

Getting Ready for School

Preparing your child

In school, your child will be asked to work in groups and share classroom responsibilities. You can:

- Set clear expectations for your child's behavior at home and school.
- Organize household schedules and responsibilities. Everyone can share in the work.
- Talk to your child. Ask questions and listen closely to her response. Respect your child's opinion even if it's different from your own.
- Help her understand her feelings and express them appropriately.
- Encourage your child's interest in other children. Help her work through conflict in a respectful way.

Your child is naturally curious. This curiosity drives learning. Many kindergarten teachers will tell you that if your child's curiosity is somehow stifled, she cannot turn it back on. You can:

- Encourage your child's curiosity. Allow your child to explore household objects safely. When possible, visit places in your community and see something new.
- Help your child classify her world. At the grocery store, point out items that fit into a group (frozen foods, pet supplies). Use concept words in phrases like "Hand me the big, red box on the bottom shelf."
- Avoid flash cards and drilling your child on colors, shapes, ABC's or numbers. Memorizing may turn her off to learning.

It is important that your child develop control over her large and small muscles. She will use them to write, cut, glue, and care for herself. You can:

- Offer many opportunities for your child to jump, climb, dance, play ball, and practice other large muscle skills.
- Encourage your child to work muscles during play (squeezing playdough, drawing, building) and during routines (pouring juice, dressing herself, brushing teeth).
- Create healthy routines for mealtimes, bathroom, and bedtime. Make sure your child receives consistent health care. Your child cannot learn when she's hungry, tired, or sick.

Reading and writing are two of the skills your child will spend a lot of time working on in school. Just like talking and walking, reading and writing need time to develop. You can:

- Foster a love of reading by sharing books with your child everyday. This will expose your child to many words and ideas such as beginning, middle, and end.
- Set an example that reading is important. Your child should see you reading magazines or cookbooks, and using calendars or TV guides.
- Encourage your child to write in meaningful ways. Help her write thank-you notes or a shopping list. Accept her mixed-up letters and misspelled words—that's part of learning and is only temporary!

Parents,

This information is provided to you today on behalf of a special visiting program your care provider is taking part in. If you would like to receive similar visits and learn more about how your child grows and develops, please contact your local Parents as Teachers program or call 1-866-PAT4YOU to find a program in your area, or visit our website at www.patnc.org



Connecting with school

You and your child may be nervous about a new school experience. A visit to school gives you and your child the opportunity to meet the teachers and staff you and your child will be working with. Talk to school staff about your hopes for your child. Share details about your family culture. Work in partnership with the school, and remember, you are still your child's most influential teacher.