



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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Welcome to Kindergarten 2006 - 2007!

Congratulations on making it through your first month in Kindergarten! Kindergarten is filled with learning, social growth, hugs, smiles, and a few tears. Some of your little ones are experiencing school for the first time, while others are old pros. For every child, this year will be a unique adventure, with you as the captain.

The task of captain can be daunting at times. The best captains understand the capabilities of their crew and plan accordingly, regardless of the experiences they may encounter.

Just like great captains, great teachers know they must first get to know their "crew" inside and out. By doing this, teachers can plan experiences that meet their students' needs and increase student achievement. Assessment is the compass that drives instruction.

Each school may require specific assessments. Most kindergarten assessments typically assess letter identification, phonological awareness, concept of word, and the ability to use print in writing. After completing these basic assessments, you

will pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of each student, which will assist you in forming literacy groups and even guided reading groups.

You may have a class that can identify whether or not two words rhyme, but can't formulate their own rhyming word. Perhaps your students begin the year knowing many letters and sounds, but have difficulty hearing the sounds in words. Such knowledge helps you focus your instruction to best meet all of your students' needs.

Teaching without assessing would be like a captain embarking on a voyage without maps, a compass, or watching the weather.

You may experience smooth sailing, but there is a high likelihood of getting lost and missing your destination.

For more information on how to assess your kindergarten students and use the results to drive instruction, RPDP offers the three credit GRIP-K class each semester. The DIBELS PDE class is currently being offered through Curriculum Professional Development. Both classes can be found on Pathlore.

What's in a Name?

"Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the 'zone of proximal development'" (Kearsley, 1994). With our guidance, and through social interaction, we want to teach children just beyond their current knowledge. How can we begin teaching our little ones when we do not yet know what this "zone" is?

A good place to start is with their names. Most children come in with knowledge of their name. They have heard it, seen it, and some can write and read it. When you use students' names to teach power standards, you help to create a community in your classroom, while creating bonds between you and individual students. Students are never more delighted than when they hear their name!

"Kindergarten children are confident in spirit, infinite in resources, and eager to learn. Everything is still possible."

- Robert Fulghum

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Curriculum Corner "Names"

Hello Book:

1. Create a page with each child's name on it using multi-colored construction paper which says "Hello, Child's First Name".
2. Use the book to welcome your students daily, as well as highlight skills such as:

- Letter identification
- Beginning/ending sounds
- Alphabetical order

Math:

Give children a strip of paper where they can write each letter of their name in a separate block. Have the students cut out the blocks. Possible skills include:

- Counting number of letters
- Placing their name next to a buddies and comparing
- Create a graph collecting data on: number of letters, beginning letters, etc.

Pocket Chart:

1. Write each student's name on a sentence strip and take each child's picture. These can be used for pocket charts throughout the year. Some ideas include:

- Matching pictures to name.
- Structured sentences such as "_____ is a good friend."