



PREPARING OUR CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN



LESSON No. 6

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION: For young children, the transition to kindergarten is one of the most significant changes they may experience. As parents, we can participate in our child's preparation for school, so that they may have a positive experience upon entering.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A great number of working parents often come home to other household responsibilities. For many of us, making time to help our children with school becomes difficult, especially if we are feeling tired at the end of the day. However, there are numerous activities within our daily routines that can help prepare our children for school.

Preparing children for kindergarten means ensuring that they are capable of learning what they will be taught during the school year. It also means helping them feel calm and safe around their teacher and classmates. It is important that children enter school with a positive attitude, an enthusiasm for learning new things, and are excited about interacting with other children.

IS MY CHILD PREPARED FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Being prepared for kindergarten involves more than just turning five years old by a certain time. Teachers have found that, children who begin school without being adequately prepared, frequently experience difficulties with learning. When a child feels that he/she is unable to do what other children can, their self-esteem may be adversely affected and can also cause problems for them in the future.



If we are not sure whether our children are prepared for kindergarten, we can seek help. If our child is enrolled in pre-school, we can speak with their teacher or the person in charge of the program. We can also consult our child's physician to assess their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. The physician will advise us whether they are ready for kindergarten or may recommend that we continue stimulating their development at home.

OTHER IMPORTANT SKILLS

During the pre-school years, there are many things we can do to help our children develop their skills. In doing so, we are preparing them, not only for kindergarten, but also for their future. For example, we can read to them, talk with them, allow them to do things by themselves, share stories and rhymes, and take them to the park to run and play, etc.

In addition, there are other skills that we can help our children develop, which will be helpful once they begin kindergarten.

- **Self-confidence:** The ability to feel good about themselves and having the confidence to learn and try new things more than once.
- **Independence:** The ability to try things on their own; defining their preferences for certain colors, tastes, places, etc.
- **Motivation:** The ability to show initiative, curiosity, and a desire to explore new things.
- **Persistence:** The ability to finish what they start.
- **Cooperation:** The ability to relate to other children, share toys, and wait for their turn.
- **Self-control:** The ability to understand that some behaviors are inappropriate, such as pushing, hitting, biting, etc. Understanding that there are appropriate ways to express anger.
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand and care for the feelings of others. Feelings can encompass joy, happiness, sadness, or disappointment.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Preschool children learn by playing on their own and also in groups. Playing alone helps them develop their independence and provides them with the opportunity to explore new things without feeling intimidated by other children.

On the other hand, giving children with the opportunity to play in groups provides them with a natural environment to acquire social and emotional skills. For example, they learn to interact, negotiate with other children, resolve conflicts, follow rules, and take turns.

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- ◆ Before our children begin kindergarten, we should help familiarize them with the school environment. If we know which kindergarten we're going to enroll them in, we should take them to visit and observe the other children during play and during structured activities.
- ◆ Talk to our children about kindergarten, mentioning all of the fun and positive experiences they will have learning new things.
- ◆ Give our children examples of a typical day in kindergarten. Talk to them about the daily routine, which may involve greeting the teacher and classmates, doing activities using a variety of materials such as: crayons, glue. In addition, mention lunchtime, recess, and the playground.
- ◆ Help eliminate any concerns our children have about kindergarten by reminding them, that as soon as they finish their daily activities, we will be there to take them home.
- ◆ Explain that the teacher is someone they must respect, but is also a friendly person who will be there to help them if needed.
- ◆ Talk to our children about the importance of being on time for school, meaning that they need to get plenty of sleep the night before. Reinforce that going to school on a daily basis leads to academic success.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD ALSO KNOW:

- ◆ Their full name
- ◆ Their age
- ◆ Their address and telephone number
- ◆ Their parent's names



Find out with plenty of time the school our child will be attending to become familiar with it and prepare our children.



IDEAS TO PUT INTO PRACTICE

1. When we are with our children, don't worry about having to "teach" them something every time. Instead, enjoy spending time together and have fun!
2. We can help our child enjoy learning by encouraging them to use their imagination and curiosity.
3. Playing board games is another opportunity for our children to learn. This activity also encourages "family time." Be sure to look for games that are age appropriate for our children.
4. It is important to monitor our children's "screen time." When used accordingly, television can help our children expand their vocabulary and provide them with conversation topics. We should also limit the amount of time they spend using the computer and hand-held electronic devices. Instead, encourage them to socialize with other children.
5. Assign our children age appropriate chores and congratulate them when completed.
6. Keep a file at home that includes all of our children's work. This could be helpful in showing their future teacher what they are able to do.

REMEMBER:

Parents have the greatest influence in the education of their children during early childhood. We need to take advantage of this opportunity!!!

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