



Starting Strong Connection

Preparing Your Child for Preschool

Here are some fun ideas for preparing your child for preschool. Remember to keep your efforts low-key—if you make too big of a deal your child may end up being more worried than excited:

- **Use pretend play to explore the idea of preschool:** Act out common daily routines, such as saying good-bye to mommy and/or daddy, taking off your coat, singing songs, having Circle time, etc. Reassure your child that preschool is a good place where he/she will have fun and learn.
- **Read books about preschool:** There are many books about going to preschool available from the public library.
- **Make a game out of practicing self-help skills:** When you play school together, you can give your child the chance to practice taking off her coat, zipping his backpack closed, and sitting "criss-cross applesauce."

Your child may also have some questions or concerns about starting preschool, either before or after school starts in the fall. Listen to your child's worries and let your child know that his/her worries have been heard. Let your child know it's normal to feel happy, sad, excited, scared or worried. Explain that starting something new can feel scary and that lots of people feel that way.

During the 2 weeks before Preschool Starts:

- **Label all items**—backpack, jacket, shoes, clothing items with your child's name in permanent ink.
- **Figure out how your child will get to school and how she/he will come home.** Talk to your child about the morning and afternoon routine so that she/he understands that he/she will be safe, okay, and cared for.
- **Start using your child's "school bedtime":** Children often go to bed later in the summer months. Help your child get into a preschool schedule by keeping his/her school bedtime for 2 weeks before school starts.

The Night before and first day:

- **Let your child choose clothes for the first day and make sure that he/she gets to bed on time.**

- **Wake up in plenty of time so as not to rush to preschool.**
- **Make a good breakfast for your child.**
- **Review the day's routine.**
- **Keep your tone positive and upbeat.**
- **Plan to stay a little while the first morning.**
- **Think about creating a special good-bye routine.**
- **Resist the rescue.** Try not to run back in the classroom if you hear your child crying.

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© Please remember to inform Early Childhood Connections of any changes in your address or contact information.

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The Journey of Mixed Emotions— How to Teach Your Child To Appropriately Get Your Attention

It is difficult to have a conversation with someone if you do not have their attention—this is true for both children and adults. The ability to successfully capture someone's attention is a fundamental social skill and



The ability to successfully capture someone's attention is a fundamental social skill

provides the foundation for future success in social settings and relationships.

Children use a variety of ways to get attention and will often resort to techniques they find most effective, such as yelling or whining. For example, think about a child who wants to get Mom's attention when she is on the

phone. He knows that if he continues to yell loudly, Mom will eventually pause her phone conversation and

see what is needed. If yelling and whining gets a child what he needs, he will continue to yell and whine until he learns a new way to get attention.

How can you change this pattern? You can teach your child the way that you want him to get your attention. (such as tapping you on the shoulder) and then reward him when that behavior occurs. When you take the time at home to build on the skills your child is learning at school, you reinforce these positive skills and create a solid social foundation for your child which will help to reduce challenging behaviors.

Reproduced from the Social Skills Backpack series

Try This at Home

- Model the behavior you are teaching and do it often! If you need your child's attention, tap her on the shoulder, move to her eye level and begin your communication from there!
- Practice, practice, practice! Play with this new skill. Practice with both parents, siblings and friends. Your child can teach her grandparent or teddy bear how to tap on someone's shoulder to get their attention.
- Remind your child of your expectation. If you are on the computer and she whines or begins to cry for attention, remind her, "it looks like you need something. I will respond if you tap on my shoulder and ask me."
- Celebrate when your child displays this new skill. "Wow, you tapped me on the shoulder because you wanted some milk. I am super happy to get you some. What a great way to get my attention!!"

The Bottom Line

Behavior is meaningful and communicates a message. If a child does not have an appropriate way to communicate, he will often use challenging behavior (e.g., hitting, screaming, whining) to communicate his needs. If his needs are then met, the behavior is reinforced and he will continue to use the challenging behavior to communicate.

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Growing Up Wild: In a Grasshopper's World

Help your child learn about grasshoppers and their habitat. Go on a grasshopper safari with your child and journey into a grasshopper's world.

Grasshopper Safari: Go on a grasshopper safari with your child. Look for grasshoppers in your yard or a nearby park. Anywhere with grasses or weeds may be a home to grasshoppers. Help your child record (with pictures/and or words) your discoveries in a Nature Notebook. Count and record how many grasshoppers you find. Describe the places where you found them. Identify what they are eating. Try to follow one as it jumps. How far can it go?

Sketch grasshoppers with your child. Illustrate their colors and special features. What other things would your child like to know about grasshoppers. Write the question in your child's notebook.



Go on a Grasshopper Safari

Quick Facts about Grasshoppers

- Grasshoppers are insects
- They have 3 main body parts: head, thorax and abdomen.
- 2 antennae grow from a grasshopper's head. They use antennae to feel and smell things that are near.
- The "skin" of a grasshopper is actually a rigid covering called an exoskeleton.
- Grasshoppers do not drink water—they get enough water from the plants they eat.



Corner

Writing Activities: Fun with Letters

Everyday Activities to Help Develop Small Muscles and Get Your Child Ready to Write

- Using scissors (It's okay if your child can't cut on a line at first)
- Coloring, scribbling, painting, and drawing.
- Writing with an adult. For example, help your child create a play grocery list when you write yours.
- Playing with play dough. Rolling the dough into small balls or blocks is especially good!
- Stamping paper with rubber stamps.
- Opening and closing twist-top jars or bottles.
- Building with interlocking blocks such as Legos.
- Picking up small objects like Cheerios (Note: Always be careful of choking hazards.)
- Hole punching.
- Manipulating paper — folding, tearing, wadding it into balls.

Magnetic Letter

Have your child use magnetic letters to make words. The magnets will help your child feel the shape of the letters when placed on a magnetic surface.



Print one letter at the top of a paper. Below this, write many letters of the alphabet in no particular order. Have your child circle the letters that match the one printed at the top. Have him place an "X" over the ones that do not match.

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**Children who start early,
Start Strong.**



Attendance in your preschool classroom

One of the biggest myths affecting the education of young children is the mistaken belief that preschool is just an add-on — that it doesn't really matter that much if my child skips a week of school now and again or is perpetually late. But research shows that poor attendance and tardiness are real issues even for young children and can hamper their ability to learn.

Early education programs help children gain the foundational skills they need to do well in school and in life. If your child is reluctant to come to school, be sure to communicate this to the teacher. Together you can make plans to address the concerns of your child.



Data on tardiness is more limited but equally startling in terms of habit development. A nationwide survey of Head Start programs indicates that in half of the classrooms, three to six children arrive late every week (there's a maximum of 18 per classroom). This is true across programs of all sizes in all types of communities: urban, suburban and rural. This tardiness also has an adverse impact on the educational experience. It is a problem, for example, when a child arrives 30 or 60 minutes after the circle activities have begun. The child misses out on the activities designed to build connections to other children and transition into the classroom. In addition, the late arrival can disrupt the flow of the classroom activities for other children. Parents and teachers can work together to ensure children acquire the habit of on-time attendance.

Remember, by bringing your child to preschool every day and on time, you are helping to ensure that he or she will live up to their full potential and become a successful lifelong learner.
