

"Going to Kindergarten"



Soon your child will begin Kindergarten - an exciting and new place for both of you. While many parents feel sad that their child is growing up, kindergarten is an opportunity for your child to learn and mature. Start now to work and play with your child to make sure she/he has some preparation for what is to come. Having a few skills for school helps your child understand what teachers and others are talking about and what is expected of s/he in the classroom. Information can help make the move from home or preschool to elementary school smoother and more fun.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

What does "Parent Involvement" mean? According to No Child Left Behind, the federal education act that provides guidance to school districts, it is "a meaningful, on-going, two-way conversation between parents and schools." What does this mean to you? Parent involvement means that you care about your child's education and find ways to let her/him and the school know that you care. When families send a positive message to their children about the importance of education, children have more success in school. Research has clearly proven that the students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, to be promoted, to adjust well to school, to attend regularly, and to graduate. So talk with your child's teacher early in the year and often throughout the year. Tell the teacher what you know about your child and ask for more ways to help your child at home. Have good conversations with your child about school. Ask him/her to "tell me something good about your day at school."

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL READINESS AND SELF-HELP SKILLS

When children are ready for school, they understand what school is about and why they are going there. They are happy to be going to school and curious about learning new things and making new friends. Children come to school with different skill levels. Your child will learn the following skills while attending kindergarten.

Your child will know how to:

- Wait her/his turn
- Be away from his/her family without being too sad
- Follow the teacher's directions and do what is asked
- Understand that others have feelings and rights
- Know how to follow rules
- Share items, work on projects with other children, be helpful
- Ask for help when she/he needs it
- Use his/her manners: say, " please, thank you, excuse me, I'm sorry, can I play with you?"
- Sit quietly for 15 to 20 minutes
- Use words to settle disagreements
- Eat snacks and lunch neatly, use a fork and Spoon
- Continue to work on an activity for a short time even when she/he gets bored, it gets hard, or when it takes a while to finish
- Finish one activity, clean it up and put it away before beginning another
- Put on and take off jackets, mittens, shoes, and hats
- Hang up coat and hat on a hook
- Open juice boxes and clean up lunch wrappings
- Go to the toilet, flush, wash hands, and manage clothing



Here are some GOOD ways to spend time with your child.

Remember, the average 5 year old laughs 400 times a day while the average adult laughs just 15 times a day! Surprised? That is why it is important to learn through play and fun. Enjoy being with your child while they learn!



Tell your child that education is important and that you want her/him to grow up to be a successful person who does their best in school.

- Read together **every day** for 15 minutes or more – or at least at bedtime.
- Listen to stories on tape. (available at your library).
- Recite nursery rhymes and make up silly rhymes.
- Talk about and/or cut out things you see in magazines newspapers and glue them on to blank sheets a book of favorite things.
- Sit or kneel on the floor at child level to talk & play.
- Write a letter together to someone you love.
- Sing songs and play music in your home and car.
- Find good websites to play and read together.
- Color and draw. Play word games and board games.
- Cook together and talk about how to cook – measure, stir, bake, pour.
- Work with your child's teacher to help your child succeed.
- Make shopping lists and read food labels at the grocery store.
- Pay attention to your child's homework – is it done and turned in?
- Check your child's school bag for notes from the school.
- Attend parent/teacher conferences and school events.
- Fill out school forms and return them on time.
- Give your child the school supplies needed - pencil, eraser, and crayons. If you cannot afford these items, call your local school department. They may be able to help.
- Join groups, attend workshops, look for services that support your parenting.
- Offer to help at the school. Many volunteer jobs can be done at home.
- Do not leave it up to others to decide your child's school life – you have a voice.
- Take your child to the library – ask the librarian to give your child a library card.
- Read road signs and point out things as you drive.
- Visit your community events, cultural fairs, museums, ballgames, fire stations, and parks.
- Play catch, jump rope, hopscotch, hide & seek.
- Dance and stretch.
- Keep your child healthy – lots of sleep, exercise and healthy food.
- Limit television – playing and getting exercise is much better for them.
- Have a regular bedtime. 8:00/8:30 PM is good for most young children.
- Dress your child for the weather. Remember hats, mittens, coats, boots and raincoats, especially if your child walks to school.



Tips for Reading



- You can read a story to your child even if you have difficulty reading. Yes, you can! You can look at pictures and make up stories from what you see. Together you and your child can talk about the pictures.
- Telling stories is a wonderful way to give children imagination. Share stories from your childhood, stories about your culture or your family, stories about when you and they were babies. Kids love it!
- Ask questions. Ask your child to find objects in the pictures. Ask what he/she thinks is happening from what he/she sees in the pictures. Ask him/her to tell a story – help him/her with the story. While looking at books, ask what they think happens next.
- Ask your child to think about “why” something is happening. This will use his/her thinking or logic skills.
- Make sure your child sees **you** reading. Keep books, newspapers, and magazines out so your child can see that reading is important to the family.

Every activity and conversation you have with your child shows the importance of love, literacy and learning.

Make the Big Day a Happy One!

The first day at the "big school" can seem frightening to even the most confident child. Here are some ways you can help make that first day a happy one:

- Be positive. Tell your child that education is important and that you are happy that she is going to school to learn so many new things, meet new friends and have fun.
- Discuss your child's concerns about school. If he/she has fears, help him/her to know that everything will be okay because his/her teacher and his/her family care about him/her and will help him/her.
- Make sure your child knows that you, his/her room, his/her favorite toys and friends will be waiting for him/her at the end of the school day.
- You can visit the school and classroom before the school year starts – be sure to call the principal in advance for an appointment.
- Show your child his/her classroom, the lunchroom and the playground; then it will be familiar on his/her first day.
- Children sometimes worry about using the bathroom at school. Let your child know that there will be a bathroom nearby and that he can use it when he/she needs to.
- The week before school starts, practice going to bed on time. Put your child to bed earlier in order to get her/him up in time for school. Most children need 8-10 hours of sleep.
- Make sure your child knows how he/she is getting to school and how he/she is getting home.
- Children do their best when they come to school healthy, well rested and eat healthy foods.



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