

Kindergarten! ... here I come!



9 Things your Child will be Working on in Kindergarten

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD:

- Prepare and share a balanced, healthy breakfast before the time your child would need to leave for school.
- Visit the school with your child and take her to the play area a few times before school starts.
- Help your child choose a school knapsack that she/he can unzip and open on her own.
- A week or two before school starts, begin to put your child to bed at the time she/he will be going to bed when school starts. Get her up at the time she will be getting up for school. Young children should get at least 10 hours of sleep each night.
- Encourage your child to tidy up the toys she/he is playing with before going on to a new toy or activity.
- Show your child how to wash her/his hands before and after eating and after using the washroom.
- If your child is staying at school for lunch, have little picnics to encourage practice opening containers and juice boxes on her own and cleaning up.
- Before going to bed, let your child choose what she/he will wear the next day.
- Have a quiet time each day when your child can choose a book to read or a toy to play with on her own.
- Read to your child – establish literacy routines where your child experiences and enjoys books with you.
- Enjoy activities and play games together that require taking turns, sharing, listening and following routines. These are skills that will be practiced in Kindergarten.

Note to Parents ~

Be excited and positive about your child starting Kindergarten. Teachers know it is sometimes difficult for parents to “let go” of their children, however it is often the parent’s nervousness that the child senses and then becomes apprehensive about this new experience.

This list has been compiled by the Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech and Language Pathologists of the Langley School District.

Here are some specific skills Kindergarten children work on:

1

Sitting comfortably for small amounts of time listening to teacher read a book or give instructions or go through the morning routine.

- Slowly build up time sitting by reading books together, playing games, singing songs etc. if necessary. Setting a timer can be helpful. Start small and work up.
- Attention span increases as a child develops and varies with activity.
- In the beginning, attention is related to interest so use whatever your child loves to engage them.
- Talk to your child. If you are with them, talk to them. Play “I spy”, ask them which story they like or who their friends are.
- For more information see: <http://www.parents.com/kids/development/intellectual/how-to-improve-attention-spans>

2

Sharing, resolving disputes, showing compassion for others, and taking turns.

- Use situations with family and/or friends to reinforce behavior. Try to use positive language. “Look! Sarah just shared her doll with Jesse” or “I noticed that you were able to wait your turn, Kaden”
- If you see another child crying, ask your child why s/he thinks that child is unhappy or “How did you know that the child was unhappy?”
- Identify emotions. “I see that Emma looks really happy! Listen to her laugh!” “Look at that boy on the T.V. He looks angry!” Don’t judge the emotions, just identify them.
- For more information see: <http://www.parenting.com/article/raising-a-compassionate-child>



3

Learning to hold a writing implement.

- It is sometimes easier for little hands to hold a small/golf pencil or even a broken crayon to start - it makes 'fist' holding all but impossible and therefore encourages three-point grasp but don't **worry** about grasp right now if your child doesn't yet have a mature one. Keep encouraging. We will sometimes say to children "Hold the pencil like a crocodile" and mimic the thumb and first two fingers 'chomping' down on the pencil with the last two fingers tucked under.
- Encourage a dominant hand (one that holds the pencil) and a helper hand (one that holds the paper).
- Encourage the same dominant and helper hand each time you draw or color but again, don't worry. This skill often takes a while to develop.
- For more ideas, see school district OT website: <http://sd35ot.weebly.com/>

4

Learning to recognize and point out the first letter of his/her name.

- Sing the alphabet song. Follow along with your finger if you have a written form.
- Look at the alphabet in written form. Point out the letter that the child's name starts with "Look, J for Jayden!"
- When in the community, point out and/or speak the letter/s that you see "Look! There's a dog. D is for dog" In the grocery store, point out and/or speak the letters "Look! We are going into aisle A" etc.
- For some fun activities see: <http://www.icanteachmychild.com/alphabet-activities-for-toddlers-preschoolers>
- For more information see: http://www.babycenter.com/404_whats-the-best-way-to-teach-my-child-the-alphabet_6897.bc

5

Recognizing and drawing pre-printing shapes.

- Before learning how to draw letters, children need to practice with pre-printing shapes.
- Begin with straight lines – l, ---, and then join them together to form shapes properly - straight lines down from the top (not up from the bottom) and circles counter clockwise.
- Play with puzzles, coloring books, etc.
- You can get simple activity books at the drug stores, Walmart or Chapters. These are great to join dot to dot, draw over shapes, follow mazes etc. Just make sure that your child does them purposely, not scribbling. This helps learning to occur. If s/he doesn't enjoy this activity, don't force it. Have fun!
- For more information see:
http://sd35ot.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/1/9/25193825/pre-printing_skills_and_pre-printing_shapes.pdf



6

Experiencing 'manipulatives'.

- Play with Playdoh, Legos, building blocks, water, sand, string beads/objects, cut with scissors, and practice with a variety of writing/coloring tools: chalk, paint, paste, puzzles etc.
- For more information see:
<http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref Ready Fine Motor/>



7 *Building gross motor skills.*

- Find opportunities to walk, run, jump, roll, bend, stretch, balance, swing, climb stairs, throw a ball, kick a ball, etc.
- For more information see: <http://handsonaswegrow.com/gross-motor-activities-preschoolers>

8 *Self-care skills.*

- Help your child to be independent in the bathroom; for example, not waiting until the last minute, closing doors, locking doors, manipulating belts, snaps and zips, washing hands with warm soapy water and drying them. Make sure that your child has clothes that s/he can manage on their own.
- Encourage your child to open lunch boxes, insert straws in juice boxes, eat their snack/lunch, manage their drink bottle, be able to put on and take off shoes, sweaters, jackets, etc. and know where they belong.
- For more information see: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/teaching_routines.pdf



9

Speech and language/community skills.

- Help your child be aware of personal information like first and last name and age.
- Explore positional words like up/down, here/there, above/below, beginning/end, and colors and simple shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle)
- Help your child practice using direct requests with justification (e.g., “Stop that. You’re hurting me.”)
- Speak to your child about imaginary conditions, such as “What if...” or “I hope...”.
- For more information see:
<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/Parent-Stim-Activities.htm>

