

HIPPY

homeroom

A Newsletter for the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
Parent Edition

April 2018 Volume 1, Issue 34

Is it Allergies or a Cold?

Allergies	Cold
Lasts a few days to months	3-14 days
Any time of year, when allergens are present	Most often in the winter
Symptoms begin immediately after exposed to allergen	Symptoms take a few days to appear after infection
No aches	Sometimes achy
No fever	Rarely fever
Often itchy, watery eyes	Rarely itchy, watery eyes
Sometimes cough	Often cough (webmd.com)

Upcoming Events:

April

Easter Egg Hunt: Lake Catherine State Park, Hot Springs	1st
Youth Fishing Derby: Lake Chicot State Park, Lake Village	7th
Through A Child's Eyes, ASU-Museum, Jonesboro	8th
Peter And The Starcatcher-Arkansas Hall Sudio Theatre-Arkadelphia	12-17th
Earth Day Celebration Weekend: Pinnacle Mountain State Park	21-22nd
Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Day	26th
For more events in your area: http://www.arkansas.com/events/	

Winner Fathers Read in February, Daniel Hill of Southeast Arkansas Educational Coop.

Preparing For Kindergarten



As the school year draws to a close, many preschoolers and their families are saying good bye to their pre-school classrooms and getting ready to say hello to kindergarten. While this is an exciting transition for most, there is often some anxiety and worry associated with such a move to the next phase of a child's life, for both kids and parents.



Below are some tips and ideas for making this transition smoother and less stressful for everyone.

What Parents Can Do This Spring:

- Visit your child's future school with your child. Find out where the bathrooms are, the cafeteria, the office, the playground, other places your child might need to go.
- Meet with the teacher, if possible. If you can't meet with the teacher, meet with the principal.
- Observe part of a class so you and your child can see how the class is structured, how the teacher interacts with students, where the kids sit, etc.
- Start talking to your child about kindergarten. Let your child tell you his/her fears or concerns and listen, don't dismiss them. Let your child know it is okay to feel those feelings. Answer his/her questions honestly.
- Help your child make good-bye cards or gift to his/her preschool teacher or friends.
- Start planning playdates with other kids who will be going to his/her school in the fall.

Summer Preparation for Kindergarten

- **Don't spend the summer doing educational workbooks with your child!**
- Do read to your child daily. Make sure he/she knows how to handle a book, where to find the title, what is an author. Read books related to transitioning to kindergarten.
- Do encourage your child to practice fine motor skills such as using scissors, making small dabs of glue, holding pencils and crayons correctly. Give him/her something to cut out or make a collage where he/she cuts out pictures and glues them onto another piece of paper.
- Do encourage your child's independence. Set up a playdate where you drop your child off and pick him/her up later. Give him/her more independence in task such as getting dressed, getting own food-opening milk cartons, condiment packets, cutting food, etc.
- Do make sure your child has had his/her check-up and is up to date on all immunizations required by the school.
- Practice the route your child will take to school. If he/she is walking or biking, make sure to take the route several times so your child is comfortable. If you are driving your child, show him/her where you will drop off and pick up. If taking the bus, become familiar with the bus stop and meet other families that will also be at the bus stop.
- Make sure your child knows his/her first and last name, age, phone number and address.

Final Preparations Before School Starts.

- Start a school time routine a few weeks before school starts.
1. Most five year olds need 10-12 hours of sleep each night. Start getting your child use to a consistent school night bedtime that will give him/her enough sleep before your child must wake up for school.
 2. Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast, if he/she doesn't usually do so. Studies show that a healthy breakfast positively affects focus, energy, and behavior in the classroom.
 3. Establish an afterschool routine that involves some play time, work time, meal time, and reading time. Practice this routine.
 4. Establish an area that will serve as a place for your child to do his/her work or read. It shows that you value your child's education.
 5. Continue talking to your child about the upcoming start of the school year. Even if you are anxious or have concerns, do not let your child know. Stay positive, talk about all the exciting new things your child will get to see and do.
 6. Make sure you have all of the necessary school supplies. This is usually a fun and exciting way for kids to get ready for school.
 7. Discuss the expectations that you have for your child when he/she is a school-listening to the teacher, being nice to the other students, following directions etc. When you show that these things are important, they become your child's values as well.



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Fun Transition to Kindergarten Practice

In order to ease the anxiety that some kids feel when transitioning to kindergarten, below are some activities that will help prepare them and make them feel more comfortable with what the new school year will hold.

1. Play School:

Have your child set up a classroom with chairs, tables, school supplies, etc. Let him/her be the teacher or you can be the teacher, whichever your child prefers. You or your child can conduct lessons, read stories, give assignments and activities. Keep it fun.



Practice walking in a line when you go around the house, raising hands to answer questions, and answering a roll call. These may be a new concept for your child that you will have to introduce.

2. Tray Balancing:

If your child is going to be buying lunch from school, make sure he/she knows how to carry a tray with food on it to avoid getting upset if unprepared and spilling it on the first day of school.

Give your child a cookie sheet or tray and put a few items on it or put their lunch on it and have him/her carry it to the table, just like they would at school. Your child can also carry other items around the house for extra practice.

**** Also a good time to talk about choosing healthy foods for their meals.**

3. Learn to Cooperate

Since much of school requires chil-

dren to work cooperatively with others, this is an important skill to practice, especially for children that have not been to preschool. Plan play dates or activities with siblings that require cooperation, such as putting a puzzle together, making a picture or project together, playing a matching game, or building with blocks, etc.



Should issues arise, rather than separating the children, encourage them to problem solve and find a solution to their disagreement. These problem solving skills will serve them well in kindergarten and beyond. Let the child offer solutions before you do.

4. Dress Rehearsal

Make sure that your child can dress himself/herself before heading off to school. This includes tying shoes, zipping pants, putting on coats, buttoning buttons, etc. Turn this into a game by having races where your child has to put on different articles of clothing with zippers, buttons, snaps, pullovers, laces, etc.

Set a timer to see how long it takes or have him/her race another child or parent. See if your child can beat his/her time. Offer help and practice as needed so your child feels confident in his/her abilities.

Let your child pick out a special outfit for the first day of school and practice putting it on all by himself/herself.

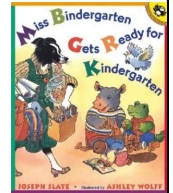
5. Read about Kindergarten

Check out the following books from the library to help start conversations or ex-

plain to your child what to expect from kindergarten.

Books About Kindergarten

- *Annabelle Swift, Kindergartener* by Amy Schwartz
- *Countdown to Kindergarten* by Alison McGhee
- *I am Too Absolutely Small for School* by Lauren Child
- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* By Nancy Carlson
- *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate
- *My Kindergarten* by Rosemary Wells
- *Eliza's Kindergarten Surprise* by Alice McGinty
- *Kindergarten Rocks!* By Katie Davis
- *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff
- *Will I Have a Friend* by Miriam Cohen
- *Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes* by Eric Litwin
- *Mom, It's My First Day of Kindergarten* by Hyewon Yum
- *Kindergarten, Here I Come!* By D.J. Steinberg



(Sources: About.com, NAEYC, Everydaylife, Education.com, Bananas Inc., Earlychildhood-news.com)

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

Kindergarten readiness is much more than academics. Whether or not your child knows all of his/her letters, numbers, or can read, are often second in importance to his/her kindergarten teacher. Without a few other specific skills, all learning and instruction becomes much more difficult for the teacher and the students. See the list below of what kindergarten teachers are really looking for when kids arrive at school.

A child who :

- Can clearly communicate what he/she wants or needs.
- Can separate from a parent for hours



without distress.

- Can follow one or two step directions and stick to rules.
- Can sit still and pay attention for at least 10 minutes.
 - Gets along well with other children, cooperates, does not hit, kick or bite.
 - Can complete personal tasks independently (button, zip or snap own pants, zip a coat, use the toilet without help, wash hands)
- Knows how to use crayons, scissors, glue, and pencil.
- Knows and states his/her own full name, address, and phone number.

- Adjusts to changes in routines and to new situations with flexibility.
- Asks for help when needed.
- Can stay on topic during a class discussion.
- Thinks and can give reasons for his/her ideas.

Without these basic skills, teachers will spend more time dealing with social issues than academic instruction. By practicing these skills with your child, you are helping him/her have a more successful and productive school year.

(Sources: Childparenting.about.com, Earlychildhood-news.com)