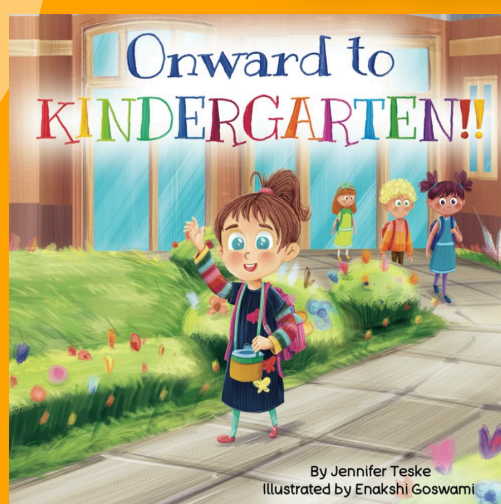
Infant Toddler Corner

Hello everyone! I am excited to share that I am moving into the Infant Toddler Specialist position! I am looking forward to supporting you in providing high quality care for your littlest children, as well as offering trainings focused on infant and toddler development and caregiving.

I will continue to be the registrar for our family daycare providers and the CACFP program inspector until we hire a new team member to fill that role.

Wishing you a fun-filled summer!
Renee

SUMMER READING!



USDA Expands Fluid Milk Options in CACFP:

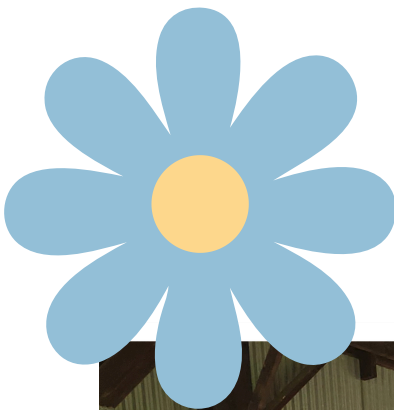
What Childcare Providers and
Sponsors Need to Know

Milk has always been an important part of the CACFP meal pattern. It supports children's growth and nutrition, and it is one of the meal components sites and sponsors must document carefully for compliance. Now, USDA has finalized a new rule that expands the types of fluid milk that may be offered in CACFP and other Child Nutrition Programs.

CACFP operators may now serve whole milk and reduced-fat, or 2%, milk to children ages 2 and older. This does not mean every program must change the milk they serve. It simply gives childcare centers, and sponsors more flexibility to choose the milk options that work best for their participants, menus, purchasing process, and state guidance.



Child Care Support Services
Catholic Charities
of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie Counties
176 Main Street
Oneonta, NY 13820



Summer Kick Off Provider Event

On July 14th we held our Summer Kick off event for Family and Group Family Child Care providers at Fortin Park in Oneonta. Thank you to those who joined us! We hope you're enjoying the summer bucket of goodies!



Summer Holidays



Q E V J R H Y T L Z P F B I K I N G X S
W D C S E M A G N S U O S H S K O O B C
F A O I C E C R E A M T O V E P I J Z I
X N T B K G W L P H R Q E L R U T D R N
P O T E L O C S M A N B Y L I M A F E C
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V A K R B X U W Q H S G N I E O N A C L
M G Y L U J D P S E N Z B E A C H I F R

August	canoeing	holidays	pool	sprinkler
barbecue	cottage	ice cream	popsicles	strawberries
beach	family	July	puzzles	summer camp
biking	friends	lake	reading	swimming
bonfires	games	lemonade	relax	traveling
books	hammock	memories	road trips	vacation
camping	hiking	picnics	sports	watarmelon