The Berkshire Museum Helps Families Prepare for a Different Kind of Kindergarten

A collection of digital tools teaches children what to expect at school, including new guidelines for COVID-19

[Pittsfield, MA] – The Berkshire Museum launched a new series this week dedicated to preparing young children and their caregivers for the first days of kindergarten. The new digital content, located at explore.berkshiremuseum.org/ready-for-kindergarten-2020, includes an updated digital edition of the museum’s award-winning publication In Kindergarten in addition to fun, age-appropriate videos that teach essential kindergarten skills and explore pandemic precautions for early learners.

“Since 2014, the Berkshire Museum has played a role in every Berkshire County child’s transition to formal education with In Kindergarten and our popular Kindergarten Day events,” said Jeff Rodgers, executive director of the Berkshire Museum. “Everything is different this year, but our team has adapted to make sure we are still here for the families in our community, providing relevant and timely information that will make the first days of kindergarten easier for both children and caregivers.”

This year’s digital edition of In Kindergarten is accompanied by a series of videos with Early Education Specialist Liz Anglin. Videos include a reading of In Kindergarten, helpful tips on how to wear face coverings, good handwashing habits, how to practice social distancing, and more. This series of videos will soon be joined by skills essential to kindergarteners - pandemic or not - including scissor safety, shoe tying, and others.
In Kindergarten was developed in 2014 by the Berkshire Museum in consultation with early childhood professionals and local kindergarten teachers to address social and emotional milestones as well as the academic skills children should have before entering kindergarten. The book aims to familiarize children with a school environment and help parents to understand the possible anxieties and stresses of beginning formal education. The book has been provided to every kindergartener in Berkshire County since its first printing in 2014, and last year was distributed to students state-wide with help from Boston Children’s Museum, Berkshire Bank, and Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) coordinators and peer institutions across the commonwealth.

Since its debut in March of this year, Berkshire Museum’s Museum@Home series provides thought-provoking digital content to visitors of all ages inspired by the museum’s diverse collection of fine art, natural science specimens, and historical artifacts. In addition to Ready for Kindergarten 2020 materials, early learners and their families will also enjoy WeeMuse videos, worksheets, activities, and aquarium facts created just for early learners. Adults and children alike are encouraged to visit explore.berkshiremuseum.org anytime to discover new stories from the Berkshire Museum.

About the Berkshire Museum

Located at 39 South Street in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, the Berkshire Museum combines art, science, and history to create thought-provoking experiences for the whole family through interactive programs, interdisciplinary exhibitions, and engaging online series. The museum building is currently open by reservation five days per week, featuring The Art of Warner Bros. Cartoons and Aquarium. Plan your visit at berkshiremuseum.org or go to explore.berkshiremuseum.org to enjoy the Berkshire Museum wherever you are.