



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

Tips for Getting Your Child Ready for School*

In addition to the tips below, parents are encouraged to check newspapers, websites, community centers and bulletin boards for local events to get kids ready for school.

Because learning begins at birth, parents can use the same basic principles – of reading, talking to and nurturing their child – to help them start getting younger kids ready for school, too!

Language Development and Literacy

1. Read to your child at least 30 minutes per day. Most libraries have books appropriate for young children. When reading a story, ask your child, “What happens next?” and wait for the answer.
2. Have printed material around your house – the newspaper, magazines, etc. – and let your child see you reading often.
3. Take your child with you and talk to your child everywhere – at home, in the car, at the store, in the bank. Make up stories or songs about your outings.
4. Ask your child simple questions about the colors and shapes of objects. Count out number of objects. Point out letters and repeat what they are. Ask your child how he/she thinks objects are used.
5. Encourage your child to draw on plain paper with crayons. Their scribbles are the beginnings of writing.

Health

1. Schedule a visit with your child’s doctor to make sure that all immunizations are current and also with your child’s dentist. Most schools have standard requirements for immunizations, vision and hearing tests. For an updated list of school requirements, contact your local school district.
2. If your child has a chronic health condition – such as asthma – or special needs, talk with your doctor or therapist about what arrangements need to be made at school to accommodate those needs. Also, try to schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher before the school year begins – or shortly thereafter – to discuss those needs.
3. Teach your child how to use the toilet by themselves, to wash their hands after going to the bathroom and before eating, to blow their own nose and to sneeze into their elbow.
4. Make sure your child gets enough rest – eight to 10 hours a night are preferred.
5. Start each day with a healthy breakfast – it helps kids concentrate.

Social Development

1. Start talking to your child about the change that is coming when they start school. Be positive, and give your child the opportunity to ask questions or express fears.

2. Prior to that first day; meet the teachers, greet them and introduce your child. Be sure to express your appreciation for their hard work. If your child's school has a kindergarten open-house, attend as a family. Let your child care provider know if it is alright to share information about your child with their new teacher.
3. Write down your child's questions about kindergarten as they come up. Call the school to get the answers and share them with your child.
4. Talk with your child about the importance of sharing, and set an example for your child whenever possible.
5. Ask your child to help you clean up at home, so he or she will learn to put things back where they belong when asked.
6. Help your child get used to routines at school by encouraging him/her to eat at regular times at the table using silverware.

**Adapted from various sources.*