

Curiosity Corner

Kindergarten is a very important year in your child's life. During this year, he or she will build the basics for a life of learning. It is important that your child discovers the joy and excitement of learning. These tips are designed to give you ways to help your child and his or her teacher. A successful year of kindergarten will set your child in the right direction for a successful life. Please put these tips somewhere you can see them, and help your child have the most successful kindergarten experience possible.



Tips for Parents of Kindergartners



Communicate with your child's teacher.

Starting now and every year, form a strong bond with your child's teacher. Learn what your child is doing well and where there might be a need for extra support. Make it a point to call and introduce yourself to your child's teacher.

Talk with your child.

Make sure you spend time every day talking with your child. Ask about his or her day at school. Ask specific and open questions, encouraging more discussion. "What did you do at recess today?" or "What was your favorite activity today?"

Have fun with words.

Singing songs, playing rhyming games, and reciting silly tongue twisters will help your child become sensitive to the sounds in words. Creative thinking with language will lead to a better reader and writer.

Connect reading to life.

Make connections between what you are reading and your child's life. If you are reading a book about animals, talk about the trip to the zoo or the dog next door. If you are reading a book about family, talk about your family members. Help your child learn that there is a lot of fun in reading.

Play with your child's name.

Help your child learn the link between letters and sounds. Point out the letters in your child's name and what sound each makes. "Alex, the word *apple* starts with the same sound as your name. *Alex*, *apple*. They both begin with the letter A. That is just like *Mommy* and *milk*."

Play with puppets and stuffed animals.

Use characters to play language games with your child. "My name is Spot. I like

words that rhyme with my name. Does *hot* rhyme with *Spot*? Does *kite* rhyme with *Spot*?"

Play letter games.

Have your child trace his or her name and talk about the letters and the sounds they make. What are the parts of the letter? This can be done on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

Encourage writing.

Have paper, pencils, and colors available for your child to practice writing. Start with the letters in his or her name. Then write words that contain letters that the child is learning in school. Together you can write a sentence or two and send the letter to a friend or family member.

Play sound games.

Children love to play a game that focuses on the sounds that letters make can be fun. "Can you guess what word this is? c - a - t." Hold each sound longer than normal.

Read the same book over and over.

It may seem boring to you, but children love hearing their favorite story many times. So go ahead and read it as many times as your child is willing to listen. Ask your child to predict the ending if it is a new story or make up a different ending if it is a familiar one.

Keep your child healthy and ready to learn.

Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep, finishes homework, and eats breakfast everyday (either at home or at school). Establish routines (such as bedtime) that show your child school is important. Make sure education is a priority for you and your child.