



# School Readiness and the Importance of Play

## School Readiness

For many parents, school readiness means getting a new backpack or pair of shoes for their child at the beginning of the school year. More than that, school readiness is helping children feel comfortable and prepared for new situations, and is part of good parenting. A child's ability to do well in a school setting, especially as he or she moves from early childhood experiences into kindergarten, is an important part of school readiness. For a child to be successful, some skills are needed. School readiness skills can be taught through PLAY and many school readiness activities are both fun and free.

## Play

PLAY is important for your child's healthy development. Preschool children learn mostly through play. Opportunities to touch, taste, feel and smell different objects and talk with other children and adults can get children ready for school.

## Activities that Help Children Get Ready for School

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|   | <p>Talking about Colors and Shapes Teaches Your Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to describe colors and shapes</li><li>• Similarities and differences between objects</li><li>• New words for vocabulary</li></ul>  |
|  | <p>Looking at and Reading Books Teaches Your Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To enjoy reading and that it can be fun</li><li>• Awareness of colors, letters, and numbers</li><li>• Good listening skills, use of memory, and correct order of events</li></ul> |
|  | <p>Playing Games Teaches Your Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New words and develops vocabulary</li><li>• Skills they need to talk to other children and adults</li><li>• How to follow directions</li></ul>   |
|  | <p>Writing and Coloring Teaches Your Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To coordinate small hand muscles</li><li>• To use their imagination and creativity</li><li>• Scribbling, a skill needed for forming letters, numbers, and shapes</li></ul>                |
|  | <p>Counting and Sorting Items Teaches Your Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patterns and numbers</li><li>• Grouping like items and separating different items</li><li>• Hand-eye coordination</li></ul>   |
|  | <p>Playing with Puppets Teaches Your Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to express their thoughts and feelings</li><li>• To use new vocabulary words in sentences and language</li><li>• Story-telling skills</li></ul>                                       |

PLAY with your child and have fun while helping them LEARN!



# Playing With Your Child

Although children need time to play alone and with other children without adult intervention, research shows that playtime with parents is also important.

Children crave time with parents. It makes them feel special. Parents are encouraged to find time to spend playing with their kids on a regular basis. This should include one-to-one with each child and group time with all of the adults and kids in the home. If you are a single parent or have an only child, occasionally invite family or friends over to play.

## Pretend Play



Let the child develop the theme. Get into their world. Let them go with it. Ask questions. Play along. Be silly along with them and have fun.

Also, when appropriate, parents can use stuffed animals or puppets to act out real-life situations that can teach problem solving or social skills. Let the puppet demonstrate the wrong way to handle a situation. Get input from the child and act out a better way. Afterward, let the child do the same.

## Play Outdoors



Throw balls. Push kids on swings. Make mud pies. Go on a hike around the neighborhood.

## Play Games



Play games – card games – board games – Follow the Leader – Guess Who I am? – Hide and Seek -- Silly and wacky kids' games. Help them learn to take turns, how to win and how to lose.

## Listen to Music



Listen to music together. Sing along.

## Read Books



Ask questions starting with "Who, What, Where, When, Why?" Ask them to change or make the story new.

Playing with kids builds a bond that will last forever. It lets the child know he or she is loved and appreciated. It opens the door for sharing problems and concerns when the need arises. It helps the parent get to know and understand the uniqueness of each child. It is also a great stress reducer for overworked parents.