

Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten

Let's face it: Kindergarten isn't what it used to be. Right or wrong, it is the world we live in. The following list is intended to help prepare your child in a variety of developmental areas to make the transition into kindergarten as smooth as possible. Believe it or not, just 15-20 minutes of playing and learning with your child can make a world of difference!

Social/Emotional Development

- Encourage your child to persist in tasks when encountering a problem by giving him tasks slightly above his current ability level. When your child cannot find a solution on his own, encourage him to calmly ask for help.
- Play board games to practice taking turns.
- Set up several play dates with friends of various ages.
- Allow your child to stay with other trusted adults for a few hours at a time prior to kindergarten (especially if she has rarely been in the care of someone other than mom and dad).
- Tell your child you expect her to clean up after play. You could implement a ransom box for toys left out like this one:
www.madsmemories.blogspot.com/2009/08/moms-ransom-rubbage.html

Language Development

- Verbally give your child specific one-step and two-step directions and encourage him to follow through.
- Read to your child for a combined total of at least 20 minutes each day.
- While reading, point out how to hold a book (right-side up with the spine on the left) and the orientation in which we read the words and look at the pictures (left to right).
- After reading, ask your child what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- Give your child plenty of opportunities to draw (without coloring books). Ask her to draw the things she sees around her.
- Teach your child the uppercase and lowercase letters and, most importantly, the sounds each letter makes through play and games. Need some ideas? Go here:
www.icanteachmychild.com/alphabet

Cognitive Development

- Have your child help you sort items according to color, size, and shape (laundry, blocks, silverware, toys, and other household items work well).
- Teach your child to make various patterns (red, blue, red, blue). Garage sale dot stickers or craft pom-poms are great for this purpose.
- Practice counting aloud to 20 while driving in the car.

- Teach your child numerals 1-10. Need some suggestions on how to do this: Go here: www.icanteachmychild.com/numbers
- Count objects in your home. Have your child point to each object as she counts.
- Go on a shape hunt. Point out circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles to your child while you are taking or walk or grocery shopping.
- Talk about positional and directional concepts like up/down, over/under, in/out, behind/in front of, top/bottom, beside/between, off/on, stop/go.
- Talk about opposite words (big/little, empty/full, slow/fast).

Physical Development (Gross & Fine Motor)

- Give your child plenty of opportunities for outdoor play: running, jumping, and climbing.
- Play catch on a regular basis.
- Practice skipping.
- Stack blocks together.
- Let your child use child-safe scissors to cut out a variety of shapes.
- Teach your child to write his name (capital for the first letter and lowercase for the remaining letters). To start, write his name using a highlighter and encourage him to trace over it. Be sure that he forms the letters from the top to the bottom.
- Ensure your child is holding her pencil correctly:
www.icanteachmychild.com/2012/06/correct-pencil-grip/
- Play with playdough regularly. Roll, squish, stamp, and even cut it!
- Encourage your child to cut out various shapes using child-safe scissors.
- String large beads to make a necklace.
- Play with an interlocking puzzle together.

Creative Arts

- Always encourage pretend play...occasionally join your child in his fantasy world.
- Teach your child to recognize the following colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, black, white, brown, and pink. For help, go to:
www.icanteachmychild.com/colors
- Use a variety of materials to let your child paint, draw and explore!

This list was created based upon the following:

<http://www.icanteachmychild.com/2012/03/71-things-your-child-needs-to-know-before-kindergarten/>