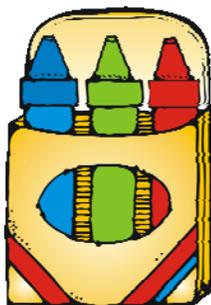


Heritage Preschool Parent Corner



Is your child ready for the first day at preschool? Even if it's just for a couple of hours a few times a week, this can seem like a big step for someone in such little sneakers. Big steps can lead to big questions (and maybe some worries too). Get your little one (and yourself) ready for this milestone with these at-home activities — they'll help her work

out her worries, practice her social skills, and know what to expect in preschool.

Cue Up the Classroom

Explain to your almost-preschooler that a classroom is a happy place where children go to play and learn, and that it's full of toys and blocks, art supplies, puzzles, and books (even more than at home). Next, talk about different things that might also be at preschool, like dress-up clothes and a bathroom (yup, they've got one of those!).

Talk Up the Teacher

Tell her that a preschool teacher is a very nice grown-up who'll do fun activities with her and her classmates. At home, create a pretend classroom with a few stuffed "students" and let your child play the part of the teacher.

Suggest things she might do with her cuddly pupils, like tell stories, play games, hold circle time, and even give hugs. Be sure to point out how well her "students" listen when she speaks so she understands that paying attention is an important part of being a preschooler.

Encourage Pride in her School

Before the first day at preschool, talk about how school is a special place that's only for children and teachers. This way, you'll help her develop a sense of ownership and pride — this is *her* special place, where she'll manage quite well (and even have fun) without you. Help her grasp this concept by talking about other places that are just for kids, like the swings at the playground or the ball pit at the mall.

Gear Up for Group Time

When you read to your little chatterbox at home, she's free to interrupt as much as she likes, but that won't fly when she's one student among many during preschool circle time. You can help by explaining what might happen during circle

time — the teacher may read a story, or everyone might play instruments; sometimes one child might have the floor for show-and-tell. Then practice the "skills" required for each group activity, like sitting quietly while you read or choosing treasures from around the house (you too, Mom!) and taking turns talking about them.

Reinforce the Rules

Just when your darling's getting the hang of your house rules, she's about to face a larger set at preschool — including new ones like raising your hand (instead of shouting) when you want the teacher's attention or standing in line at snack time. Practice following these at home, along with taking turns, and be sure to cover the toughest rule of all: keeping those little hands to herself. Discuss how important it is to respect other students' belongings and space, and to use words rather than hitting to express anger.

Prep Her for Playmates

Preschool is like a playdate on steroids — more kids, more toys, and potentially more fun. Even if your child has been in day care or a playgroup, it's important to practice some preschool skills at home, like taking turns, choosing activities, and playing with toys.

Do a Dress Rehearsal

Talk up this activity ahead of time, perhaps laying out a special outfit the night before. That morning, go through the motions from dressing to pretending to leave your house and arrive at school.

Practice greeting the teacher, stashing her stuff in her cubby, checking out all the fantastic books and toys that'll be in the classroom, and munching a snack. And don't forget to do a dry run on saying drop-off good-byes — a quick kiss and a wave is best — and reuniting at the "end" of the day, when you'll hear all about her great day at preschool!

Adapted from: <http://www.whattoexpect.com/toddler/photo-gallery/at-home-preschool-prep.aspx#/slide-1>



SCHOOL