“Won't you come learn with us?” That could easily be a translation of the opening song lyrics “Won't you be my neighbor?” because the Neighborhood series is full of people — real people — who enjoy learning and who want to share what they've learned with young children. Children learn from Mister Rogers and his guests, from the factory videos, the field trips and the Neighborhood of Make-Believe stories. Just as importantly, they're developing the “tools” they'll need for kindergarten and beyond.

**Tools For Learning**

All through the Neighborhood series, we have included the traditional tools for learning — ABCs, numbers, colors, and basic concepts. On many occasions Mister Rogers and his guests enjoy reading books. They also find out information from signs and write notes. When children see that reading, writing and counting are helpful, interesting, and fun, they want to learn those skills.

But for school readiness, children need more than the cognitive tools of ABC’s and numbers. They need social and emotional tools like:

- self-esteem
- curiosity
- the ability to handle mistakes
- constructive ways to deal with anger
- the ability to get along with others

We've purposely scheduled theme weeks this fall that are related to these tools.

**Self-Esteem**

The week about LEARNING (Sept. 2-6) — and indeed every Neighborhood program — has at its core the message of “You are special...and so is everyone else in this world.” There’s much research to support that when children feel good about what they can do and who they are, they are more open to learning, better able to manage their feelings, and more likely to keep on trying.

**Handling Mistakes**

When children are learning something new, they're bound to make mistakes. If they expect and accept mistakes as a natural part of learning, they're better able to handle their frustration and keep on trying. In the week about MISTAKES (Sept. 23-27), Mister Rogers asks pianist André Watts about his musical mistakes, so children can know that even famous musicians make mistakes...and that mistakes can be helpful because they show us what needs more work.

**Dealing With Anger**

Being able to deal with anger is such an important part of being able to learn. When children are angry and frustrated, they can't concentrate on what they're learning and they might disrupt the classroom. One of the most important messages for today’s world (in and out of the classroom) is in the Neighborhood song “What do you do with the mad that you feel?” with lyrics about finding constructive ways to express their feelings...and about working on developing the good feeling of self-control.

It’s important to expose children to people who have found ways of expressing all kinds of feelings...ways that don’t hurt others. In MAD FEELINGS week (Oct. 7 - 11), they'll get to know people who use music, dance, and exercise. These examples can help children channel their own feelings and find control. There's also a week about FRIENDS (Sept. 30-Oct. 4) in which the conflicts between friends are resolved because they talk about their feelings and come to understand each other better.

**In Child Care**

Of course, our Neighborhood programs can go only so far in helping children develop these tools for learning. What's really important is that children have caregivers who help them feel good about who they are and what they can do, who encourage their questions and respond to their ideas, and who help them deal with their feelings, frustrations, and conflicts. In those everyday ways, you're helping them fill their “toolbox” with lots of tools that will help them in school.
Dear Parents and Providers,

Children are born ready to learn. Right from the start, they begin learning about the world through touch, smell, sounds, sight. All through the early years, that's how they learn best: through their senses. They put things together, move them around, experiment, explore, and discover.

While children may look like they're "just playing," they are also working on some of the most basic things they'll need in order to be able to read, write, and do math later on. And they're learning about those things in a way that's natural and interesting for them.

"More and less," "different and same," "top and bottom" — those are the kinds of basic things children need to understand for "school learning" with letters and numbers. When children play and pretend, what they're doing is meaningful — much more meaningful than if they're just given fragmented bits of information (like 1+1=2) which they can't connect or relate to.

When children make mud pies and need "more" water for the right consistency, or need "one more" spoon for the pretend party so each stuffed animal can have one, "more" as a math concept has real meaning.

In those kinds of everyday ways, children develop one of the most essential "tools" for school readiness — a sense that the world is an interesting place. They can be fascinated by the simplest things they see and hear, even taking a long time to look closely at a bug crawling up a tree trunk or a crack in the sidewalk.

When you show genuine interest in the everyday things a child talks and plays about, you're showing an appreciation for that child and for what he or she says and does. That's the very best climate for any kind of learning...or living.

Sincerely,

Fred Rogers

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A Page For Parents — Tools For Learning

Being ready for school means much more than knowing the names of letters and numbers. It also means being healthy, being curious, being able to get along in a group, and developing the necessary "work habits" to complete assignments. Here are some ways you can help your child be ready for school.

A healthy start

Make sure your child has enough rest, healthy meals and snacks, and medical care.
- Help your child with a calming bedtime routine. If you include reading a book, your child can see there's pleasure in knowing how to read — and be ready to calm down and relax for a good night's sleep.
- Encourage your child to help you prepare healthy snacks. When children participate, they're more likely to eat the food. Children also develop the fine motor control they will need at school by spreading peanut butter on crackers or pouring juice from a small pitcher.
- Give your child opportunities to play about going to the doctor or dentist both before and after the visit. Playing about what to expect can make these visits more manageable.

Curiosity

Nurture your child's wondering and questioning. Children who are interested in the world are eager learners.
- Take the time to answer your child's "why" questions whenever you can. If you don't know the answer, you can say, "That's a really good question. I don't know." If you can, you might want to help your child find the answer at the library, through the Internet, or from someone who knows.
- There may be times when your child's "why" questions are exhausting, and it's okay to say, "I can't answer just now. Let's talk about it later."

Managing conflicts

Help your child learn to get along with others.
- Give your child a chance to play with another child on a regular basis. Stay within hearing range so that you can help them settle disputes.
- Help your child express frustration through words rather than by hitting or shoving.
- Give your child ways to express feelings through play, drawing, and painting.

Good working habits

Encourage and model good working habits.
- Give your child small jobs around the house: setting the table, folding napkins, sorting socks. Children take great pride in work they can do well, so be sure that the job is easy enough for them to be successful.
- If your child "gives up" when cleaning up toys, put out containers for sorting: one for cars, one for stuffed animals, one for blocks. This builds organizational skills and makes the work seem more manageable.
- Let your child see that you sometimes need to look up information, like which stores have sales or what ingredients you need for a recipe.
- Find things that your child likes about your work and tell your child why you like doing what you do. If you complain about something, be sure to also mention how you're working on the problem and/ or dealing with it.
A Page For Caregivers

Here are some activities that can help children develop the cognitive, emotional, and social "tools" for learning:

**Language Play**

**Materials:** none

Encouraging children to play with the sounds of language lays a foundation for connecting the printed letter and the sounds they represent. For instance, encourage your children to make up words that rhyme. See how many ways they can substitute the first letter sound:
- purple — duple, skipple, spuple
- cellar — tellar, tellar, dellar
- carnivals — carnivals, marinavil, tarnavil
- butterfly — pufferfly, tusterfly, mufferfly

**Some Mistakes Can Be Fixed**

**Materials:** pencil, eraser, paper

It would probably be a good idea to cover the work area with old newspapers to contain the pencil marks and the eraser "crumbs." Give each child some paper, pencil, and an eraser. Encourage the children to play around making pencil marks and erasing them. Talk with them about things that erase and things that don't erase. You might want to let them try creating pen marks, crayon marks, or paint.

**A Closer Look**

**Materials:** magnifying glass, if available; newspapers or magazines, a box of assorted interesting objects (feathers, pine cones, thread, yarn, seeds, stones, shells, etc.)

This activity could easily be done outdoors, weather permitting. Using a newspaper or magazine, let them see how letters or pictures look when seen through a magnifying glass. Then let them use the glass to look at interesting objects. If you don't have a magnifying glass, sit down with the children and examine the objects in the box very carefully. What do they see? Do they notice anything about the object that they didn't see before?

Encourage the children to look carefully at their surroundings, too. You can point out things like:
- fuzz on the carpet;
- spots or bugs in the yard;
- threads in the curtians;
- a strand of hair;
- the veins of a leaf.

**Drumming All Kinds of Feelings**

**Materials:** coffee cups or empty boxes

Let the children experiment with drumming sounds and different rhythms. Ask them to pound hard, then softly, then pound fast and then slowly. Which sounds made them think of angry feelings? Ask them how they would play the drums if they were angry or happy. You might want to remind them that they can also use words to say they're angry or happy or sad. Maybe they can think of words to go along with their drumming and use them as a chant.

**Working Together**

**Materials:** play materials that two can share (wagon, ball, dramatic play materials)

Friends can help each other in many ways. Encourage the children to work together with a friend on a project today. Some children might be able to take turns pulling each other in a wagon; others might want to create a make-believe story together. Younger children can roll a ball back and forth to one another, or play at the sand or water table. Still others may choose to work together on an art mural.

If a child wants to play alone, help him or her find an activity that is suitable. Perhaps that child will choose to play with a friend on another day.

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**September**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Musician’s Quest; Talking About Feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Talking About Feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Swimming Can Help With Anger; Thank You For Washing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Ways To Use Hands; Be Kind To Others; Be Kind To Yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Uptown String Quartet; How People Make Music</td>
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**October**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>Musical Guest; Talking About Feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Visiting a Restaurant; Anger &amp; Anger's Solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Artist Red Green; Lady Elaine Is Angry About Sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Swimmer Can Help With Anger; Thank You For Washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Ways To Use Hands; Be Kind To Others; Be Kind To Yourself</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Tools for Learning

**November**

**Monday**
- This Week: **THINGS TO WEAR**
  - #1406: Great Expectations; Real Stories from Inside
  - #207: Puffin Maker; Sink Factory; Makes Rubes "brrrr".

**Tuesday**
- This Week: **CREATIVE STRONG**
  - #1711: Street with炎症; Bible Stories; Scriptures; Songs about Sharing
  - #1914: People: How to Make People Feel Good

**Wednesday**
- This Week: **SHARING**
  - #1715: Breast of People; Rhythm & Blues Artists; Feeling Good
  - #2114: Electric Cars & a Bus on an Electric Wheelchair

**Thursday**
- This Week: **DIVORCE**
  - #1536: How Mean People Feel About Others
  - #1537: Chef: Shopkeeper, Makes a Present; Bakery Sticks

**Friday**
- This Week: **FOOD**
  - #1538: Chef: Shopkeeper, Makes a Present; Bakery Sticks

**December**

**Monday**
- This Week: **MUSIC**
  - #1540: A Young Person; John Coltrane's Music Behind the Scenes
  - #1555: John Coltrane: How People Make Sounds

**Tuesday**
- This Week: **CELEBRATIONS**
  - #1560: Eric Carle: Author-Illustrator; Portraits, Colors, and Factory
  - #1561: Help with Bathrooms: Paint, How People Make Things

**Wednesday**
- This Week: **INVITING & RECEIVING**
  - #1562: Gifts & Heart Feelings: A Spanish-Speaking Friend, Bagel Factory
  - #1573: How People Make Cars for the Homeless; Money in Make-Believe

**Thursday**
- This Week: **ART**
  - #1574: Gifts on Display; Creative Art, Spanish Stories
  - #1575: Music, Group Singing from Korea: Concert Factory Tales

**Friday**
- This Week: **HELPING**
  - #1576: Willy Wonka: Hat Shop, Everything Is Important

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**Learn From Mistakes:**
- Andre Watts helps children see mistakes as helpful—because they show us what needs more work. (September 26)

**Keep on Trying:**
- Mister Rogers doesn't give up, even though he has trouble learning hand movements like those of Thomas and Chuck. (December 4)

**Enjoy Books and Reading:**
- Tony Cetinski offers his love of books, stories, and reading. Examples like that help children want to learn to read. (September 12)

**Talk About Feelings:**
- When Daniel is upset, he finds it helpful to talk with neighbors like Mayor Maggie. There are many songs to express feelings—ways that don't hurt. (November 26)

**Wonder and Ask Questions:**
- Factory videos like this one—about how people make vegetable soup—encourage children to wonder and ask questions about everyday things. (November 26)

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Every day Mister Rogers' Neighborhood gives children an appreciation for learning—and helps them develop tools for learner readiness.
Check 'Em Out! — Books To Share With Children

September 2-6 — Learning
Moses Goes to School by Isaac Millman. Moses, a deaf child, realizes that his experiences at school aren't that different from the other children's.

September 9-13 — Curiosity
What’s in Aunt Mary’s Room? by Elizabeth Howard. Two young girls wonder what’s hidden in their elderly relative’s room and eventually find treasures there.

September 16-20 — Competition
Star of the Circus by Mary Beth Sampson. Each performer in this animal circus tries to top the other until they all realize there’s room for everyone under the big top.

September 23-27 — Mistakes
Trick or Treat, Smell My Feet by Diane DeGroat. Young Gilbert is looking forward to the Halloween parade but accidentally picks up his sister’s pink tutu.

September 30 - October 4 — Friends
Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice by Sylvia Ross-Casanova. On her way to visit her sick granddaughter, Mama Provi from Puerto Rico gathers friends and food.

October 7-11— Mad Feelings
Sometimes I’m Bombaloo by Rachel Vail. Preschooler Katie Honors manages to cope well with the difficulties of life — most of the time.

October 14-18 — Be Yourself
Goose by Molly Bang. Raised by woodchucks, Goose leaves home to find herself and returns to her adopted family with a new understanding of the world and her place in it.

October 21-25 — Superheroes
Max by Bob Graham. Max is the child of two superheroes, but he’s also a late bloomer. The eventual development of his flying ability will please and reassure young readers as much as it does his parents.

October 28 - November 1 — Things To Wear
Red Dancing Shoes by Denise Lewis Patrick. A young African-American girl shows off her new shoes to the folks in her town.

November 4-8 — Brave & Strong
The Bravest of Us All by Marsha Diane Arnold. Ruby Jane’s big sister is the bravest of them all until a fierce storm gives her the chance to show her own strength.

November 11-15 — Sharing
The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins. Two children eagerly anticipate dividing cookies between themselves but their shares get smaller as friends gather.

November 18-22 — Divorce
Charlie Anderson by Barbara Abercrombie. Two young girls befriend a fluffy gray cat only to discover that, like them, he shares two different homes.

November 25-29 — Food
Pass the Fritters, Critters by Cheryl Chapman. Manners matter in this light-hearted rhyming romp about a delicious meal shared with friends.

December 2-6 — Music
Sing Sophie by Dayle Ann Dodds. Sophie’s songs help settle her sobbing baby brother.

December 9-13 — Celebrations
Dancing with the Indians by Angela Shelf Medearis. Family stories form the basis of an African-American family’s visit to a Seminole Indian celebration.

December 16-20 — Giving & Receiving
The Runaway Rice Cake by Ying Chang Compestine. A poor family generously shares their only food with an older woman and finds their unselfish act rewarded.

December 23-27 — Art
David’s Drawings by Cathryn Falwell. David’s friends contribute their ideas in creating a classroom composition.

December 30 - January 3 — Helping
Gugu’s House by Catherine Stock. Kukamba admires her grandmother’s fancifully painted house in Zimbabwe. When the rains wash the colors away, she looks forward to helping redecorate.

Special thanks to Dr. Margaret Kimmel of the University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences and Lisa Dennis, Coordinator of Juvenile Collections Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.