



A Parent's Guide

TO PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PRESCHOOL

Starting preschool is such an exciting and momentous occasion! When children turn 3-years-old, they are no longer toddlers. They are “big kids” who may be ready to start preschool. **As parents, we can help our children prepare for this next big step by doing these five things:**

READ

If we were only allowed to give one piece of advice to parents, it would be, “read to your child.” Read every day. Have books in every room, in your purse, and in the car. Reach for favorite books so often that you and your child have them memorized. Visit the library often.

TALK

Developing your child’s oral language skills is a crucial part of preparing him or her for preschool. Turn off the movie in the car and engage your child in a discussion about the world around him or her. Ask questions. Talk about nature, and colors, and letters, and feelings. Put down your phone and listen when your child talks to you. Encourage your child to make eye contact and greet others with a “hello” and a “good bye.”

PLAY

Spend time every day on the floor playing with your child. Encourage pretend play and role playing. Get messy! Laugh and have fun together. Offer your child time to play by themselves, giving them the opportunity to decide what to do.

ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

Children who are able to take care of some of their personal needs do better at the beginning of preschool than children who rely on adults for everything. Make sure your child has shoes that he or she can put on themselves. Allow extra time before you need to leave the house each day so that your child can put on their own shoes. Support your child in taking care of their own bathroom needs. If they ask for help with their pants, or with wiping, try talking them through it rather than doing it all for them. Teach them to wash their own hands and flush the toilet. It’s not glamorous, but these are important skills in preschool.

PRACTICE

Give your child time away from you. Practice separating and giving your child a little bit of space. Invite other children over for play dates, and allow your child to go on short play dates as well.