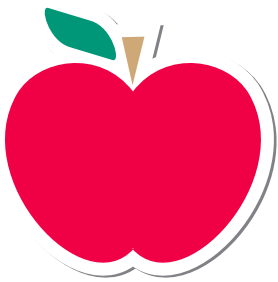


PREPPING *for* PRE-KINDERGARTEN



“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” –Proverbs 22:6

Develop in Your Children a Love for Books

By taking time to read to your children daily, letting them see you reading for enjoyment, and visiting bookstores and local libraries to surround your children with literature. No longer is Pre-Kindergarten just about playing well with others and napping—some children can sound out simple words and recognize sight words by the end of their Pre-K4 year, and some even enter elementary school able to read!

Practice Letter Names, Letter Sounds, and Counting

Educators are expecting children between the ages of three and five to recognize some letters and letter sounds and to be able to count to 20 or higher. To be able to recognize these numbers is helpful as well, however, it is normal for students to reverse written letters or numbers even into first grade.

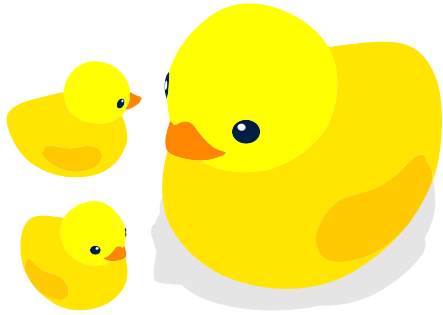


Teach Your Children to Write Their Names Correctly From the Beginning

The correct way to write a name is to begin with a capital letter, followed by lower case letters. Contrary to some beliefs, it is not easier for little ones to write their names in all capital letters. We recommend teaching your children to write their names correctly the first time to avoid having to reteach them in Pre-K or Kindergarten.

Give Your Children the Opportunity to "be okay" "When You're Away"

Children often experience separation anxiety during their first few weeks—or more—of school. You can alleviate or even avoid this situation by getting your kids used to your leaving and returning. Babysitters give you the opportunity to get away for a needed break, while simultaneously allowing your children to know that you will come home after being away. Also dropping off your children at Sunday school is a great way to help children work through separation anxiety. These situations allow your children to know that your marriage and church attendance are a priority. Children will learn to adjust to new situations when others are in charge.



P practice Taking Turns and Using Good Manners

At dinner, practice taking turns talking. When my own children were young, we decorated a “talking stick.” The person with the stick had the turn to talk while everyone else listened. This is a good lesson for everyone grown ups included. Children at the age of four and five are often taught to say, “Excuse me,” but they still interrupt, so take it to the next level and have them wait until others are finished speaking. Dinner time provides opportunity to have your children use good manners, stay on task, and sit properly in their chairs. If they cannot sit through dinner, it will be a lot to ask them to sit through a day at school.



Teach Your Children to Play Well With Others

Children need to learn how to take turns, wait, and share. From play dates at the park to family gatherings, your child is bound to be offended at some point by another child, so it’s important to teach them to have a voice and how to handle conflict. Children benefit from practice when it comes to forgiveness and being a peacemaker—it’s amazing how often a problem between two students can be solved when one of them speaks in love.

Sportsmanship is Important

Playing games with your children, no matter what their age, helps them learn to win and lose graciously. When children get to school, they are often shocked to realize they are not the best at everything if at home they are the “apple of your eye.” Teaching children that God gave us all different gifts and talents will facilitate sportsman-like behavior at school and in the game of life!

Recognize Your Teacher as an Advocate for You and Your Child

Teachers tend to spend more time with your child than you do, so get to know your school and volunteer if possible. Attend parent conferences and Back to School Nights. Read the papers that are sent home. Teachers are busy, so when they communicate, it is for the benefit of parents and students. Communicate with your teacher, but also realize there are at least 20 others requiring your teacher’s attention.

Teach Them to Dress Themselves and be Self-Sufficient in the Restroom

Velcro is a great invention, but children should also learn how to tie their shoes, and Kindergarten is an appropriate age to teach this skill. A few years ago, a little girl in my class became a leader because of her willingness to help her classmates tie their shoes. Of course, teachers will assist students who need help with buckles and snaps as they learn to become self-sufficient, but having these skills and being competent in the bathroom before the start of school will be beneficial to your children.