



EARLY CHILDHOOD
RESOURCE CENTER



Annabelle: Ready to Make Friends

Annabelle is about to start kindergarten. During her last-ever SPARK lesson, her mom, Kaitlyn, reads the book *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* with her.

The book tells the story of a kindergarten teacher who's busy preparing her classroom for all of the animal students who are about to start school.

The accompanying activity has the SPARK child place the animals on the school bus, alphabetically.



Annabelle's excited about kindergarten. This activity is helping her envision what it will be like. As she places an animal on the bus, she tells Kaitlyn, "When somebody gets on the bus, they make a friend."

Making friends is at the top of Annabelle's list, because her family recently moved here from Alaska.

Kaitlyn says Annabelle has grown with each monthly SPARK lesson. SPARK helped Kaitlyn prioritize, so she knew what to work on with Annabelle and what learning goals they needed to set each month.

Now that kindergarten is nearly here, Annabelle is ready. When that bus comes, she'll find her seat, sit down, and make a friend.

What is SPARK?

The SPARK program helps families get ready for kindergarten.

A SPARK parent partner visits the home monthly to conduct lessons and activities based on Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and designed to meet the individual child's learning needs. At every visit, the family receives a book, supplies, and activities to keep the learning going.

SPARK also conducts developmental screenings. If a child is found to have barriers to school readiness (such as speech or behavioral issues), SPARK initiates referrals to needed community resources. The goal is to address concerns long before the kindergarten year begins, so that the child and family are excited and ready to succeed.

The program is highly effective: SPARK children significantly outperform their peers on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, and they have an advantage through at least the third grade.

To learn more about SPARK, visit ecresourcecenter.org