

15 Ways to Be Ready for Kindergarten

- 1. Talk with you child often.** Talk about what you see and do. Make up stories. Sing songs. Rhyme. Tell jokes. These things help you child learn about words, language and the world.
- 2. Read to your child daily.** It's key to helping your child learn how to read. It can be a great part of a bedtime routine, too. As you read each word, point to it. Ask your child to guess what might happen next or to retell the story. Go to the Library together. Let your child help pick books. Choose some on kindergarten.
- 3. Teach the ABC's.** Help your child learn the alphabet and the sound for each letter. When you see an "A", for example, point it out. Say, "A is for apple and ant." Also point out words you child sees often in the world. For example, look for common words at the grocery store.
- 4. Count together.** Count birds on a wire, people in a checkout line – anything! Point our numerals, too. If you see a "3," for example, say, "Show me 3 fingers." Compare things. Use the words - more/fewer and bigger/smaller. Talk about what happens if you take 1 item away – or add 1.
- 5. Explore shapes, colors and more.** Teach your child basic shapes and colors. Sort and match, too. For example, have you child help you sort laundry and match socks. Or ask you child to spot 3 things that are red or square. Have you child guess what comes next in repeating patterns, such as red, blue, red-?
- 6. Encourage coloring and scribbling.** These are per-writing skills! Along with using safety scissors, this exercise fine motor skills and you child's creativity. Encourage your child to copy letters and numbers and write his or her name.
- 7. Learn about the school.** Go to Kindergarten Round Up. Meet the teacher and school staff. Read the school handbook.
- 8. Put your child at ease.** Discuss what the school day will be like. Encourage questions. Let your child know it's OK to be nervous. Stress the fun things your child will do and learn and the friends he or she will make. Be upbeat!

9. Use instructions. Help your child practice following simple instructions. For example: "Please hang up your coat. Then, wash your hands. Then, meet me in the kitchen."

Responsibility is also important. Give your child simple chores. Teach him or her to take care of things. Also let your child make some choices, such as what to wear.

10. Work on making friends. Teach how to share, take turns, say "please" and "thank you", respect other people's things and solve problems without hitting. Help them learn words to use when they are frustrated.

11. Use routines. They're good for you and your child. Create routines for bedtime and waking up, laying out school clothes the night before and eating breakfast. Give your child 3 healthy meals plus healthy snacks, each day.

12. Get your child moving. Children need plenty of physical activity. Encourage running, dancing hopping, climbing and catching balls. Make it a family affair! (Consult your child's health care provider before starting an exercise program.) To ensure time for activity and schoolwork, limit "screen time" (TV, internet or video games) to no more than 2 hours per day.

13. Teach good Hygiene. Help your child learn to use the restroom without help. Get him or her into the habit of washing hand often and well. Also teach him or her to sneeze and or cough into their shoulder or the back of their hand.

14. Teach safety. Make sure your child knows his or her full name, address and telephone number and how to contact you.

Teach your child to only cross a street with an adult and to look left-right-left before crossing.

15. Get your child immunized. Call your health care provider to arrange for their Kindergarten check up and shots.