Kindergarten Touring Guide

Great First Eight is a groundbreaking, all-day, open educational resource (OER) curriculum for children from birth to eight that is strengths-based and research-aligned. It is designed for classrooms with a number of children from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds. Great First Eight provides children with the education they need to thrive and create a more just and caring society.

Kindergarten Touring Guide

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Project-Based Units

The Great First Eight kindergarten curriculum provides 165 full days of instruction divided across a launch week and seven project-based units.
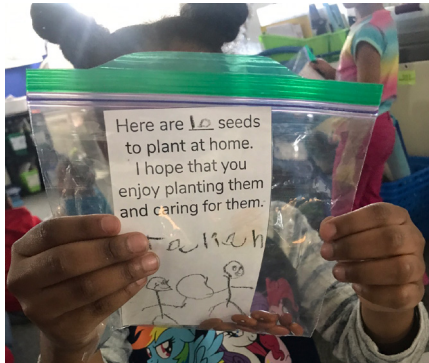
Kindergarteners Care
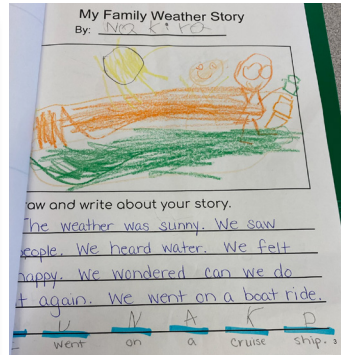
World Watchers

Music Moves Us

Domino Effects

Power in the People

Engineering Inside and Out
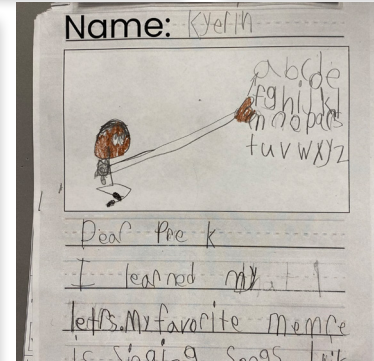
Communicating Kindergarten

Project-Based Units: Driving Questions

Kindergarteners Care (led by social studies)	**How do we care for ourselves and others and work together in our community?**
World Watchers (led by science & engineering)	**How can we make and use observations to learn about our world and share experiences?**
Music Moves Us (led by social studies)	**How can music bring people together?**
Domino Effects (led by science & engineering)	**How can we design, build, and share a chain reaction?**
Power in the People (led by social studies)	**How can we lift up the lives and contributions of people and places in our community?**
Engineering Inside and Out (led by science & engineering)	**What can we learn about engineering as we study how living organisms meet their needs and solve problems?**
Communicating Kindergarten (led by socal studies)	**What should we communicate about life in kindergarten to incoming kindergartners?**

Project-Based Units: Primary Project Product(s) **with focal writing genre(s) in bold**

5 days	• (The first five days of the year are focused solely on launching the year.)
30 days	• Items for children to use for self care • Care basket for community member • "We Care" video for the school community that shows observations of care and where more care is needed • Compliment cards to show care **(personal communication)**
20 days	Class book of weather stories, with the option to include family weather stories, for the classroom community to enjoy **(personal narratives)**
25 days	• Class music playlist • Notes about the history/effects of a song for local business **(informative/explanatory text)** • A song they have composed and for which they've written lyrics **(poetry)** • Performance of their original songs and a dance to bring the school and/or local community together
15 days	For an audience such as senior citizens or children in another classroom: • Chain reaction that demonstrates understandings of pushes, pulls, collisions, ramps • Technical drawings of chain reaction machines • Instructions for how to create the chain reaction **(procedural text)**
30 days	• Museum exhibition of places, people, and events in the local community, with museum placards and captions for artifacts **(informative/explanatory text)** for an audience of community members
30 days	• Poster for a local dentist's office to persuade people to brush and floss the plaque structure away from their teeth, including an image about plaque bacteria from children's engineering models **(persuasive text)**
10 days	• Video for incoming kindergartners about what they should know about kindergarten **(informative/explanatory text)**

Project-Based Units: Examples of Interdisciplinary Connections

30 days	Each discipline/domain makes direct or indirect contributions to the project. The concepts of **collaboration, justice, and community** are addressed across multiple domains. For example, children develop social and emotional knowledge and civic qualities to act on injustice and collaborate in small groups.
20 days	Each discipline/domain makes direct or indirect contributions to the project. The concept of **observation** is addressed and deepened across multiple domains. For example, children apply narrative writing strategies to make sense of and communicate their observations of weather.
25 days	Each discipline/domain makes direct or indirect contributions to the project. In addition, in this unit, the **history, purpose, and influence of music** is a concept addressed across multiple domains. For example, children use their developing knowledge of music genres to write poems or song lyrics for a variety purposes including to inform, entertain, or express concerns.
15 days	Each discipline/domain makes direct or indirect contributions to the project. In addition, in this unit, **cause and effect** is a concept addressed across multiple domains. For example, children explore cause and effect through scientific investigations, using unifix cubes to measure distances, and socially and responsibly negotiating turn taking with materials. This concept appears in Social Emotional Learning as children consider impacts of behavior and interactions.
30 days	Each discipline/domain makes direct or indirect contributions to the project. The concepts of **power, place, and community** are addressed across multiple domains. For example, children engage in informative/explanatory writing about their communities for the museum exhibition.
30 days	Each discipline/domain makes direct or indirect contributions to the project. In addition, in this unit, **ways our environment and daily lives are engineered or are impacted by engineering** is a concept addressed across multiple domains. For example, children use their developing knowledge of engineering design in science to engineer geometric structures in mathematics.
10 days	Each discipline/domain makes a direct contribution to the project, as children share **what and how they've learned across domains** over the course of the year.

Project-Based Units: Examples of Addressing Identity

30 days	Children develop an understanding of their **existing identities,** in collaboration with their families
20 days	Children develop and grow their identities as **world watchers,** or **scientific observers** of the world around them
25 days	Children develop identities as **musicians** and **dancers** and develop understandings of artistic contributions of diverse groups of people
15 days	Children develop identities as **engineers, makers,** and **problem-solvers**
30 days	Children develop their identities as **members of their local community** and **curators of artifacts** from their community
30 days	Children develop identities as **engineers, makers,** and **problem-solvers**
10 days	Children develop identities as **experts on kindergarten** and **soon-to-be first graders**

Standards

Science & Engineering

The Next Generation Science Standards, including practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas.

Social Justice

A modified version of the Learning for Justice Standards, augmented to include environmental justice

Social & Emotional Learning

Developed in alignment with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Framework—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making—with an additional strand devoted to creativity

Great First Eight addresses standards in six domains.

Social Studies

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards, with grade bands converted to grade-level-specific standards and greater specificity added to standards

Literacy

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects, with some additions, for example in handwriting (these standards can be crosswalked with other state standards)

Math

The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics with some additions, for example regarding recognizing & valuing the contributions of mathematicians from varied cultural backgrounds (these standards can be crosswalked with other state standards)

Standards

A Standards Crosswalk identifies which standards are
addressed in each unit of the curriculum.

Standards: Next Gen Science Standards	Launch Week	Kindergartners Care	World Watchers	Music Moves Us	Domino Effects	Power in the People	Engineering Inside & Out	Communic...
Developing and Using Models: Modeling in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to include using and developing models (i.e., diagram, drawing, physical replica, diorama, dramatization, or storyboard) that represent concrete events or design solutions. ▪ Use a model to represent relationships in the natural world.			■		■		■	
Asking Questions and Defining Problems in grades K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to simple descriptive questions that can be tested. ▪ Ask questions based on observations to find more information about the designed world.		■	■		■		■	
Analyzing and Interpreting Data: Analyzing data in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to collecting, recording, and sharing observations. Analyze data from tests of an object or tool to determine if it works as intended.		■	■		■		■	
Engaging in Argument from Evidence in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to comparing ideas and representations about the natural and designed world(s). ▪ Construct an argument with evidence to support a claim.							■	
Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information in K–2 builds on prior experiences and uses observations and texts to communicate new information. ▪ Communicate solutions with others in oral and/or written forms using models and/or drawings that provide detail about scientific ideas.	■	■	■	■	■		■	
Planning and Carrying out Investigations to answer questions or test solutions to problems in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to simple investigations, based on fair tests, which provide data to support explanations or design solutions. ▪ With guidance, plan and conduct an investigation in collaboration with peers.					■		■	
Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions in K–2 builds on prior experiences and progresses to the use of evidence and ideas in constructing evidence-based accounts of natural phenomena and designing solutions. ▪ Use tools and materials provided to design and build a device that solves a specific problem or a solution to a specific problem.							■	■
PS3.B: Conservation of Energy and Energy Transfer ▪ Sunlight warms Earth's surface.				■				
ESS2.D: Weather and Climate ▪ Weather is the combination of sunlight, wind, snow or rain, and temperature in a particular region at a particular time. People measure these conditions to describe and record the weather.				■				

Daily Schedule: Introduction

The Great First Eight Kindergarten Curriculum full-day daily schedule has been carefully designed to enact the Great First Eight principles. With a few exceptions, we encourage teachers to schedule the components of the day in any order that works for them.

Connect and Launch

Word Wonders

Wonder Co-Lab

Recess/Play 1

Math Marvels

Lunch & Recess/Play 2

Community Time

Self Time

Quest Co-Lab
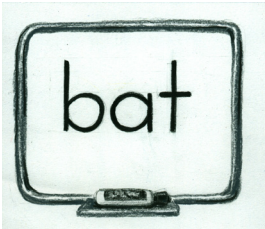
Time Talks

Arts, Movement, or Media

Peace Out

Daily Schedule

Part of Day & Length*	Description
Connect and Launch (20 minutes)	Connect and Launch is a daily opportunity for children to: • store their belongings; • sign their name on a "Hello" sheet (first name only at beginning of year, and first and last as the year progresses) and indicate their lunch choice, if applicable in your setting; • talk with one another and with the teacher to build relationships; • process events happening in their community, if needed; • write and/or draw in personal journals, if they choose; • eat breakfast, if that is aligned with your school scheduling; and • transition smoothly from home to school. We encourage the teacher to focus on these important activities. Some other classroom activities commonly used in the morning are not well-aligned with research (e.g., worksheets, daily oral language).
Word Wonders (30 minutes)	This portion of the day targets children's development of literacy foundational skills, in particular concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, and word-reading and spelling strategies, in a whole-group format. The approach involves a combination of explicit instruction, structured inquiry, experiences that strengthen children's memory for phoneme-grapheme relationships, and opportunities to read and write words and sentences. Children transition with movement to and from Wonder Co-Lab using our Great First Eight hip-hop phonics songs.

Daily Schedule

Part of Day & Length*	Description

Wonder Co-Lab
(60 minutes)
	Wonder Collaborative or "Co-Lab" engages children in small-group and individual activities that foreground literacy development, although many other domains are also entailed. This portion of the day involves three kinds of learning opportunities:
	
	1) **Small-group instruction with the teacher, which we call "Meet with the Teacher."** Beginning in Unit 2, the teacher meets with children in small groups formed based on children's instructional needs, strengths, and/or interests for differentiated instruction and experiences reading and writing project-related texts. There are three types of Meet with the Teachers:
	
	   a) *Wonder Book Reading:* The teacher leads lessons that involve reviewing phoneme-grapheme relationships taught, reading Wonder Books, and discussing Wonder Books. Wonder Books are often connected to the project, are largely decodable based on phoneme-grapheme relationships children have been taught, typically feature phoneme-grapheme relationships and high frequency words that have been taught or reviewed the previous week, and have other features that research suggests support reading development.
	
	   b) *Interactive Writing:* While leading children in writing a text that is typically related to the project (e.g., a thank-you note to a guest speaker), the teacher reinforces instruction (e.g., concepts of print, phonemic awareness, spelling) and provides opportunities for application.
	
	   c) *More Time With . . . Lessons:* The teacher chooses from a bank of lesson plans to provide additional instruction based on specific children's strengths and needs (e.g., to review a particular orthographic pattern). Letter tiles are often used during these lessons.
	
	Each group meets for 10-15 minutes. Teachers aim to meet with at least three groups on the first day of a five-day cycle and at least four groups each of the subsequent days of the cycle, with each child meeting with the teacher three to five times per week.
	
	2) **Small-group and individual experiences, which we call "Dives ."** In frequently-changed groups intentionally formed such that children have complementary strengths and needs, working alone or with their group-mates to varying degrees, children engage in a series of activities called "Dives." On the first day of a five-day cycle, children rotate to three of the five Dives. On the subsequent days they rotate to four of the five. Dives are opportunities for children to gain independence in key literacy skills and to build content knowledge. There are five types of Dives each week: Digital Games, Imagine It, Make Your Mark, Project Connection, and Word Wonders.
	
	3) **Whole-class reflection.** The teacher concludes Co-Lab with a time in which children discuss (a) what they learned in relation to the driving question of the unit, and (b) what they learned about reading and writing. Children transition with movement to the next portion of the day. Children who qualify for literacy intervention services receive them when they would otherwise be in Dives.

Daily Schedule

Part of Day & Length*	Description
Recess/Play 1 (20 minutes)	This recess takes place outdoors whenever possible. When possible, research-supported training in the facilitation of play (e.g., by Playworks) should be provided to the staff members involved, and equipment made available on the playground should be informed by relevant research. In addition, Recess/Play is never denied to a child or children for disciplinary reasons.
Math Marvels (45 minutes)	The Math Marvels portion of the day begins by targeting children's development of number sense, computational skills, and mathematical argumentation. The approach involves a combination of structured inquiry and experiences such as engagement with number talks that strengthen children's understanding of numbers and operations, shapes, and spatial orientation. Periodically, a read aloud anchors the Math Marvels time. Within the Math Marvels block, a Marvel Activity engages children in small-group and individual activities that foreground mathematics development, although many other domains are also entailed. This portion of the day involves three kinds of learning opportunities: 1) ***Whole-class activities.*** During whole-group instruction, the teacher elicits children's mathematical thinking around project-related topics. For example, the class might engage in a whole class discussion to reflect on patterns of care or lack of care in their school, or the teacher might conduct an interactive read aloud to connect counting principles with a theme from the current project. 2) ***Small-group and individual experiences.*** Working alone or with their group-mates to varying degrees, children engage in activities selected by the teacher. For example, the teacher might facilitate a high-level, groupworthy mathematics task in which small groups use children-generated strategies to solve a problem from the current project. Children who qualify for math intervention services receive them when they would otherwise be working on small-group experiences. 3) ***Whole-class reflection.*** The teacher concludes Math Marvels with a reflection time in which children evaluate the accuracy and efficiency of multiple problem-solving strategies, try these strategies, and draw connections between their mathematical activity and themes from the current project.

Daily Schedule

Part of Day & Length*	Description
Lunch (30 minutes) and **Recess/Play 2** (20 minutes)	Children engage in a lunch period of up to 30 minutes followed by a period of recess/play of at least 20 minutes. This recess takes place outdoors whenever possible. When possible, research-supported training in the facilitation of play (e.g., by Playworks) should be provided to the staff members involved, and equipment made available on the playground is informed by relevant research. In addition, Recess/Play is never denied to a child or children for disciplinary reasons.
Community Time (20 minutes)	In this portion of the day, children engage in instruction designed to support their development of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, as well as creativity and cultural identity. Standards for reading literature are also frequently addressed during this time. Instruction is largely whole group, often includes read alouds of narrative text, and sometimes incorporates small-group, partner, or individual learning activities.
Self Time (10 minutes) (This may be longer early in the year.)	During Self Time, children spend time alone, quietly sitting or snuggling into a spot in the classroom while calming music plays to power nap, look through books, draw, or engage in other quiet activities individually. Individual quiet time helps children develop their independence, and it gives them an opportunity to relax and learn how to entertain themselves.

Daily Schedule

Part of Day & Length*	Description

Quest Co-Lab
 	
(75 minutes)
 	
(This may be less time early in the year if Self Time is longer.)
	In this portion of the day, children focus especially heavily on the unit's project. Science and/or social studies lead this time, but there is also considerable involvement of literacy, mathematics, and social emotional learning. Quest Co-Lab has four major components:
	
	1) ***Opening Co-Lab (25 minutes):*** This is a whole-group time that includes an experience with an informational text that builds content knowledge, typically through a read aloud, but at times through presentations provided by experts related to the project or other activities. Reading Informational Text and Listening standards are also addressed during this time.
	
	2) ***Co-Lab Quests (round one: 15 minutes, round two: 15 minutes):*** These involve children in working toward a project goal, typically in collaborative small groups or pairs. In some cases, all children work on the same task ("Quest") that serves the project. In a typical week, five Quests are available, with each child doing a given Quest twice. During the Quests, the teacher either (a) circulates to provide support or (b) provides small-group instruction targeting specific content or skills, in the context of the project.
	
	3) ***Co-Lab Quest Check-In (5 minutes):*** Mid-way through the day's Co-Lab Quests, the teacher and children pause to reflect on what children have learned in the Quests they have done thus far. The teacher may also review or provide additional instruction depending on the needs they have observed.
	
	4) ***Walking Reflection or Dance Party (15 minutes):*** To help get to 60 minutes of physical activity per day in Great First Eight Kindergarten (more on days with PE), children engage in either Walking Reflection or Dance Party.
	
	   a) *Walking Reflection:* Children walk, outdoors when possible, as they reflect on a question related to that day's Quest Co-Lab. We provide information about the rationale for and approach to Walking Reflection.
	
	   a) *Dance Party:* Children have an opportunity to engage in physical movement to engaging music.

Time Talks (10 minutes)	The Great First Eight Time Talks address, on a rotating basis, specific math, science, and social studies goals. For example, on one day of Time Talks during a 5-day cycle, children might analyze weather data they collected during the past season; on another day of the 5-day cycle, children might be engaged in counting the days remaining until a special event, such as a key milestone in the project, by noticing groups of five and ten.

Daily Schedule

Part of Day & Length*	Description
Arts, Movement, or Media (50 minutes)	This model schedule assumes that there is a daily 50-minute block, including transitions, devoted to art, music, gym/physical education, library/media, and/or other activities (commonly called "specials"). We provide a document that suggests ways that art, music, and physical education teachers can coordinate with Great First Eight projects. Please share this document with the art, music, and physical education teachers who work with your students.
  Peace Out (5 minutes)	Peace Out is an opportunity to close out the day with intentionality. With the children, establish a routine for each day's end that is positive, efficient, and fosters connection (e.g., a song, a specific cheer, or a class gesture as each child goes out the door). The highest priority is to conclude the day on a positive or hopeful note with all children. For example, even if there is something that did not go well during the day, we encourage teachers to cast it in a positive orientation such as, "Tomorrow I look forward to us continuing to help each other during Dives."

* We realize that the length of school days varies considerably from district to district, and state to state. This schedule is close in length to the average length of a school day in the United States, which is six hours and 38 minutes. ***We intend for the length and description of each part of the day to remain as close as possible to what is indicated here.*** Also, please note that children should transition, with movement, between each part of the day.

** Great First Eight requires that children get an average of 60 minutes of physical activity each day. That includes a morning recess (20 minutes), a lunch recess (a minimum of 20 minutes), an afternoon walking reflection or dance party (15 minutes), and one or more physical education periods per week (listed as "Arts, Movement, or Media").

† The CDC recommends children have a minimum of 20 minutes of "seat time" (i.e., time seated with their meals) to eat and socialize. To ensure children meet this recommendation and in alignment with research, we have built in a 30-minute lunch period that allows for additional time for children to get their meals, as well as take their seats, while accommodating transition time to and from lunch and recess.

Daily Schedule: Dives

Digital Games

Imagine It
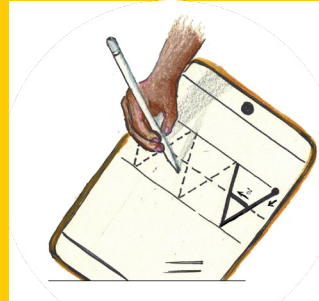
Make Your Mark

Project Connection

Word Wonders

Digital Games

Children use a computer-adaptive literacy foundational skills program. We strongly recommend using a game-like program that has been rigorously tested in research and shown to be effective, such as Lexia Core 5. One or two days of the five-day cycle, we recommend a digital game for children to play that is connected to the project (i.e., to science or social studies content), such as certain games available at pbskids.org.

Daily Schedule: Dives

Digital Games	Imagine It	Make Your Mark	Project Connection	Word Wonders

Imagine It

The power of imaginative play is harnessed in this Dive, which rotates among block/construction play, sociodramatic play, playful writing, and/or puppetry. In each case, the play is related to the project focus and/or a story that has been read in Community Time. For example, children might play "forest ranger" to extend their learning about how scientists observe the natural world, or they might use puppets to enact alternative ways characters in a story read during Community Time might have handled a situation.

Daily Schedule: Dives

Digital Games	Imagine It	Make Your Mark	Project Connection	Word Wonders

Make Your Mark

Children work to develop their handwriting, and reinforce other literacy foundational skills, during this Dive. Great First Eight has developed an innovative and deeply research-aligned approach to handwriting instruction. Children work with a handwriting application developed through a collaboration of Great First Eight and Cambiar Education, engage with paper-based practice sheets, do free writing on paper with Great First Eight handwriting lines, and experiment with writing in creative ways on a Word Art Wall.

Name: _____

Ss   Ss
S S S
S   S
Ss   Ss

Use the lines below to practice writing your favorite letters!

Daily Schedule: Dives

Digital Games	**Imagine It**	**Make Your Mark**	**Project Connection**	**Word Wonders**

Project Connection

Children engage in a Dive that is related to that unit's project. The content of this Dive varies from week to week. For example, one week children might spend time in Project Connection making a final version of a text they previously drafted in Quest Co-Lab. The next week children might spend time in Project Connection writing thank-you notes to community members who assisted with the project. Another week children might build important background knowledge related to the project through listening to audio or audio/video recordings of books; listening to online informational presentations; or watching PBS KIDS television programs.

Daily Schedule: Dives

Digital Games	Imagine It	Make Your Mark	Project Connection	Word Wonders
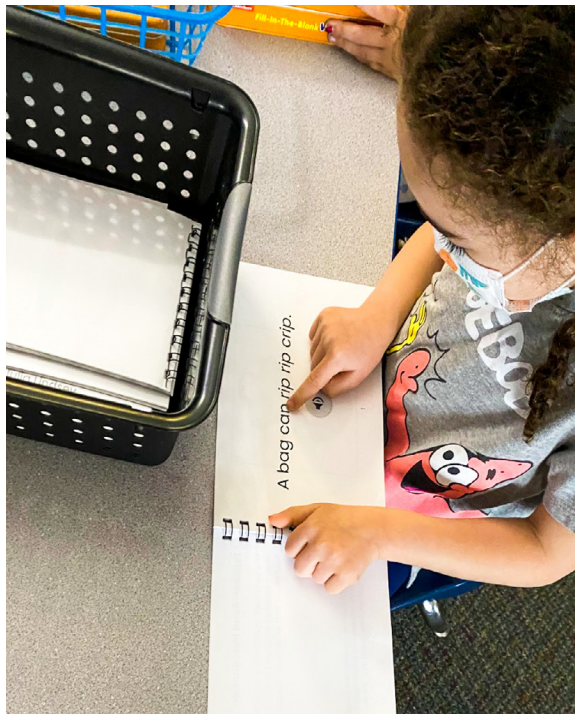
Word Wonders

Children engage in an activity that follows up on instruction from Word Wonders. In a typical week, children are provided with phonics and/or spelling games, many of them from the Florida Center for Reading Research, and are encouraged to reread Wonder Books that they have had the opportunity to read in Meet with the Teacher lessons. We provide a Wonder Book Reading Menu, which offers a variety of ideas for ways that children can reread Wonder Books. We also provide bookmarks with specific reading strategies, such as "Slide through each sound." If the classroom has a classroom volunteer or volunteers, we recommend stationing them at this Dive.
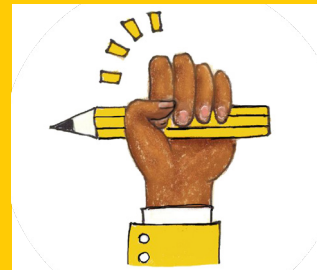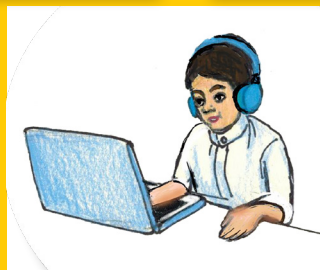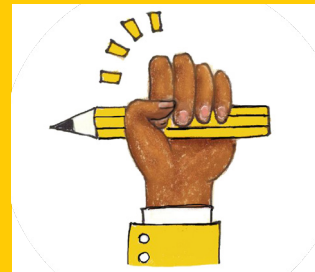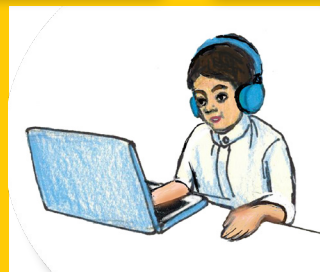
Daily Schedule: Quests
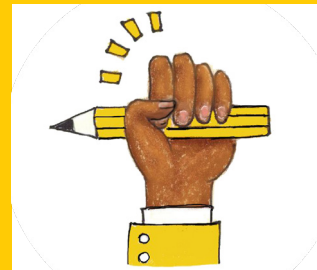
Math Minds Quest

Play and Learn Quest

Message Making Quest

Exploration/Investigation Quest
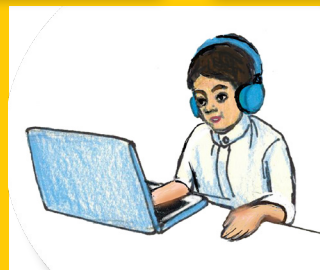
Look, Listen, and Learn

Makerspace Quest

Quest with the Teacher

The Math Minds Quest

The Math Minds Quest is mathematics focused. Children engage in activities that use games or puzzles to foster fluency, they may pose and solve their own problems related to the theme of a project or try out others' problem-solving strategies. They may also work on mathematical aspects of a literacy task.

Daily Schedule: Quests

Math Minds Quest

Play and Learn Quest

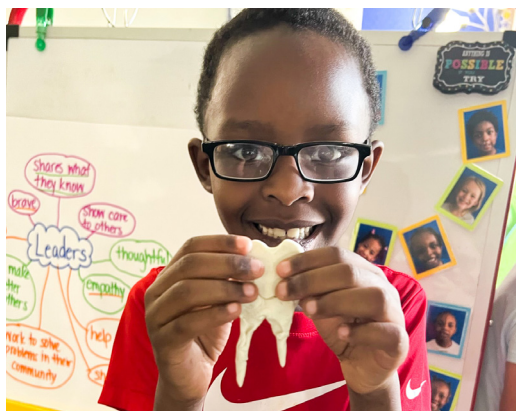**Message Making Quest**

Exploration/ Investigation Quest
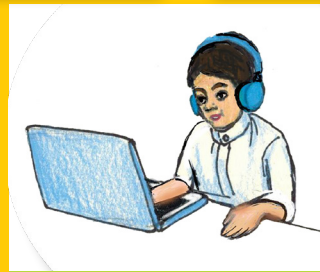
Look, Listen, and Learn

Makerspace Quest

Quest with the Teacher

Play and Learn Quest

During the Play and Learn Quest children have opportunities to engage in sociodramatic play relevant to the project. For example during Kindergartners Care, children act as botanists or florists to show care to plants or flowers. Depending on the week, children may also build objects and structures using blocks, recycled, or natural materials.

Daily Schedule: Quests
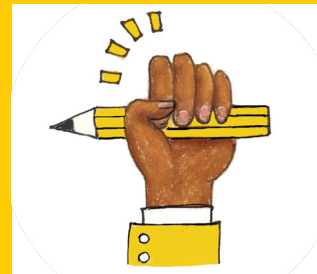
Math Minds Quest

Play and Learn Quest

Message Making Quest

Exploration/ Investigation Quest

Look, Listen, and Learn

Makerspace Quest

Quest with the Teacher
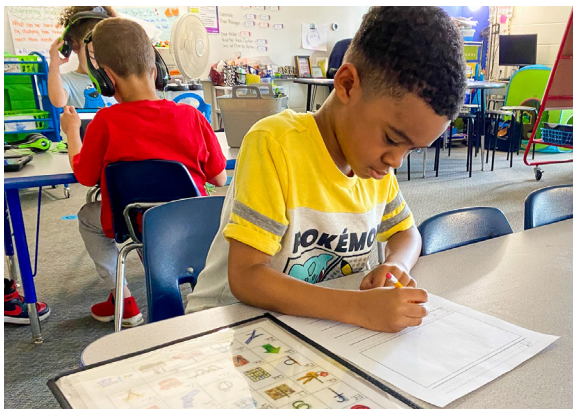
Message Making Quest

The Message Making Quest is composed of teacher-directed learning experiences that focus on writing and literacy activities that support children in completing project products. For example, in Kindergarteners Care!, children write letters to the recipient of the care basket they are creating.

Daily Schedule: Quests

Math Minds Quest

Play and Learn Quest

Message Making Quest

Exploration/ Investigation Quest

Look, Listen, and Learn

Makerspace Quest

Quest with the Teacher

Exploration/Investigation Quest

Known as the *Exploration Quest* in social-studies-led units and the *Investigation Quest* in science-led units, this Quest involves children engaging in project-related work that supports the conceptual development of ideas and practices.

Daily Schedule: Quests

Math Minds Quest

Play and Learn Quest

Message Making Quest

Exploration/ Investigation Quest

Look, Listen, and Learn

Makerspace Quest

Quest with the Teacher

Look, Listen, and Learn Quest

Look, Listen, and Learn is a literacy-focused Quest that involves listening and looking at videos of read alouds as well as content-specific videos. This Quest builds background knowledge related to the project.

Daily Schedule: Quests

Math Minds Quest

Play and Learn Quest

Message Making Quest

Exploration/ Investigation Quest

Look, Listen, and Learn

Makerspace Quest

Quest with the Teacher

The Makerspace Quest

The Makerspace Quest focuses on a science activity related to creating an artifact or part of a product that supports the project's driving question.

Daily Schedule: Quests

Math Minds Quest

Play and Learn Quest

Message Making Quest

Exploration/ Investigation Quest

Look, Listen, and Learn

Makerspace Quest

Quest with the Teacher

Quest with the Teacher

In Quest with the Teacher, the teacher works with a small group. The content of this Quest is typically similar to what children will be engaging with in Exploration/Investigation or Message Making.

Lesson Plans

Great First Eight Lesson Plans were carefully designed, with input and feedback from many classroom teachers, to provide a great deal of support for planning and carrying out the lesson while also providing room for teachers to be responsive to the children in front of them.

Many lesson plans include "Grow What You Know" and other boxes designed to support continued professional learning related to implementation of the curriculum.

GROW WHAT YOU KNOW

Research suggests that it's easier for children to blend stretchable sounds, so we start with fr, in which both sounds are stretchable, before turning to pr and tr, in which only the /r/ is stretchable.

Minimal pairs (e.g., *fill* and *frill*) can be very helpful to supporting children's learning.

Children sometimes find it difficult to distinguish /ă/ and /ŏ/. You might want to revisit the Are you on the octopus? poster to help them remember which is which.
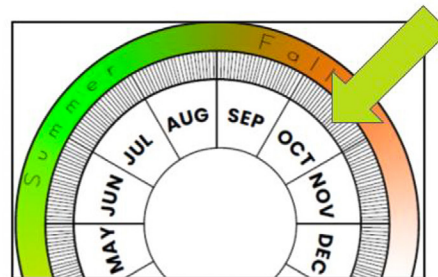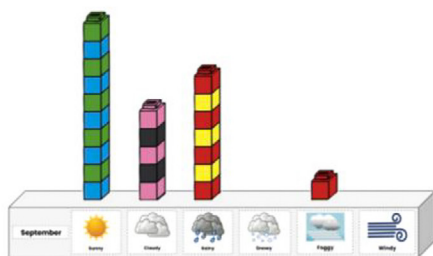
Materials & Tools

Great First Eight includes many materials and tools that support learning, such as the Wonder Books described earlier, an alphabet wall chart and individual alphabet cards, slides that go with specific lessons, and much, much more!

Do you see a push or a pull?

Weather and Temperature Data

The Alphabet Plus Card

Assessment

Too often assessment practices in U.S. schools do not actually improve the quality or appropriateness of individual children's education but rather serve to perpetuate a narrow, deficit-laden view of children's capabilities and unequal opportunities for children to engage in the most intellectually engaging work. In the Great First Eight Kindergarten Curriculum, we take a different approach . . .

Principles Guiding Our Observation and Assessment Plan

The following principles shape our approach to assessment:

1. Observation and assessment practices should align with our 15 Great First Eight Design Principles.

2. Observation and assessment practices should help teachers maintain high expectations for all children.

3. Observation and assessment practices should emphasize what children can do.

4. Observation and assessment practices should be equitable.

5. Observation and assessment practices should enable children to be active participants in the assessment process.

6. Assessment tasks should offer learning opportunities for children.

7. Observation and assessment should be aligned to the curriculum, including the curriculum's aims with respect to:

- procedural knowledge, practices, & skills
- conceptual knowledge
- discourses
- dispositions

8. Observation and assessment should offer children multiple opportunities to show what they know and can do over the course of a unit or over multiple units.

9. Observation and assessment should offer children multiple ways of expressing their thinking.

10. Assessment practices should be educative when needed (e.g., about central components of science practices).

11. Observation and assessment must inform instruction.

We enact these principles through a three-pronged approach to assessment:

(1) guided observation,
(2) rapid, systematic assessments, and
(3) a structured portfolio.

Assessment

Standard	Obser-vation Period	Level of Support Provided				Comments
		Substantial	Moderate	Minimal	None	**Arjun Anand**
MATH						**MATH**
M1: Sees themselves as a mathematician, & recognizes & values the contributions of mathematicians from various cultural backgrounds.	Ob-1	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-2	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-3	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-4	☐	☐	☐	☐	
M2: Makes sense of problems and perseveres when solving problems.	Ob-1	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-2	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-3	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-4	☐	☐	☐	☐	
M3: Communicates their reasoning effectively, and critiques the reasoning of others.	Ob-1	☐	☐	☐	☐	Arjun described addition as, "I put this one and then I put this one." We worked on using the words "together," "in all," and "adding" with counters.
	Ob-2	☐	☐	☐	☐	Arjun correctly sorted flat (2D) and solid (3D) shapes, with the exception of the cylinder. Arjun said the cylinder was a circle so he put it with the square and triangle. When asked probing questions, Arjun stated the shape was a circle but also solid so he wanted to choose both categories.
	Ob-3	☐	☐	☐	☐	Subtraction: Arjun watched his partner draw five circles and then cross out two circles. He said, "why did you put an x on two cookies?" and his partner indicated it was because he ate two of the "cookies."
	Ob-4	☐	☐	☐	☐	Arjun was able to describe several attributes of a basketball (light, round, not flat) with no assistance. He said, "But the baseball is smaller than the basketball because it fits in my one hand."
M4: Develops and values multiple ways to solve problems.	Ob-1	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-2	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-3	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-4	☐	☐	☐	☐	
M5: Attends to precision when solving mathematical problems.	Ob-1	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-2	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-3	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-4	☐	☐	☐	☐	
M6: Recognizes & creates patterns.	Ob-1	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-2	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-3	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-4	☐	☐	☐	☐	
M7: Counts to tell how many, compare, or order sets of objects.	Ob-1	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-2	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-3	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	Ob-4	☐	☐	☐	☐	

We provide a structured online observation spreadsheet, called Seeing Strengths, to guide and record observations of children's developing strengths. The spreadsheet is created with individual children's names and photos in the column headings and strengths organized by domain within the row headings. These strengths typically reflect clusters of standards rather than just a single standard, making them a powerful and relatively efficient foci for observation.

The spreadsheet offers space to record brief comments about observed strategies or skills, evidence of content knowledge, or other dispositions for each child. There is also a set of four checkboxes for each strength: substantial, moderate, minimal, or none. These checkboxes don't put the onus on the child but rather refer to the amount of support the teacher needs to provide for the child to show this strength. Teachers may work in the Seeing Strengths spreadsheet during the day or during a reflective period of the teacher's choosing. We also provide prompts in some lessons that offer an especially good opportunity to observe for a specific strength.

Assessment

Rapid, Systematic Assessments

Word Reading & Spelling Assessment Kindergarten

Introduction:

The purpose of this informal, formative assessment is for you to learn how individual children are progressing in their word reading and spelling to inform (a) what you review more often in Word Wonders; (b) the instruction you provide, and with which children, during Meet with the Teacher sessions; and (c) what you incorporate into Dives and other learning opportunities. For example, you might form a group of children who are blending VC words, but would benefit from additional instruction blending three-phoneme words. Or you might set up a Word Wonders Dive to work on -id and -it words for children having difficulty with short i words. For instructional resources that may be helpful, see previous Word Wonders lessons, previous Meet with the Teacher lessons, and resources on the Kindergarten Cross-Unit Resources page of the website under "Additional Meet with the Teacher Lessons."

Three very important notes:

(1) This is an informal, formative (i.e., to inform instruction) assessment. As such, **you should use your judgment** as you administer it. You should stop when you have information you need to plan next steps in instruction for that child. **There is no need to administer all of the items** if you have the information you need. For example, if you have determined that the child is reading short a words without difficulty and has solid consonant letter-sound knowledge, you might skip any remaining short a words. Also, **you should feel free to add additional, similar words as needed**. For example, if you think the child might have memorized sat, you could also ask them to read pat instead.

(2) **It is important to pay attention to what the child is doing** when attempting to read or spell a word, because that provides information about instructional needs. For example, if the child is pronouncing the correct (for that child's dialect) sound for each letter but having difficulty blending those sounds together, teaching the Blend as You Go strategy might be a good instructional text step. In contrast, if the child is not pronouncing the correct (for that child's dialect) sound for particular letters, using Additional Meet with the Teacher "More Time With . . ." lessons on those letters may be a good next step. See *Accelerating Literacy Foundational Skills Development*, which you'll study later in the year, for more information.

(3) It is important to enact *The Great First Eight Principles for Observation and Assessment* when administering this (and any) assessment.

Rapid, systematic assessments in Great First Eight Kindergarten include any assessments the school must administer due to state mandates as well as systematic formative assessments developed by Great First Eight. The Great First Eight assessments are administered at various points throughout the year for the purpose of informing instruction.

The Great First Eight rapid systematic assessments are very carefully aligned to our curriculum. For example, we only test children's ability to read and spell words with phoneme-grapheme relationships that we have explicitly taught. This alignment is uncommon in U.S. assessment and crucial to achieving equity and effectiveness in assessment.

Assessment
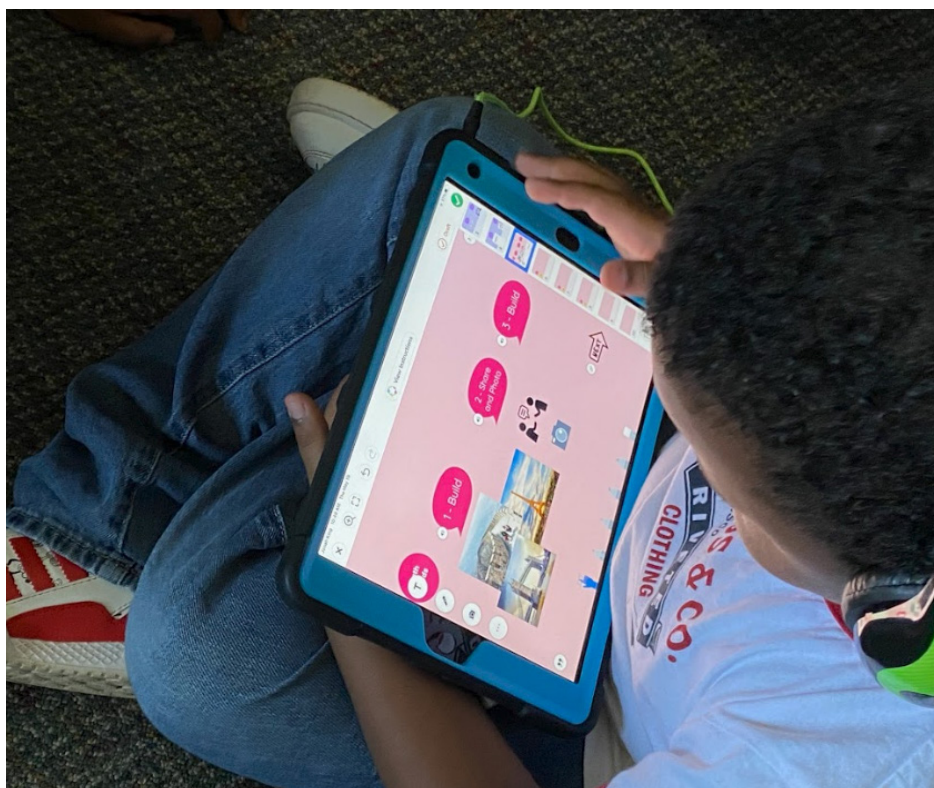
The third and final component of the Great First Eight Kindergarten approach to assessment is a structured portfolio that captures key accomplishments of children in each unit/project. The portfolio is created using the digital platform Seesaw to encourage two-way communication with families about children's learning and to allow for children to use multiple channels or methods to demonstrate what they know or can do, such as photos of drawings, writing, or artifacts, videos, and audio recordings.

The unit/project portfolio includes at least one entry per domain and is designed to incorporate student choice. For example, in World Watchers, for math children choose how to demonstrate that they can represent data in different ways (math) and for social and emotional learning, they choose how to demonstrate that they are a good friend/classroom (which they indicate by labeling a drawing of themselves). For each portfolio entry except in social and emotional learning, we provide a rubric the teacher can use to evaluate the entry; in some cases, child-facing versions of the rubrics are also provided.

Professional Learning

Great First Eight professional learning involves:

- Daily planning time

- Weekly or biweekly teacher study group/professional learning community/lesson study/inquiry meetings

- Thirty hours of professional learning modules to engage in with colleagues before implementing Great First Eight

- Sixteen hours of professional learning modules to engage in with colleagues

- during the first year of implementing Great First Eight

- Additional professional learning materials for use in subsequent years

All modules come with facilitator guides so that a coach, lead teacher, or other member of the school or center community can lead the professional learning internally. It's the best of both worlds: high-quality, research-aligned professional learning materials used in a job-embedded, ongoing manner.

The Year One Professional Learning Modules include the following:

Fundamental Understandings about Great First Eight:

- Introduction to GF8 Kindergarten
- Professional Learning in the Great First Eight Kindergarten Curriculum
- Designing a GF8 Kindergarten Classroom
- Lesson Plan Walk-Through in GF8 Kindergarten
- Assessment in Great First Eight Kindergarten
- Language Diversity in Great First Eight
- Project-Based Learning
- Positionality (four sessions)
- Frameworks for Family and Community Engagement in GF8 Kindergarten

Professional Learning About Parts of The Day:

- The Daily Schedule in GF8 Kindergarten
- Word Wonders and Meet with the Teacher in GF8 Kindergarten
- Wonder Co-Lab
- Math Marvels
- Community Time in GF8 Kindergarten
- Quest Co-Lab
- Time Talks
- Classroom Culture & Climate in GF8 (across the day)

Professional Learning About Specific Units:

- Launch Week
- Kindergartners Care!: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Concept of a Beloved Community Launch Deck
- World Watchers Launch Deck
- Music Moves Us Launch Deck
- Domino Effects Launch Deck
- Power in the People Launch Deck
- Engineering Inside & Out Launch Deck
- Communicating Kindergarten Launch Deck

Professional Learning

Specific Domains of Learning

- Social and Emotional Learning and Identity in GF8 Kindergarten
- Social Studies Teaching and Learning
- Science and Engineering Teaching and Learning
- What are the Social Justice Standards?
- Accelerating Literacy Foundational Skills Development
- Vocabulary: POWords
- (Other aspects of math and literacy are addressed in modules about parts of the day)

Tools and Techniques in Great FIrst Eight:

- Wonder Books & Other Texts in Great First Eight Kindergarten
- Classroom Discourse
- Interactive Writing
- Differentiation
- Hip-Hop in GF8 Kindergarten
- Family Engagement Curriculum–Parts 1 and 2
- Intro to Seesaw (for those not already familiar with this platform)
- Seesaw in Great First Eight

Revisiting Modules of Choice

- Great First Eight's curriculum and professional learning materials are accessed by registering and logging into "Great Gate." Great Gate keeps track of where you left off in the curriculum and brings you back to that spot the next time you log in.

Math Marvels in GF8 Kindergarten

Mathematics In GF8

Dr. José Martinez Hinestroza
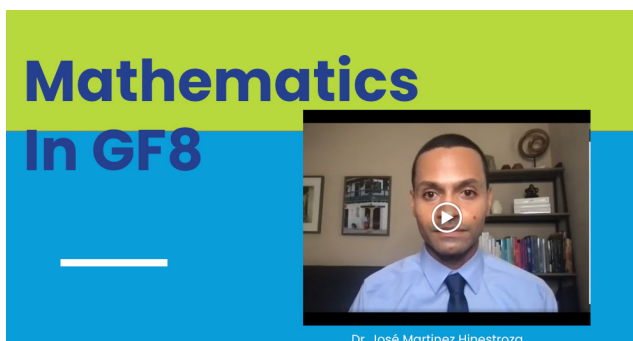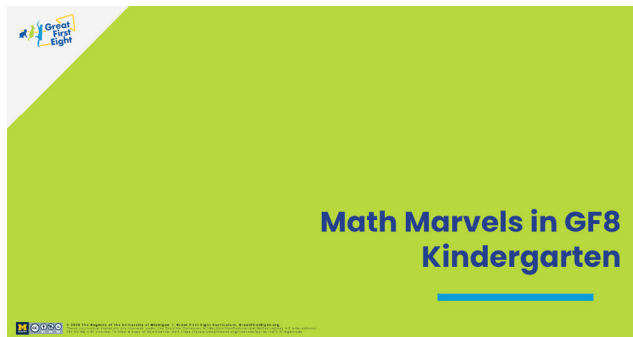
Family Engagement

Families First: The Great First Eight Curriculum Family Engagement Approach K – 2

In Great First Eight, we recognize that families are children's first and most enduring teachers. We help teachers learn from families. We provide opportunities for families to learn from one another. And we share with families ways they can support children's curriculum-related learning at home.

In Great First Eight K – 2 classrooms, teachers have daily opportunities to learn from and with families, including through:

✓ Talking at pick-up and drop-off (if applicable)
✓ Text messages
✓ Phone calls
✓ Video messages
✓ Seesaw (a digital platform for sharing children's work)
✓ Our family folder
✓ School/community events, including project celebrations
✓ Conferences
✓ Feedback on children's work
✓ Opportunities to volunteer

Our family engagement approach also includes:

Family curriculum and unit introductions: We share with families about Great First Eight and each curriculum unit

Family journal: Weekly opportunities for families to write, draw, video- or audio-record responses to prompts related to the in-class project-based unit

Family studios: Get-togethers in which families learn from one another and the teacher about ways to support children's learning through everyday activities at home.

Great First Eight's approach goes beyond traditional "parent involvement":

↗ We include many family members, not just parents
↗ Educators learn from and with families to support children at home and at school
↗ The goals and cultures of families and the community are honored

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School & Community Events

TEACHER REFLECTION
- How can teachers invite families to attend and participate in school and community events?
- How can school and community events be designed to be inclusive of families' needs and interests?

School and community events provide an opportunity for students and families to engage with and build relationships with teachers, other families and community partners.

The Great First Eight curriculum is designed to intersect with the community. Units culminate with the children's work on a purposeful product, and often include special events where children will be able to share their ideas and learning with families and community members.

🚀 GETTING STARTED

Create a year-long family calendar of school and community events.

Include events that can be located within the school building and within the broader community.

Share the calendar with families at the beginning of the school year.

As events approach, send reminders to families using student-created invitations.

Tips

1. Integrate a wide range of opportunities to volunteer, including ways families can be involved even if they cannot attend the event.
2. Recognize family contributions publicly at events and express appreciation for participation.

🔗 Links to Principles

Principle 1:
The Great First Eight curriculum values children's engagement by providing them with real-world purpose and authentic audience. So the events you plan are critical for evoking jubilation. Learning in GF8 is fun! Children should feel joy and agency when they share their hard work with an audience.

Look for patterns in beloved family treasures – like the blanket that Grandma knit!

Blue
Cream
Yellow
Cream
Blue
Cream
Yellow
Cream

Next Steps

Eager to learn more about Great First Eight?

Pre-register at GreatFirstEight.org to be notified when the kindergarten curriculum can be accessed for review. To apply to be among the first implementers of Great First Eight Kindergarten, in the '23 - '24 school year, please contact greatfirsteight@stand.org.

Thank you for your interest in Great First Eight!

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