

Getting Ready for Preschool!

Preschool is a fun and exciting part of a child's life. However, the transition into preschool can also be very stressful. As a parent, you can help your child transition into preschool by working on the skills listed below. Children don't have to master these tasks to start preschool, but having some experience with each of these will help ease the transition from home to school.

- ◆ **Spend time away from parents**—If your child has never been away from his/her parents, the first week or two of preschool can be VERY hard. Prior to the start of school, have a babysitter come and stay with your child and/or take your child to a friend's house WHILE YOU LEAVE. You don't have to be gone for a long period of time, just enough for your child to know you left and to see that you will come back. The more often you leave your child with people other than family members, the easier his/her transition will be into preschool.
- ◆ **Practice washing and drying hands**—At preschool, all children will be washing their hands at the sink prior to eating snack and after going to the restroom. Hand sanitizer is only used when running water is not available.
- ◆ **Practice putting on coat**—We work with our younger preschoolers to learn how to put on their coats, but our older friends need to be able to put their coats on without help and be ready to learn how to zip and/or button their coats and jackets.
- ◆ **Practice sitting at the table and eating snack**—We cannot allow children to roam around the room with food or drinks. While many of our 2 year old friends may still sit in a high chair for meals, it is helpful if they have some experience sitting 'unrestrained' while eating.
- ◆ **Practice eating independently**—We expect all of our preschoolers to be able to feed themselves. Please make sure your child has regular opportunities to eat independently prior to preschool.
- ◆ **Read books daily**—This is an incredible bonding time for parents and children, but it also helps children to be ready to sit in circle time at preschool. Visiting story time at the local library and reading to your child at time other than bedtime is also beneficial in getting ready for preschool.
- ◆ **Spend time outside**—Outside play is important for your child's development and is a daily part of preschool. You can visit the CEC playground anytime that CEC is not in session. Studies also show that children who play outside have stronger immune systems, too.
- ◆ **Stop taking morning nap**—If your child still takes a morning nap, summer is the time to wean him/her off that nap. We are very busy for the entire morning at preschool and children need to build the stamina to be ready for a morning filled with activities.
- ◆ **Practice using words to communicate needs**—Please work on basic words or phrases that your child can use to communicate with his/her teacher. "Go Potty", etc. If English is your second language, it is especially helpful if your family can speak English at home more frequently in the weeks leading up to the first day of school.
- ◆ **Practice following directions**—Help your child follow directions by having him/her clean up his/her toys or set the table for supper. Directions need to be simple and "one-step" for the younger children and can become slightly more complex as children get older. An example for setting the table might be, "Please put one napkin at each place." After the child has put all of the napkins out, the next direction might be, "Please put one fork on each napkin."
- ◆ **Clean up toys**—At preschool we are learning to be responsible for our things. Children who have similar expectations at home will transition into the preschool routine much more quickly. Telling preschoolers to "Put your toys away" is overwhelming, however telling them to "Put their blocks away" is specific.
- ◆ **Potty training**—Children in our 2's program do not have to be potty trained. If not completely potty trained, children in our 3 year old classes should be working on potty training. Children in our 4's and 5's classes should be completely independent in the restroom.