

# Kindergarten Readiness

## Language Skills Development

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Kindergarten is a very exciting time for you and your child. Your child will experience and learn many new things in the school setting. With your help as active parents, your child can be prepared for some of the activities he or she will encounter in school and feel more confident in his or her abilities as a student. Listed on the following pages are some ideas for activities to enrich and help develop your child's language skills. Remember to make it fun and natural for you and your child!



Active parenting involves the direct teaching of essential age-appropriate skills to a child and greatly enhances the process of learning. Active parenting happens as you recognize teachable moments within your everyday activities and create meaningful experiences for your child. Teachable moments occur within your daily routines and family rituals. When parents incorporate consistency, structure and positive feedback into these lessons, they build a motivated and confident child (2006, Super Duper Publications).

## **Language Skills**

Helping your child develop his or her oral language skills through natural, daily activities at an early stage will help improve his or her reading and writing skills in school.



### *Talk with Your Children Whenever Possible*

Encourage dramatic play with your child, such as pretending to go grocery shopping, or role-playing with your child pretending to be a teacher and you as the student. During daily activities, such as cleaning up toys or making a meal, talk about what you are doing and what your child is doing if he or she is helping. Talking to your child in this manner exposes your child to language, vocabulary, and conversation skills. Try to use new words daily.



### *Read and Tell Stories to Your Child*

Help develop reading comprehension skills by reading each day with your child. Allow your child to pick an easy book on a subject that he or she is interested in. Reading books at a lower level or reading the same books over and over helps to increase your child's fluency and confidence when he or she starts to read. Discuss the pictures, characters, feelings of characters (& why they feel that way), settings, and plots. Acting out the stories and using expression in your voice will increase your child's comprehension of the story. If the story has an event or character that is similar to something in your child's life, talk to your child about how the story connects to his or her life.

Telling your child stories about things from the past or things that will happen in the future, is a good way to help them learn how to organize and tell a story with sequence, logic, and details. You can also encourage your child to tell you a story by saying, "Tell me a story," "What happened next?", "When did that happen?", or "Tell me what you did at your friend's house today."

## **Social Skills**

Demonstrating appropriate social skills to your child is another important part of active parenting. Many children learn social skills by observing how people in their environment react to situations and interact with others. It is also important to explain why we use certain body language, facial expressions, tone of voice or verbal responses in a given social situation that is appropriate for a child to understand.



Model appropriate social behaviors for your child such as: good behavior, manners, sharing, waiting your turn, how to handle winning/losing in games, appropriate topics to talk about in school, and more with your child. Explain to your child why we do these social behaviors and the consequences that may happen if he or she does not act appropriately. For example, explain to your child that we can't always win when playing a game. Even though you feel upset for not winning, it's important not to yell or show a mean facial expression at the person playing with you because they may not want to play a game with you next time.

Set up play dates with other children to help your child learn and use his or her social skills. Listen to your child play so you can find out which skills your child is using appropriately and which skills you may need to teach. Teaching your child in the moment of the situation that is occurring is a great way to help them understand what went wrong and what they could do better next time.

## **Phonological Awareness Skills**

Phonological awareness skills are skills that a child needs to develop to be a good reader. It involves manipulating sounds and syllables in words in an auditory form. For example, a teacher may ask a child what is the first sound he hears in the word, 'cat'. When a child is able to break down all the sounds heard in a word, the child will then be able to spell and/or decode a word easier.

Here are some activities to encourage your child to play with sounds and words in a fun, playful manner:

- Play traditional hand-clapping games such as 'Patty Cake' and 'Miss Mary Mack.'
- While riding in the car, play a rhyming game such as saying, "I see a bee on my \_\_\_\_\_." Your child could answer, 'key', 'knee', or 'lee.' When rhyming, the word doesn't have to make sense, as long as it rhymes. Your child may require some help generating these answers in the beginning.
- When reading stories with rhymes to your child, emphasize the rhyming words and say the words together to show your child how they sound alike. Dr. Seuss books have a lot of rhymes in them. Nursery rhymes also have a lot of rhyming words.

*Why are phonological awareness skills important?*



Phonological awareness skills are important because they are a basis for reading. Children begin to read by listening to others read aloud, then recognizing sounds in words, sounding words out for themselves, recognizing familiar words, and so on. By engaging in word play, children learn to recognize patterns among words and use this knowledge to read and build words.

(Knoblauch, Lindsay; Super Duper Publications, 2008)

*Thank you!*

*Most of all, thank you so much for taking the time to read this information. Many of you are probably already doing a lot of these activities with your child, so thank you in advance for being such active parents. We look forward to meeting you and your child in the fall, and sharing in all of the wonderfully new and exciting experiences your child will encounter throughout their academic careers.*

