

Ideas for Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten

“How can I prepare my child for school?”, “What can I work on at home?”, “What do we focus on?” These are common questions for parents preparing to send their child off to school.

The following ideas can help prepare your child for kindergarten.

Safety

- Teach your child to stop an activity and look in your direction when his or her name is called
- Practice road and sidewalk safety
- Talk to your child about taking the bus and bus rules

Self-help

- Provide opportunities for your child to do things themselves
- Provide enough time for your child to get dressed on his or her own or to do as much as possible on his or her own
- Establish a washroom routine and have your child participate to the best of his or her ability
- Encourage your child to eat as independently as possible (i.e. opening and closing lids on food containers, etc.)
- Have your child tidy up his or her toys after he or she is done playing
- Teach your child to use a tissue
- Include your child in everyday activities (e.g. laundry, groceries, gardening, cheering for your ball team, washing the car, caring for the family pet)

Routines and Social Interaction

- Provide opportunities for your child to practice sharing and waiting his or her turn
- Encourage your child to be curious about what is happening around him or her, point things out, talk about what's happening
- Draw your child's attention to someone who is upset and suggest ways of helping the person to feel better
- Establish some basic routines around eating, sleeping and free time
- Describe activities in sequence: First, you put on your pyjamas... Then mom or dad will read a story... Then bedtime...
- Gradually change bedtime and wake up routines to prepare your child for getting up early for school
- Encourage your child to stay at an activity of his or her choice for approximately ten minutes
- Have your child practice personal space (amount of space between people) in different situations

Expressive Communication

- Have your child practice communicating what he or she wants
- Provide opportunities for your child to ask for help and make choices
- Listen as your child talks about his or her day and tell your child about your day
- Create a photo album of familiar people, places or things your child likes and have him or her talk about the pictures

Receptive Communication

- Practice common instructions (e.g. Come here, Get your coat, Time for lunch, etc.)

Reading

- Read to your child, sing nursery rhymes and point out letters and words as often as you can
- Have your child hold the book and practice turning pages and following the words with his or her finger
- Encourage your child to make up stories about pictures
- Teach your child to recognize his or her name (whole name rather than each letter) in upper and lower case letters (i.e. John)

Mathematics

- Include your child in activities such as cooking (measuring), laundry (sorting) or setting the table (number correspondence)
- Count things in everyday life (e.g. stairs, cars, etc.)
- Have digital and regular clocks in the house

Physical Abilities

Gross Motor (arms and legs)

- Create obstacle courses to teach your child how to move around without bumping into things or tripping over objects and how to solve problems when moving about
- Have your child practice carrying a backpack, hanging it up, etc.
- Encourage your child to be active everyday to the best of his or her ability
- Make it fun! Catch, run, and jump with your child

Fine motor (fingers)

- Allow your child to experiment with writing tools (e.g. big crayons, markers, pencils)
- Have your child manipulate objects (e.g. Lego, blocks)
- Provide opportunities to snip with scissors (e.g. construction paper, playdough, etc.)
- Have your child practice using the zippers on a backpack, putting things in and taking things out