

Preparing for Kindergarten Success: A Guide for Families



- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

Preschool Learning

Standards now,
knowledge for a lifetime.



Dear Family,

As you begin thinking about preparing your child for success in school, *Preschool Learning* will give you a sample of some of the things he or she should experience before entering kindergarten. The booklet also has helpful tips and activities you can use during family routine times that will be helpful to your child before entering into kindergarten.

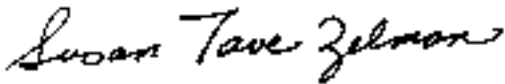
The guide is based upon Ohio's new academic content standards that help parents and others who work with preschool children understand what these young learners should know and be able to do in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. Ohio now has academic content standards for the preschool years through grade 12.

It is important to note that the information in this guide is **not** the complete set of standards; rather, this information is designed to highlight a select number of skills that will help your child succeed in kindergarten.

To view the complete set of standards, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, visit the Ohio Department of Education Web site at **www.OhioAcademicStandards.com**.

I sincerely thank you for the time, interest and energy you are investing in your child's education. I hope this guide is one of many tools you use to help your child achieve success inside and outside the classroom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Tave Zelman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Tave Zelman
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dear Family,

The journey of learning begins the day your child is born. The early years before formal schooling are a time of tremendous growth and change and a time to lay the foundations for success in school.

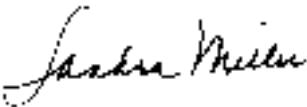
As your child's first teacher, you play an important role in these early years. To help you, the Ohio Department of Education has developed early learning content standards for preschool children in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

These standards are statements that describe the knowledge and skills young children should learn, with adult guidance, before entering kindergarten. Based on research, these standards serve as the foundation for creating meaningful early learning experiences within all preschools, child care settings and the home. The preschool standards are aligned with Ohio's kindergarten standards that help teachers, children and families understand what is expected in kindergarten.

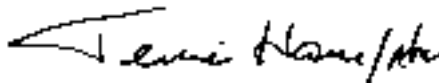
The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services are working in partnership to inform families of preschool age children about the important role you play in the early education of your child and to provide supporting resources for your efforts. This booklet contains examples of suggested tips and activities to assist you as you play and work with your child. You don't need special training or expensive materials to do the activities – just include them in the things you already do together every day.

On behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, we want to thank you for continuing to celebrate and support your child's educational and developmental progress.

Sincerely,



Sandra M. Miller, Director
Office of Early Childhood Education
Ohio Department of Education



Terrie Hare, Chief
Bureau of Child Care and
Development
Office of Children and Families
Ohio Department of Job and
Family Services



Children who enter kindergarten knowing many different words, carrying on conversations with other children and adults, and sharing information and asking questions are better prepared to learn to read and write. During preschool years, they learn to form the different sounds words make through hearing stories read to them and by reciting nursery rhymes and playing other word games. When young children hear books read aloud to them, they learn how to listen and how to talk about the stories, and they add new words to their vocabularies.

Parents and preschool teachers help children become competent and confident readers and writers by reading to and with them and providing them with the materials they need to practice their reading and writing skills. Hands-on experiences show young learners the enjoyment and power that come from reading and writing well.



Phonetic Awareness, Word Recognition and Fluency

What this means: *Be able to read well by sounding out words, recognizing the word in print and reading the words out loud easily.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Read their first and last name.
- Recognize and say some upper case (A, B, C) and lower case (a, b, c) letters.
- Recognize letters in their first name.

Check your understanding: Upper and Lowercase letters

Uppercase: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Lowercase: abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

- Know that letters are used to make words, such as c-a-t, d-o-g.
- Be able to read some common words by sight such as STOP on a stop sign.
- Recognize rhymes in familiar stories, poems and songs.
- Recognize when words begin with the same sound such as bat and bird.

- Tell the number of syllables (word parts) by clapping hands or snapping fingers while saying the word.

Check your understanding: **Syllables**



Words with one syllable: bat, dog, help, it, run, book

Words with two syllables: apple (ap-ple), baseball (base-ball), water (wa-ter), paper (pa-per).

Words with three syllables: octopus (oc-to-pus), calendar (cal-en-dar), ladybug (la-dy-bug), telephone (tel-e-phone).



Acquisition of Vocabulary

What this means: *Be able to read new words by using clues in a story, asking questions, listening and talking to adults and friends.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Use pictures to learn the meanings of words.
- Recognize words, signs and symbols in everyday life such as the word SCHOOL on the side of a bus, a street sign, symbols seen along the road such as deer crossing and park signs, or the word EXIT on a sign in the grocery store.
- Use words and group them in common categories when asked such as color words (blue, red), food words (apple, pizza), and direction words (up, down).



Reading Process - Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies

What this means: *Children learn the basic ideas and meanings of different types of print materials such as storybooks and reference books, recipes, greeting cards.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Understand that print has meaning by retelling a story or giving information related to print.

- Hold a book right side up, turn pages from front to back and pretend to read words from left to right.
- Know the difference between pictures and print.
- Use pictures to show the order of events in stories read aloud.
- Be able to ask and answer questions about what has been read aloud.
- Identify favorite books.
- Predict (what's next) in stories read aloud.



Reading Applications - Informational, Technical and Persuasive Text

What this means: *Reading, understanding, explaining and giving feedback about different kinds of written materials such as story books, magazines, science books, maps and computer Web sites.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Use pictures to help understand the story or information.

Check your understanding: *Using Pictures to Understand What is Being Read*



Draw a picture together with your child and each of you tell a story about the picture.

- Tell what a story is about.
- Follow simple directions.



Reading Applications - Literary Text

What this means: *Being able to read stories, poems, fables, short stories and plays. Explain the meaning of what is read, name the main characters, understand where and when the story takes place and guess what happens next based on what has already been read.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Identify characters in favorite stories.
- Retell or act out a story that has been read.

Check your understanding: **Remembering What Has Been Heard** 

Read a story to your child, then ask your child to retell something from the story. Is he or she able to tell you the main happenings in the story? Did he or she understand the story?

- Begin to understand the difference between fantasy (make-believe) and reality (fact).



Writing Processes

What this means: *Using the steps of prewriting (planning, getting ideas), writing (first attempt), and then revising and editing to produce the final product.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Create writing ideas by talking to others.
- Begin to tell why he or she is writing such as writing invitations to a birthday party, thank-you notes to grandmother or a note to the teacher.
- Express ideas by telling them to a parent or teacher who writes them down.
- Begin to use lists of simple words or help from a teacher to put thoughts into writing.
- Share writing samples and pictures with others.



Writing Applications

What this means: *Learn about, select and use words for different kinds of writing such as letters, essays and stories. Learn how to write for different readers.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Write simple stories using pictures, letter-like marks or letters.
- Name and label familiar objects (with help from an adult).
- Show what he or she knows about writing by starting at the top of the page and scribbling or “writing” in horizontal lines left to right, top to bottom.



Writing Conventions

What this means: *Understanding and applying punctuation, grammar and spelling rules (i.e., a sentence begins with a capital letter, a sentence may end with a period, question mark).*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Print letters of own name and other common words (e.g. color words, animal names, words of interest to child), with help from an adult.
- Try to write familiar words using letter-like marks or letters.
- Begin to be aware that letters come together in groups to make words (c-a-t is cat), and that words group together to make sentences with spaces between groups (The cat is fat.)



Research

What this means: *Know how to gather information for all school subjects using books, computers, magazines and other sources. Tell about what is found by writing and speaking to others.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Ask questions about school activities and areas of interest.
- Use observations and books to learn about new things (with help from an adult).
- Remember information learned about new things and talk about them with others.



Communication: Oral and Visual

What this means: *Speaking to others about different topics.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Listen to speakers, stories, songs or poems.
- Follow simple spoken (oral) instructions.

Check your understanding: Following Simple Oral Instructions ✓

Help your child learn to follow simple instructions with the game, “Simon Says.” For example, Simon says, “Touch your head.” Simon says, “Touch your toes. Now, touch your knee.” If the child touches his or her knee, he or she loses a turn because you didn’t say “Simon says.” Let your child play Simon and give you the orders.

- Speak clearly and understandably.
- Tell others about own experiences or creations.
- Join with others in reciting poems and nursery rhymes and in singing songs.

Tips and Activities

- ✓ Read aloud to your child every day. Set aside time before or after dinner and time before bed.
- ✓ As you read:
 - Let your child hold the book and turn the pages.
 - Move your finger along under the words.
 - Point to and talk about the pictures that go with the words.
 - Pause while you read and ask your child what he or she thinks might happen next.
 - Encourage him or her to ask questions about what is being read.
 - Talk about a word that is new to your child.
 - At the end of the story, talk about your child's favorite parts.
- ✓ Read rhymes to your child, such as "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see? I see a black cat looking at me." As you read, stop before a rhyming word and encourage your child to fill in the blank. Teach your child some nursery rhymes and sing songs together.
- ✓ Point out words that are a part of everyday life, such as words on billboards (McDonald's, Pizza Hut), cereal boxes (Wheaties, Cheerios) and street signs (STOP, SCHOOL).
- ✓ Visit the library monthly and pick out books with your child. Ask your child to "read" a favorite story to you.
- ✓ Think about giving books or writing and drawing materials to your child as presents for birthdays and other occasions.
- ✓ Ask your child to tell a story for you to write down. Read it back to him or her.
- ✓ Make a book out of your child's writing. Have him or her draw pictures to go with the words or scribbles.
- ✓ Ask your child's teacher or a librarian to suggest books that you can read to your child.



Long before entering school, children are interested in math and numbers. They begin to develop math skills as they hand one cookie to each of their friends, divide a sandwich in half to share with a brother or sister, pour water from one container to another, put all the big buttons in one pile and the smaller ones in another or clap a rhythmic pattern to words or a song. Everyday experiences prepare children to understand mathematics.

Preschool teachers and parents can encourage their children's interest by helping them learn mathematics through real home and classroom situations and play activities that call for counting, measuring and using numbers to solve simple problems such as how to share six cookies with three friends. Problem-solving and reasoning are the heart of mathematics. Young children who are given opportunities to observe, question, collect information, communicate ideas and connect math to everyday life build a solid foundation that helps them understand math concepts when they enter school.



Number, Number Sense and Operations

What this means: *Using numbers from basic counting to paper and pencil calculations, to age-appropriate use of calculators and computers.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Count to 10 by touching each object during play or while looking at number books with a parent or another person who reads.
- Tell how many objects in groups of 5 or fewer objects.
- Group 2 sets of like objects together with each set containing the same number of objects such as all animals, all colors or all plants.

Check your understanding: Forming Sets of Objects

Form 2 sets of blocks with 3 blocks in each set (for a total of 6 blocks).



- Identify and say aloud the numbers 0 through 9. Begin to write and copy numbers.
- Name some coins (penny, dime, quarter) and know that they are worth different amounts.
- Count forward (one, two, three...) using items such as number cubes or dominoes with familiar dot patterns.
- Join 2 smaller sets of objects together to make 1 large set. For example, combine 2 sets of blocks with 3 blocks in each set to make 1 large set of 6 blocks.



Measurement

What this means: Making correct measurements using measuring tools such as rulers or measuring cups; language such as inches or pounds; and technology such as scales or calculators.

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Begin to identify and use the language for units of time such as day, night, week, yesterday, today and tomorrow.
- Identify and use tools that measure time such as a calendar, clock and oven timer.
- Begin to compare objects using words such as bigger, smaller, heavier, lighter, taller, shorter, more and less.
- Measure length and capacity (how much a container holds) using familiar objects as “units.”

Check your understanding: Measuring Length and Capacity by Units



How many paper clips would equal the length of a pencil? One paper clip would be one “unit” of measure. Or, how many cups of sand does it take to fill a toy sand pail? One cup of sand would be one “unit” of measure.



Geometry and Spatial Sense

What this means: Name different shapes, put them into groups that are the same and different, and compare the objects. Use this information to solve problems.

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Identify, match and sort objects by shape, size and other characteristics. For example, compare 2 squares of the same size and 2 balls of different sizes.

*Check your understanding: **Sorting into Group***



Sort shapes or everyday objects, such as socks, spoons and trucks into groups based on what your child labels as the group. For example, ask him or her put all the squares in one group and all the items shaped like a circle in another group.

- Name and describe three-dimensional objects using the child's language such as sphere—"ball," cube—"box," and cone—"ice cream cone."

*Check your understanding: **Two-Dimensional and Three-Dimensional Objects***



Two-dimensional objects have two dimensions – length and width such as a square drawn on paper. Three-dimensional objects have three dimensions – length, width and height such as a toy block.

- Begin to use language to describe the position of objects such as up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front of, behind or between.



Patterns, Functions and Algebra

***What this means:** Show how objects are related to each other using charts, graphs and symbols. Use these items to solve problems.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Sort objects by one feature (characteristic) such as size, color, shape or how it is used.
- Copy, add on to and create simple patterns.

*Check your understanding: **Simple Patterns***



What shape would come next? ■ ● ■ ●



Data Analysis and Probability

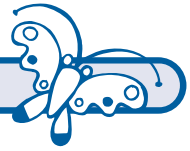
What this means: *Collect, organize and interpret information (data) and use results to answer questions, solve problems and make predictions.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Describe and sort objects by how they are the same and how they are different.
- Choose the category on a simple graph that has the most or fewest objects.

Tips and Activities

- ✓ Play number games with your child. You and your child can count the number of steps when walking up a set of stairs, count the number of apples in a bag or count the number of toys on the shelf.
- ✓ Read and talk about numbers in counting books, pointing and counting the objects on each page. Sing songs with patterns or clap out patterns.
- ✓ Have your child help count pennies and help you count paper money.
- ✓ Talk about time, such as “It is 11:30 – time for lunch.” “It is 9:30 – time for bed.”
- ✓ Ask your child questions such as “Which object is bigger or smaller?” or “Which person is taller or shorter?”
- ✓ Give your child objects to sort and count, such as different colored and shaped blocks, leaves, buttons or plastic animals.
- ✓ When taking a walk or shopping, ask your child to point to objects that are the same shape and ones that are shaped like squares, triangles or circles.
- ✓ Ask children to measure things around the home using pieces of string or long blocks.
- ✓ Ask your child’s teacher or a librarian to suggest books that you can read to your child about numbers.



Children are natural scientists – curious, observant and questioning. Their knowledge of science grows out of an attempt to find meaning in their environment and by relating new experiences to past personal experiences. They try out things to see how they work, they experiment, they manipulate, they are curious and they ask questions. Through these activities, they learn to enjoy and appreciate their surroundings.



Earth and Space Sciences

What this means: *Understanding how the cycles on Earth such as day to night are connected with systems in the universe such as the sun and planets in the solar system.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Begin to use science words such as night, day, sun, moon, stars, cold, hot to describe what they see.
- Notice how animals and plants cause changes in their surroundings such as leaves falling from trees and collecting on the ground or squirrels digging holes.
- Describe and compare seasonal changes such as leaves changing color, weather getting warmer or colder, or flowers pushing out of the earth.
- Use words or drawings to describe changes in the earth.



Life Sciences

What this means: *Understanding how living things live, how they work together and how they interact with the environment.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Know that living things need food, water and air.
- Begin to learn that stories such as cartoons and movies sometimes show plants and animals doing things they can't do in the real world such as a flower that talks.

- Begin to understand that baby animals usually look like their parents and young plants usually look like full-grown plants.
- Recognize differences in the same group of people, plants or animals. For example, dogs come in many sizes and colors, and apples have many different colors.



Physical Sciences

What this means: *Understanding what objects are made of, what they can do and what we can do with them (physical systems). Understanding the concepts and the properties of matter, energy, forces and motion.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Show that objects are made of parts such as a chair has legs, a seat and a back.
- Use the five senses – touch, smell, sight, taste and hearing – to compare different types of materials such as water, sand and wood.
- Sort familiar objects by one or more properties such as color, shape and size.

Check your understanding: *Sorting Objects*



Understanding science can involve sizes, shapes and colors. Ask your child to sort buttons based on size, then the number of holes, then the color.

- Understand motion words such as up, down, fast, slow, rolling, jumping, backward and forward as they follow oral directions.



Science and Technology

What this means: *Understanding how the relationship between science and technology is used to solve problems.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Recognize familiar tools and know how to use them safely (with help from an adult) such as scissors, a hammer, a paintbrush or a cookie cutter.

- Use familiar objects in a new way such as using a paper towel roll as a telescope or using a pan and wooden spoons as a drum set.



Scientific Inquiry

What this means: *Using scientific processes to ask questions, study a problem, or gather, analyze and communicate information.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Ask questions about objects including "what if" questions.
- Begin to compare objects or living things based on how they are alike and how they are different.
- Tell about what has been observed by drawing pictures or telling stories.



Scientific Ways of Knowing

What this means: *Learning how to think scientifically and understanding how people have shaped the study and practice of science.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Offer ideas and explanations for observations, such as why an ice cube melts, by drawing, speaking or demonstrating (with help from an adult).
- Recognize the difference between actions that help or hurt living things.
- Participate in experiments such as testing items to see which sink or float in a bucket of water.

Tips

and Activities

- ✓ Take time to answer your child's questions about nature and how things grow and change. Go on a quiet walk with your child. Ask him or her to listen to the sounds around you. Describe and write down what they hear.
- ✓ Visit children's museums, nature centers, parks, food stores and flower shops with your child. Talk about what you see and what your child learned.
- ✓ Plant flower or vegetable seeds with your child. Talk about and chart the changes over time.
- ✓ Play "I Spy" by describing something and asking your child to guess what you see.
- ✓ Read books about animal families. Talk about and help your child identify adult animals with their young such as cows and calves or ducks and ducklings.
- ✓ Supply containers for your child to begin rock and bug collections. Sort and label the containers with him or her for use as study.
- ✓ Talk about and show your child how things work such as how batteries are needed in toys and flashlights, or how the wind is needed to make a kite fly.
- ✓ Let your child taste, smell and feel ingredients before and after cooking. Discuss the changes.
- ✓ Ask your child's teacher or a librarian to suggest books that you can read to your child about science.



Social studies teaches students about how people live, work, get along with others, solve problems, make changes in their world and are changed by their world. For young children, the family, school, neighborhood and community offer first-hand experiences that introduce them to the foundation for learning social studies.

In preschool, simple board games help children understand rules of participation (citizenship), while the challenge of riding around a tricycle path teaches mapping (geography) concepts and skills. Children learn about time (history) from the daily, predictable routines established – a story before rest time, or outdoor play after lunch. When a play area is set up as a grocery store, children can explore the concepts of jobs and the buying and selling of goods (economics). The content of social studies is also a familiar theme in many books and poems for young children.



History

What this means: *Understanding events that have happened in the past.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Begin to use words describing time such as day, night, yesterday, tomorrow and today.
- Label days by what's happening that day such as school days, weekends, birthdays or vacation days.
- Be able to tell things that happened when he or she was younger.

Check your understanding: **Remembering Past Events**



Look at photographs together. Family photographs showing you and your child at different ages are good choices. Ask your child, “What do you remember about this picture?”

- Share personal family stories and traditions – “When I was little...”, “When Grandpa was a boy...”



People in Societies

What this means: *Identifying how people are alike and different by the music they like, the food they eat, where they live and family events they enjoy.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Identify the ways we belong to different groups—family, friends, preschool class, boys or girls.
- Use stories, folktales, music and art to learn about the traditions and customs of other countries.



Geography

What this means: *Identifying the location of places such as home, school or park, understanding how places are connected such as the streets traveled from home to the park and how living in that place changes over time.*

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Use words that describe location such as up or down, over or under, here or there, front or back.
- Recite home address when asked.
- Know how to get around familiar environments such as home, neighborhood or preschool without getting lost (with help from an adult).
- Describe the area near the home such as streets, other buildings, woods, lakes or parks when walking with an adult.
- Tell how natural resources are used such as using water for drinking or bathing, or dirt needed for planting flowers or gardens.





Economics

What this means: Learning the difference between what we need and want, who provides us with those items and services (producers) and who buys or uses the items (consumers).

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Recognize that people have many things they may want and many things they may need.
- Learn how to obtain what he or she wants in an acceptable way such as sharing items, taking turns or trading items fairly.
- Understand the concepts of supplying goods and services and using goods and services by activities such as playing store and taking field trips to area farms.

Check your understanding: **Goods and Services**



Goods: Objects you might purchase such as food, clothing or toys.

Services: Actions you might pay someone to do for you such as cutting hair, fixing a car or babysitting.



Government

What this means: Understanding how government helps us and how it works.

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Identify adults who provide help and care such as parents, teachers and police officers.
- Recognize the flag of the United States as a symbol of our government.
- Understand the need for classroom rules and why it is important to follow them.



Check your understanding: **Importance of Rules**



Talk about rules with your child, including traffic rules and safety rules at the swimming pool or park. Talk about what might happen if there were no rules or if we did not obey the rules.



Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities

What this means: Preparing to become active, responsible citizens.

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Cooperate in classroom activities and at home by helping, taking turns and sharing with others.
- Learn how to solve arguments with other children using words to work out the problems.
- Show that he or she can make choices and follow through on plans.
- Understand the results of making choices. For example, picking up toys makes the room safer and keeps toys from being broken.



Social Studies Skills and Methods

What this means: Collecting information, organizing it and using it to make decisions.

What children know and can do at the end of the preschool years, with adult guidance:

- Listen for information when others are talking about books, stories or events.
- Begin to make predictions (what might happen next) after listening to and talking about stories and events.
- Share information by talking about, drawing pictures or acting out an idea.



Tips

and Activities

- ✔ Use a family home calendar to plan and talk about school days, weekends and special days. Mark and talk about special days on the calendar.
- ✔ Share stories about your child's life as a baby and a toddler, as well as stories about when you were a child. Share photo albums of when your child was little and talk about how much he or she has changed.
- ✔ Read magazines and newspapers with your child and show him or her pictures or photographs of different landforms such as mountains, valleys, streams, deserts and forests.
- ✔ Look at the night sky with your child for three days in a row. Talk about what you see such as clouds, moon and stars. Talk about what is different and what is the same.
- ✔ When taking a trip, show your child the route you will follow on the map. Point out the symbols that stand for the things you will see as you travel. Ask your child to make his or her own map.
- ✔ Praise your child for making good choices such as sharing and working with others by saying, "I like the way you shared your toys today with Susie."
- ✔ Talk about family customs and traditions during the year such as how you celebrate birthdays, Thanksgiving and special holidays, vacations and time with grandparents.
- ✔ Ask your child's teacher or a librarian to suggest books that you can read to your child about how children live in other countries; how families work and play together.





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