



Kindergarten Readiness Tips for Parents

How You Can Help

Concept Development: helping young children construct their own understanding of concepts as they interact and work with materials, people, events and ideas:

- Provide age appropriate toys, which require thinking. This includes puzzles, blocks or sorting toys.
- Save scraps, boxes and other things around the house to use for creative experiences.
- Count objects around the house, such as plates and forks for the table, crackers for snacks.
- Play games with your child using preposition and action words such as: "Put the ball on the chair" and "Get the pot from under the sink."
- Play Simon Says. For example: Simon says, "Put your hands under your feet." Simon says, "Put your hands over your head."

Physical Development: children need physical skills to be successful in school. Daily opportunities to use large and small muscles should be provided on a daily basis.

- Take your child to the park to play on outdoor equipment.
- Allow your child time to dress himself/herself.
- Provide experience with scissors such as cutting pictures from a magazine.
- Provide opportunities to use crayons, markers, pencils and pens.
- Provide opportunities for your child to experiment with balls, tricycles and jump ropes.

Health and Safety: "Children must have their basic needs for health care and nutrition met if they are to be prepared to achieve in school." -*Marian Wright Edelman*

- Make sure your child has regular medical check ups and up-to-date shots.
- Remember trips to the dentist and regular teeth brushing.
- Provide opportunities for your child to get exercise.
- Teach your child to swim or take him/her to swimming lessons.
- Model and encourage healthy eating and limit junk food.
- Teach your child simple safety rules (fire, traffic, bicycle, poison).
- Keep a watchful eye on your child and remove hazards from home and outdoors.
- Practice emergency situations to use 911 and have home fire drills.
- Alert your child to the dangers of strangers and drugs.

Number Concepts: the development of number concepts such as classifying, ordering, counting and time/space relationships is directly related to children's ability to perform mathematical tasks throughout their school years and the rest of their lives. It is important to help children feel confident in dealing with number tasks.

- Let your child set the table ("How many forks do we need?" "How many chairs?").
- Provide opportunities to put away groceries.
- Provide opportunities to compare objects.
- Set up a sequence for personal care.
- Provide objects or toys for play.

Language Development: listening, speaking, reading, and writing are critical to children's success throughout their school years and the rest of their lives. It is tied to everything children learn or do in school. Parents can support the development of language abilities by talking with and listening to children as they share their ideas and experiences.

- Talk with your child about what interests him or her.
- Use questions that have more than one answer such as: "What do you think?" "How would you feel?"
- Play rhyming games.
- Let your child know what he/she says is important by actively listening to your child.
- Get down at eye level and show your interest.
- Encourage other members of the family to listen.
- Encourage your child to develop and share ideas by asking questions and offering suggestions.

Reading Development: reading a book to children is an enjoyable and interesting experience; it should be part of the daily family routine and is the most important way in which parents can help children.

- Provide a wide variety of books for your child, including nursery rhymes and fairy tales.
- Obtain a library card for your child.
- Provide a special place for your child to keep his/her books.
- Give your child books as presents.
- Make reading a part of your daily routine.
- Provide a wide variety of reading materials (magazines, newspapers etc.).
- Accept your child's "pretend reading."
- Point out print in the environment (signs, cereal boxes, restaurants).
- Read your child's favorite stories over and over again.
- Allow your child to select the story that he/she would like to hear.
- Sing familiar songs and stories (Old MacDonald, The Itsy Bitsy Spider, etc.).

Reading To Your Child

It is important to read to your child every day.

BEFORE reading a story:

- Introduce the book, discussing the cover, title, author and illustrator.
- Look at the pictures to discover what the story is about.
- Discuss special words or new words that are in the story.
- Talk about places, people and things in the story with which your child is familiar.
- Remember to keep the introduction simple and quick.

DURING the story reading:

- Allow time for your child to look at and talk about the pictures.
- Talk to your child about the characters and story events.
- Ask questions: What do you think is happening? How would you feel if that happened? What might happen next? (prediction) Would you ever do that? Did you think that would happen?
- Allow your child to ask questions as you read and answer his/her questions.
- Accept and be positive about your child's responses to your questions.

AFTER the story reading:

- Go back to the beginning and have your child turn the pages and share comments or questions.
- Have your child retell the story to you.
- Compare the story situations to your child's personal experiences. Could you do that? Has that ever happened to you? Did we ever do that? (make connections to his/her life)

Writing Development: to become skilled lifelong writers, children need encouragement and support as they begin the writing process. They'll play at writing like they play at reading. Ask them to read what they've written. Children go through various stages of writing development. These stages include scribbling, drawing pictures and pretend writing.

- Provide your child with materials (crayons, pencils, paper) and a space for writing.
- Focus on what your child can do.
- Have a place to display your child's writing efforts.
- Watch your child as he/she writes.
- Answer your child's questions about writing.
- Accept your child's trial and error (scribbles, pictures, alphabet soup).
- Make signs to label objects in your child's room or other rooms in the house.
- Let your child see you write.

- Encourage your child to read his/her writing to you.
- Provide magnetic letters for your child to practice forming his/her name and words he/she wants to know.
- Encourage your child to invent his/her own spelling for words (shopping lists, reminder notes, messages, signs, stories).
- Special Note:
Remember to respond to the message and content of what your child is writing about, not how it looks on the surface. Writing is not just copying. By providing opportunities to write as part of your daily family routine, you will keep your child interested and excited about writing.

Social and Emotional Development: Children must be socially ready for school. Parents can help their children get ready for school by giving them the opportunity to be part of a group of children, whether in a playground or a preschool classroom. Children need to know how to take turns, make compromises, approach familiar children, obey those in authority and generally be nice to others. Here are some tips for parents:

- Remember that discipline is teaching your child how to behave rather than punishing him/her for misbehavior.
- Remember to always love your child and let him/her know it's the misbehavior you dislike.
- Have high, yet realistic, expectations for your child. Understand your child's limits.
- Let your child know exactly what is expected.
- Treat your child and others with respect.
- Be positive through the use of praise and encouragement. Accept your child's honest efforts without criticism.
- Let your child know what he/she should do, as well as what he/she should not do.
- Show your love to your child frequently.
- Give hugs and smiles, and spend happy times together.
- Help your child find words to describe feelings.
- Let your child know all feelings are okay.
- Tell your child when he/she does things right.
- Set the tone that learning is good, fun and important.
- Show your child how to be a friend.
- Model the use of words such as please, thank you and excuse me.
- Describe ways your child can solve disagreements with others.