

A Parent's Guide

to preparing your child for preschool

Starting preschool is such an exciting and momentous occasion! When children turn 3-years-old, they are no longer toddlers. They are "big kids" who may be ready to start preschool. As parents, we can help our children prepare for this next big step by doing these 5 things.

1 READ

If we were only allowed to give one piece of advice to parents it would be, "**Read to your child.**" Read every day. Have books in every room, in your purse, and in the car. Read favorite books so often that you and your child have them memorized. Visit the library often.

2 TALK

Developing your child's **oral language skills** is a crucial part of preparing her for preschool. Turn off the movie in the car and engage your child in a discussion about the world around her. Ask questions. Talk about nature, and colors, and letters, and feelings. Put down your phone and listen when your child talks to you. Encourage your child to make eye contact and greet others with a "Hello" and a "Good Bye."

3 PLAY

Spend time every day on the floor **playing** with your child. Encourage pretend play and role playing. Get messy! Laugh and have fun together. Offer your child time to play by herself, giving her the opportunity to decide what to do.

4 ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

Children who are able to take care of some of their **personal needs** do better at the beginning of preschool than children who rely on adults for everything. Make sure your child has shoes that she can put on herself. Allow extra time before you need to leave the house each day so that your child can put on her own shoes. Support your child in taking care of her own bathroom needs. If she asks help with her pants, or with wiping, try talking her through it rather than doing it all for her. Teach her to wash her own hands and flush the toilet. It's not glamorous, but these are important skills in preschool!

5 PRACTICE

Give your child time away from you. Practice **separating** and giving your child a little bit of space. Invite other children over for play dates and allow your child to go on short play dates as well.