

Kindergarten Parenting Matters™



A TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS
OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

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Kids Need To Learn Self-Regulation

Kids need to learn to control their emotions and behavior, resist impulses and have self-control and discipline. They need what is called “executive function.” We are learning that without this, we end up with high dropout rates, drug use and crime. In fact, good executive function is a better predictor of success in school than a child’s IQ.

So what is “executive function” all about? It isn’t something children learn in front of television and video games. It isn’t found in the time they spend in little leagues and music or karate lessons. Even though those activities can help, they are usually regulated by adults, not kids. “The best kind of play costs nothing and really only has one main requirement: imagination,” says neuroscientist Adele Diamond and psychologist Deborah Leong.



When children learn to rely on themselves for playtime - improvising props or making up games and stories, they’re actually developing critical skills, including executive function. Adults help by encouraging them to plan in advance and negotiate with others in the group. The more the children use their imagination, the better.

Perhaps we need to look more carefully at all the ways we take imagination from our children and look for ways to give them more time to really get into their play.

Spiegel, A., *Creative Play Makes for Kids in Control*, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=76838288

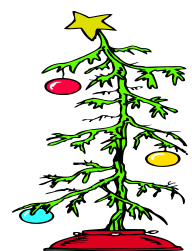
Are you listening?

Take time each day to hear what your child has to say about school, friends, and life. You want to keep communication open and that begins with making a habit of talking together regularly.



HOLIDAY STRESS

To keep holiday stress to a minimum, don’t let your child get overly tired. Try not to let her become overwhelmed by all that is going on by keeping as much of her regular routine as possible. Don’t let her go too long without eating. Calm her down by reading a book or take her for a walk with just the two of you.



UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

Reading comprehension means understanding what you’ve read. You can help improve your child’s comprehension in several ways. When reading together, talk about the title of the book and see if he can guess what the story will be about. While reading, invite him to talk about what he thinks will happen next. As you read, discuss your thoughts about the story while you encourage him to ask questions about what’s taking place in the story. When you finish the book, ask him to tell you about his favorite part. These simple activities will help him learn to get more out of everything he reads.

U.S. Department of Education through the Public Broadcasting System, http://www.pbs.org/parents/readinglanguage/first/listening_milestone_first.html



Today I Was...

Children often express themselves through imagination and play. Next time you pick your child up from kindergarten, instead of asking him how his day went and him replying "fine," ask him, "What kind of animal did you feel like at school today?" His answer could be very telling. Perhaps he was a lion who felt angry and aggressive, or maybe he was a puppy who just wanted to cuddle and play.

Law Nolte, D., *Children Learn What They Live*, Workman, 1998.

Your Child's Nutrition

A taste of independence

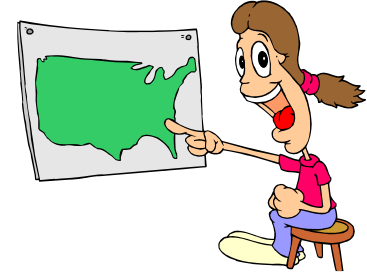
The start of kindergarten may mean that your child will eat at least one meal per day outside of your home. Make sure he's prepared.

Talk to him about healthy eating habits and the importance of a balanced diet.

In particular, make sure he knows about any food allergies or other dietary restrictions he has.

This information should also be given to his school.

www.bornlearning.org



Geography

Help your child learn about her world by hanging a big map on the wall. Find photos of friends and family and glue them to the state or country that each lives in. Help her prepare interview questions for the relatives by phone, letter or in person to find out a silly fact about each place.

Ellison, S., *365 Days of Baby Love*, Sourcebooks, 1996.

Disciplining at Home

When you discipline your child at home, you are actually helping with your child's discipline at school. It works best when both are expecting good behavior.

Here are some discipline hints:

1. Express the rules clearly and enforce them.
2. Concentrate on what you want him to do, not what you don't want him to do.
3. Have him be involved in solving the problem.
4. Keep the corrections simple.

When you correct him, move closer to him. Say his name.

Then repeat the phrase ("Bedtime now") over and over again.

5. Be firm and kind. Discipline is an act of love. He needs to know you love him no matter what.



www.parent-institute.com/pmd, 2005.



Next Time

The next present your child gives to a friend, let her sign her own name. She will be very proud of what she is learning at school.

Get Ready for 6

The calmness of your five-year-old is slowly going away, ready to be replaced by more restless behavior.

The typical six-year-old is almost constantly active.

The teacher of this age children will tell you that even sitting is difficult for many boys.

He is everywhere including climbing trees and crawling over and under anything he can find.

He is all over the room and not always with the best coordination.

He likes boisterous scramble-type play, wrestling with his father or a sibling, even when it frequently ends in disaster.

He doesn't always know when to stop.

Alexander, K., *Should I worry if my grade-schooler can't sit still?*, www.babycenter.com

Attendance Matters

Even in kindergarten, coming to school regularly matters. Every day she is learning something that will help her. Make sure she doesn't miss anything.



If you have any questions, call the Port Angeles School District at (360) 457-8575 or Parenting Matters at (360) 681-2250 or e-mail us at info@parentingmatters.org
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Want Your Child to Succeed in School? Learn How to Help Him with His Letters

One of our goals for each of our kindergarten students is to help him or her recognize the letters of the alphabet. Your help on this can really make a difference.

Here is an easy and fun way to help:

1. Gather up flyers, cereal boxes, advertisements or newspapers with different letters in different styles on them.
2. Set out a piece of paper, scissors and glue.
3. Have him write three letters at the top of the paper (H, B, K as an example)
4. Then have him cut out at least 5 examples of H, 5 examples of B, etc.
5. Have him glue them underneath the letters he has written.

Make this fun as well as a learning activity. This is not only good for letter recognition but it also helps develop his coordination.

Florida Center for Reading Research, Student Center Activities, Florida Department of Education, 2005.



H	B	K

Find other letters on signs, in the store, anywhere. See if he can recognize them. Focus on different letters and make a big deal out of all he is learning.

Everyday Writing

The more your child practices writing, the more legible her writing will become. Simple things like making a shopping list, signing cards, putting dates on the family calendar, writing down phone messages, and writing recipes will encourage her to put her skills to good use. Make writing part of your family's everyday living.



Writing Leads to Reading, www.readingrockets.org

QUIET DOWN!

Next time your children are arguing, tell them that they can continue to bicker but that they must whisper. You will be amazed at how much quicker the conflict ends; and it may end in giggles.

Reizner, J., *A Book of Family Traditions*, 1990.

“**T**he most important thing about education is appetite.”
~ Winston Churchill

By Now . . .

The transition into kindergarten is an important event for your child and even for you. In these first months, he has been adjusting to a more structured place to learn. He has been learning about raising his hand, being part of a group, and the tough job of paying attention. Some children do this easily and others struggle.

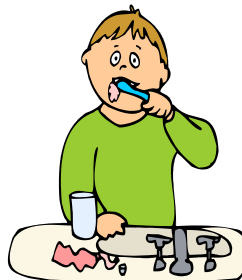
How is your little one doing? If you aren't sure, be sure to check with his teacher. This is an important year, so you don't want to ignore how he is doing. Call your school to make an appointment.

Rath, L. K., and Kennedy, L., *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, HarperResource, 2004.

Baby's Breath

Do you struggle to get your young child to brush his teeth? Try to make it fun. Invest in three or four different flavors of toothpaste: bubble gum, orange, berry or cinnamon. Have him "secretly" pick a flavor and brush his teeth, then come out and blow on Mom and Dad. Whoever guesses which flavor he used gets to read him tonight's bedtime story!

Faull, M., *Darn Good Advice Parenting*, MQ Publications Limited, 2005.



Take a Picture with Your Mind

When your kindergarten child is struggling to remember a word, have him take a picture with his mind camera. For example, if he is trying to learn the word "the" have him think about it, imagine it, say it, and see if it will help him learn it. You can even have him draw it. It helps many children who need to learn in a different way.



Westwood, P., *Spelling: Approaches to Teaching and Assessment*, ACER, 2005.

Chores Can Help Teach Your Child Life Skills

Assigning household chores to your child will not only ease your workload, but also teach him essential social skills.

1. Chores, or family responsibilities, teach basic discipline, time management, and organizational skills.
2. When your child works as a family member, he begins to understand that he is part of a "community" in which responsibilities are shared in order to keep the community going.
3. The life survival skills he learns from doing his chores will benefit him when he enters an independent living situation, such as college, because he will find living with roommates much easier.

Chores do more than pass the time. They teach.

Lutz, E., *The Complete Idiot's Guide to a Well-Behaved Child*, Alpha Books, 1999.

Read to your child each day. You will be giving her just the right experience she needs to become a good reader in the future!

www.parentsasteachers.org/site/pp.asp?c=ekIRLcMZJxE&b=307148



The average parent gives their child 17 commands in one half hour! That's a lot of commands. What about you? Remember, too many commands makes a parent sound like a boss.



The Three R's

Your child will be reading lots of books at school that have *rhythm*, *rhyming* and *repetition*. This is to help him learn words. There will also be poems and songs he will be singing and saying with his classmates. He will probably bring home copies of poems and songs he has learned in class to share with you. All of this helps him learn about the sounds that make up spoken words and build his sight-word vocabulary.

www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/377

Forward and backward

Your kindergarten begins to learn about math by working with blocks, tiles or anything

that can be counted, classified or sorted. By using these, she learns that adding means counting forward and subtracting means counting backward.

See ways you can have her count, sort or classify things around the house.



Child Learn In Kindergarten?

What will My

Kindergarten is not all about reading, writing and math. Your child will also be learning about herself as a person and about growing into a strong and independent individual. Social and personal growth is just as important as learning academics, so here is this month's list of what she will be learning.

Social and Personal Growth

- * learns to respect others
- * practices self-control
- * shares with others
- * can make changes in her routine
- * listens to other people while they talk
- * learns classroom and school rules and is able to follow them
- * works and plays cooperatively with others
- * adds information to the group that is on subject
- * takes care of her own belongings
- * shows self-confidence
- * talks about her needs
- * learns about problem solving
- * learns to make friends

