

## **Parents And Teachers Working As Partners**

In many ways the adjustment to kindergarten is similar to your child's first transition to preschool or child care. Children need to feel secure in their new school and understand the daily routines.

For many children the entrance into kindergarten means different transportation, new classmates and teachers, larger classes, experiences with older children in higher grades, navigating the layout of a large school building, encounters with the school nurse, principal, secretaries, custodians and others.

Kindergarten offers challenge to all children in literacy, mathematics and social skills and research shows that success during this first year may predict later school success. Adults view kindergartens as being more focused than preschools with greater academic expectations and increased independence from children.

## **Questions To Ask Kindergarten Teachers**

- How can I prepare my child for kindergarten?
- How will my child spend his day?
- Are there opportunities for children to choose their own activities?
- Will my child learn to read?
- What are the academic goals of kindergarten?

## **Strategies For Parents**

There is a wide difference in the development of children entering kindergarten. Some children will be bigger than others, some will be sociable, some shy. Some will be reading, others will not be able to write their name. Whatever your child's stage of development, there are some guidelines on readiness for kindergarten.

Children are usually ready for kindergarten if they can:

- leave their parents without too much difficulty
- go to the bathroom alone
- play well with and respect other children
- follow simple directions and rules
- resolve some conflicts with classmates without needing the teacher
- work independently for at least five minutes
- sit and listen to a story for ten minutes
- talk in complete sentences

Think about activities you can share with your child to help get him ready for kindergarten. Some examples are:

- Find the picture of the red beans on the can at the supermarket.
- Think of ten words that rhyme with can.
- Give the cashier the money and count the change.
- Start and organize a collection - rocks, baseball cards, stickers, bottle caps.
- Cook together and learn to measure ingredients.

- Sort the nuts and bolts from the tool bench.
- Let your child tell a story while you're folding the laundry.
- Put a sticker on the calendar as each day goes by.

**Parents, teachers and schools should work together to support children's successful transition to kindergarten.**

### **Making More Than One Transition**

In many communities kindergarten is a 2 1/2 hour school day. Even full day kindergarten may not meet the needs of working parents. Some children will require child care before and after kindergarten thereby experiencing multiple child care situations every day. It can be difficult for children to understand and relate to so many changes. Look for a routine that will offer consistency and the fewest number of transitions during the day.

Whether the programs in your community are called wrap-around care or after-school care, this transition for your child is as important as the start of kindergarten. Try to be available and flexible the first few days of school. Mark down the important dates and notices coming home. Invest time in your child's kindergarten year.

Many children visit their parents at work. Give them a chance to take you to the school where they work as well. Children are remarkably adaptable. Your child will be able to meet the new expectations and adapt to new routines. That success builds new confidence and a positive self-image.

It is important for parents and teachers to know how and when to assist. Good communication between you and your child's teacher both at school and at after-school care is essential to developing an effective partnership for success.

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