

## PREPARING THE PRESCHOOLER FOR FIRST GRADE

Children can make more rapid progress in school if they have learned basic character factors BEFORE formal education in first grade. We have attempted to outline some of these in this section. We recommend your implementing them per your discretion.

### **Discipline**

Help child to obey promptly and cheerfully and accept the answer "NO" cheerfully. Do not allow child to use crying as a handle to get his own way.

Be consistent with child.

Teach child obedience, but also help him to a degree of independence.

### **Responsibility**

Make child responsible to perform specific tasks each day without needing to have constant reminders to perform them.

He should learn to tie his own shoes, button, snap and zipper own clothes, and put boots on.

It is also good if he has a few jobs that he can do and is expected to do by himself such as clean the toy corner, set the table, hang up own clothes, feed the cats, etc.

Make child responsible to finish what he starts.

### **Listening**

Teach child to listen when he is spoken to; teach him to look at the person who is speaking to him. Help child to think about what is being said. As much as possible, do not repeat instructions.

Read stories and books frequently to your child; read with expression and meaning. Discuss pictures, rhyming words, etc. Discuss meanings of unfamiliar words. Ask the child questions about the story. Ask who, what, when, where, how, and why questions. Have child retell the story to you. Call attention to the fact that books are read from front to back.

During family worship, when each person reads a Bible verse, have the preschooler repeat a verse, phrase by phrase, as the Father or Mother reads one phrase at a time.

### **Following Directions**

Give child directions to follow. First, one step at a time; then gradually build up to a series of steps in a set of directions. Example: Set the table--first put on six plates; next put on six tumblers; then put on six spoons, six forks, and six knives.

Give child directions to follow on paper. Examples: Draw a circle with a green crayon. With a red crayon, draw a house and a tree on each side of the house. With a blue crayon draw a big dot.

### **Developing Eagerness to Learn and Stimulating the Mind**

Allow your child to "help" you. Being with an adult contributes to the child's emotional well-being as well as providing a learning environment.

Help the child to enjoy and to develop an awareness of things around him.

Observe the clouds, notice the interesting insects in the garden, see how many different kinds of trees are in your yard, etc.

Help child to enjoy words. Help him to be alert to new words that he hears.

Help the child to increase his oral vocabulary. Examples: Instead of asking the child if he is tired, say--"Are you weary?" Instead of saying that you have a job for him, say--"I have a task for you."

Help child to enjoy memorizing. Memorize poems and Bible verses and chapters.

### **Concentration**

On a daily basis, give child a specific project to work on for 15-20 minutes at a time without interruption. Teach child to sit quietly as he works and to think about what he is doing and to look at what he is doing. Examples of projects--sewing cards, embroidering a patch, latch hook, dot-to-dot, cutting and pasting, etc.

### **Speech**

Enunciate clearly as you speak to your child and teach the child to do the same.

Discourage mumbling. Discourage baby talk--instead of baby talk use adult language, even if the child cannot say his words clearly.

Use pronouns. Instead of "Does John want a drink of water?" say, "Do you want a drink of water?" Call attention to irregular verbs, "Do you mean "drived" or "drove"?"

### **Auditory Awareness**

Help child to notice differences in sounds. Notice the sound of splashing rain on a rainy day, the whistling wind on a windy day, the rustling leaves on an autumn day, etc.

Teach child to hear the differences in birds songs and to identify bird calls.

### **Visual Awareness**

Help child to see likenesses and differences.

Identify birds. Identify flowers. Identify leaves. Identify shapes.

See how many circles and squares and triangles you can find in the kitchen, etc.

### **Developing Coordination and Motor Skills**

Have child work often with pencil and paper and crayons and scissors.

When he traces, help child to stay on the line. When he colors, help child to color neatly within the lines and to stroke in the same direction.

Let child cut pictures from seed catalogs of old greeting cards and paste them in a notebook.

Help child to organize the pictures into classes--pasting the vegetable pictures on one page and the fruit pictures on another, etc.

Let child work with clay. Teach child to jump rope.

Let child write on a chalkboard. As the child nears school age, acquaint him with letters in his name so that he is able to print his name before entering first grade.

### **Singing**

Sing much in the home. Help child to hear differences in high and low tones. Help child to sing on pitch.

### **Learning Colors**

Teach child to identify the different colors. Learn one color at a time. Have child match items of the same color.

Teach color words in context--blue dress, the brown sweater, the green tablecloth, etc. Have child name as many objects that he can think of that are yellow, etc.

### **Learning Numbers**

Teach child to recognize the numbers from 1-10 and to count at least from 1-20.

Call attention to the numbers on the clock, calendar or other places in his environment.

Teach number words in context by giving child jobs to do that require counting--one jar of jelly, six spoons, six knives, six forks, nine clothes pins, etc.

### **Learning Good Health and Eating Habits**

The child should be taught to keep his hands and face clean. He should know how and when to clean his nose.

Teach child good toilet habits and have him wash his hands after using the lavatory. And good table manners need to be taught.

## **SCHOOL READINESS**

Readiness refers to a child being totally prepared to master school tasks. It is the child's ability to cope with school environment, physically, socially, and emotionally, as well as academically without undue stress.

The first year of school is the most important. It is the foundation upon which all other education is built. Placing a child in first grade before he is mature enough to really profit from the experience causes him to "shut off" or reject learning. Children who begin an academic program before they are ready may suffer for the rest of their lives because of this one mistake in timing.

### **Basic tips about school readiness:**

1. Boys develop more slowly than do girls, In the age range of 5-7 years, the lag is about six months.
2. The average child should be at least 6 years old when he starts first grade.
3. A high IQ does not guarantee readiness for first grade.
4. A child that can read and write is not necessarily ready to enter first grade.
5. "Unready" children usually do not in succeeding years "catch up" with the ready ones.