

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2007

Tiny Tot Preschool & Kindergarten

KID BITS



The school habit

Now is the time to let your child know how important school is. Try to schedule checkups after school hours and take family trips over breaks. You can explain: "Your dentist appointment is on Saturday so you won't miss class." "We'll visit Grandma during winter break when school is closed."

Teach kindness

Your little one will be kind to others if she sees you showing kindness. Run an errand for a sick neighbor, or let someone with fewer items go ahead of you in the checkout line. Also, be sure to praise your youngster when she is nice to friends, adults, or animals.

Hands-on math

Most kids learn best when they can use their hands. Use real objects in your home to help your child understand math concepts. *Examples:* Let him sort coins to roll up and take to the bank. Give him a ruler, and ask him to help measure the table for a new tablecloth.

Worth quoting

"Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere."
Chinese proverb

Just for fun



Teacher: You've got your shoes on the wrong feet.

Megan: But these are the only feet I've got!

Ready for school

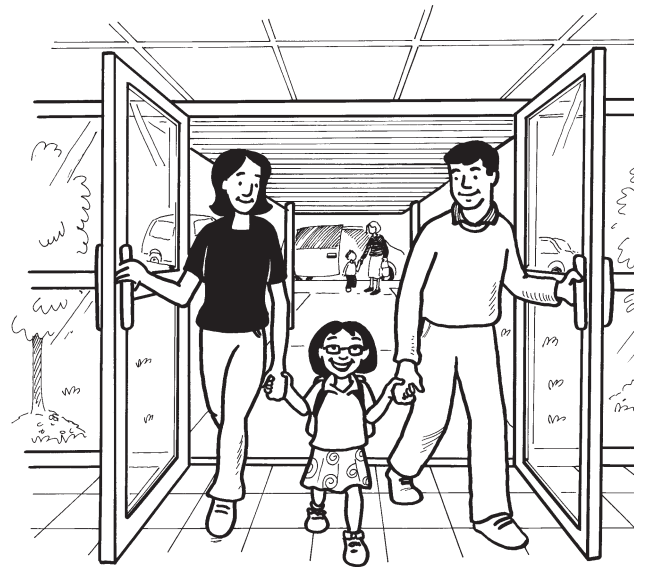
You've helped your child learn to count to 10, say her ABCs, and write her name. What else can you do to prepare her for school? Here's what three experienced teachers told us.

Reading

"Children who are familiar with books are ready to learn to read. Make time to read with your youngster every day. Before beginning, ask her to show you the book's front and back covers and to describe the pictures inside. As you read, point to the words on each page. Encourage your child to read by having books available—put some in every room of your house!"

Listening

"Help your youngster learn to sit still and listen for short periods by doing fun activities that require her attention. For example, take her to puppet shows, story hour at the library, or magic shows



at your community center. Remind her not to talk when people are performing. She'll learn to stay quiet when her teacher is speaking."

Doing

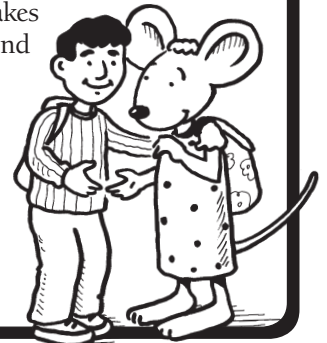
"Have your little one pick up her toys and hang up her coat at home, and she's likely to be more independent at school. You can give her a boost by buying clothes that she can manage herself, such as pants with elastic waists and slip-on shoes. Being able to say 'I did it myself' will make your child feel better about herself, too." ♥

September book bag

Get your child excited about going to school with these great read-aloud ideas:

■ Introduce characters who share his feelings. In *Wemberly Worried* by Kevin Henkes, a young mouse student is anxious—until she makes her first friend. *The Berenstain Bears Go to School* by Stan and Jan Berenstain shows a colorful schoolhouse full of cubs happily playing with paint, clay, and blocks.

■ Help your youngster brush up on skills. He will practice letters and numbers with *The Turn-Around, Upside-Down Alphabet Book* by Lisa Campbell Ernst or *Ten Little Ladybugs* from Melanie Gerth. Work on telling time with Kathi Appelt's *Bats Around the Clock*. ♥



Fast friends

School is much more fun when you have friends to play, laugh, and learn with. Pass along the joy of friendship to your little one with these ideas.

Speak up

Suggest that your youngster introduce himself to other children in the class. Practice saying, "Hi. My name is Matthew." He can follow this with a compliment ("I think your dinosaur shirt is cool"). *Tip:* Act out conversations together using his stuffed animals.



Step up

Offer to drive a classmate to after-school activities, or invite a school friend to go to the park or zoo. Get the two of them talking by asking about something they did during the day. Help a new friend feel comfortable in your home by providing a tasty snack and making sure your child shares his toys.

Join up

Sign your youngster up for a neighborhood sports team (soccer, T-ball), a gymnastics class at the YMCA, or an arts program at the local pottery studio. He is sure to meet other children who have the same interests or attend the same school.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Cub reporter

Who's the oldest person your child knows? She can discover what life was like before computers, cell phones, and maybe even television by interviewing an elderly friend or relative.

First, help your child think of someone to interview (grandfather, retired neighbor). Then, have her make a list of questions to ask, leaving room to fill in the answers. *Examples:* "What games did you play when you were my age? (stick-ball, jacks)." "What did you do on weekends? (visited family, read books)." After the



interview, encourage your child to write or dictate a story about the person. She can draw pictures on each page. When she has finished, put the pages between two pieces of construction paper, and staple together. She and her older friend will enjoy reading her story, and your youngster will have gained important researching and writing skills.♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote school readiness, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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Q & A

Fixing mistakes

Q: When Derek makes a mistake, he gets upset, and then so do I. How can I help him learn from his mistakes instead of crying?

A: Everyone makes mistakes. Young children need help learning how to stay in control when something goes wrong. Show your child how he can handle these situations so he doesn't feel helpless the next time.

If he spills his glass of milk, for example, teach him how to wipe it up. "Get a sponge, soak up all the liquid, and wipe with a clean, wet paper towel." You can help by giving your youngster the tools he needs (keep sponges and paper towels within his reach).

To show Derek how to remain calm, be a good role model. The next time you goof, point out what happened—and how you're fixing it.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Help from home

When my youngest child started school, I wanted to be involved. Since I work during the day, I asked Hannah's teacher what I could do at night. She was certainly glad for the help!

Mrs. Thomas asked me to find child-friendly Web sites on topics the class was studying. Each month she e-mailed me a list of topics. I searched for appropriate sites and e-mailed back the Web

addresses. I also helped by cutting out shapes and letters for projects. Hannah was happy to be the messenger when Mrs. Thomas sent home paper, patterns, and instructions.

The best thing was that her teacher told the class, "Hannah's dad did this for us" each time she shared a Web site I had found or used materials I had made. Hannah knew I was interested in what she was learning—and I knew what was going on in her classroom.♥

