

Parents Make the Difference!



Make the most of your time together this school year

The beginning of preschool is an exciting time for both parents and children. It is also a return to a busier schedule. The school year always comes with a longer to-do list. But spending time with your child is still important--and necessary for her school success!

Carve out time every day for certain activities and don't let anything else interfere. Eat at least one meal together every day. Get some exercise together. Read together every day.

In addition, you and your preschooler can:

1. Start a project together. This can be a jigsaw puzzle, a family newsletter, a weekly baking session--anything you enjoy doing together.
2. Care for something together. This is natural if you have a family pet, especially a dog that you can walk and feed together. But if not, consider getting an easier pet, such as a fish, and learning about fish care with your child. Or take care of your indoor plants together and tend to them daily.
3. Collect something together. Consider cards, stamps, coins or something from nature--such as leaves that will soon gain color and start falling.
4. Volunteer together. Your child is young, but she is not too young to help you bake cookies and deliver them to the local fire station. Or to help you collect clothes that no longer fit her and take them together to a charity.
5. and unscheduled play--all of which are things children need.

Is your child on the road to reading success?

Your young child is not expected to know how to read yet. For most children, that happens around first grade. But there are early signs that indicate your child is on track now to begin reading when he is six or seven years old.

Check for and encourage these signs in your child:

- Your child likes books. He enjoys being read to. He enjoys picking up a picture book and looking through it.
- Your child knows that the words in the book tell a story.
- Your child looks for a few familiar words, such as his name, or the word stop on a sign.
- Your child knows some letters: A, B, C or more.
- Your child enjoys nursery rhymes and other books of rhyme.

Talk to your child's preschool teacher or doctor if he is four or five years old and you don't notice any of these signs.

Ensure regular attendance for school success

When your child was in preschool, you probably learned that missing school meant she was missing out on a lot of fun with her class and teacher.

Missing kindergarten and first grade means missing fun, too. But it also means missing the learning that your child needs for school success. The only way your child can learn and progress is to be in school.

As a parent, it's your job to make sure your child attends school on time, every day, unless she is sick or there is an emergency.

Remember that:

- Early reading instruction begins in kindergarten. It affects how quickly and easily your child will learn to read.
- Good school attendance helps the teacher learn your child's strengths and weaknesses. Then she can support your child's strengths and give her any specific help she may need.
- If English is not your family's first language, coming to school every day helps your child become fluent. She may get instruction in English. And she can practice all the time as she speaks to classmates and teachers.