

REPORT TO PARENTS

Preparing for Kindergarten

The move from preschool to "real" school is exciting (and often tearful) for both children and parents. There's a lot you can do to make the transition to kindergarten enjoyable.

Making Friends with the School. Point out the school as you drive or walk past, and say, "That's your school." Attend kindergarten Open House together. Take your child to play on the school's playground after school, on weekends, and during the summer.

Learning Social Skills. Sharing is a regular part of the day in kindergarten. Help your child learn to take turns by sharing toys, crayons, and games with friends and family members. Waiting is tough for preschoolers, but you can help them get used to it by saying things like, "We'll go to the park after lunch." Teach your child to communicate with words, not actions, when upset. Emphasize that screaming, crying, hitting, kicking and other "temper tantrum" behavior is not acceptable.

Listening is Important. Looking at the person who's talking to you is more than good manners when it's the teacher who's doing the talking. Work with your child on paying attention and following simple directions: "Please put your pillow on your bed, and then put your shoes in your closet."

Making Your Child More Independent. If your child isn't already attending preschool or day care, look for ways for him/her to spend some time apart from you. Trade off with a friend, or sign your child up in a community or church program for preschoolers.

Who Am I? Kindergartners should not only know their full names, but the first and last names of their parents and caregivers. Memorizing your phone number and address may be a little easier for a preschooler if you set them to a familiar tune, like "Mary had a Little Lamb."

All By Myself. To become independent, your child should be practicing how to snap, tie and button. Be sure that your little one can also take care of his or her bathroom needs well before the first day of school.

Begin With Basics. Help your child learn to write his or her name, using a capital letter, followed by lower case letters. Talk about the colors and shapes around you - the round clock, the red umbrella. Make simple counting a part of your preschooler's day by counting aloud as you put each piece of silverware in the drawer, climb stairs, or bring in bags of groceries.

Ensure a Healthy Start. Make sure your child's immunizations are up to date. A complete physical before the start of school is required. Start your preschooler on a school day regimen of bedtime and wake-up time several weeks before school starts. At this age, a child should have ten hours of sleep.

Please understand that your child is unique and will learn at his/her own pace, so don't become frustrated if your child fails to master simple skills right away. The best thing you can do to prepare your preschooler for kindergarten is read aloud as often as possible. The long-term results will be worth your efforts!

