



Growing Up: Pre-K

Your child will develop skills and grow in a number of ways during this important year.

Physical

As the year goes on, Pre-K students improve their fine motor skills (e.g., holding a crayon properly) and gross motor skills (e.g., running and skipping).

To help your child improve fine motor skills, do art projects that involve drawing and cutting. To help develop gross motor skills, encourage activities such as playing ball, dancing, or swimming.

Intellectual

Pre-K children have vivid imaginations and learn about their world by playing make-believe. They are also developing stronger memories and can recall events, names, and story endings.

If your child shows an interest in a topic or activity (e.g., trains, dinosaurs, art) help expand and develop that interest. Make learning fun!

Emotional

Pre-K children's personalities are blossoming, but they can get very emotional at times, and sometimes have tantrums. Be patient, and help your child learn to talk through tough emotions.

"Early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society." Maria Montessori



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769-20

Support Your Child

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Parent Involvement Guide

Building Independence

Over time, encourage your child to do more on his/her own. For instance, it might be easier and quicker for you to put your child's jacket on for him/her, but taking a few minutes to teach your child how to do it by him/herself will build self-confidence and encourage independence.

Here are some important self-care skills your child should be able to do independently (or with little help) by kindergarten:

- ▶ use the restroom
- ▶ wash his/her hands
- ▶ use eating utensils
- ▶ drink from a cup or juice box
- ▶ put on a coat and hat
- ▶ button, snap, and zip
- ▶ cover his/her mouth when sneezing or coughing
- ▶ take shoes off and put them back on

Building social skills and making friends can help your child be more confident and have more fun in school as well.

Help your child learn to listen when others talk, take turns with peers, remember friends' names, and greet others. Also, help your child understand that no one always gets to do what they want to do, a crucial lesson to learn before kindergarten!

Welcome to Pre-K!

A tremendous amount of learning takes place between the ages of three and five, and throughout these years, you are your child's most important teacher. With every story you read and skill you teach, you are helping your child become a better learner!

This InfoGuide will walk you through the skills your child will develop during these exciting years. It will also show you how you can help your child acquire the skills needed for kindergarten, including:

- ▶ tips to help your child build reading, writing, and math readiness skills.
- ▶ ways to help your child become more independent, self-reliant, and confident.
- ▶ information on how you can support the physical, intellectual, and emotional growth of your Pre-K child.

Your involvement and support are key to your child's success!



Learning in Pre-K

Reading

In Pre-K, children learn about letters and sounds, expand their vocabulary, and learn how to properly pronounce words.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Read aloud to your child every day. While reading a story, ask your child questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?" "What would you do?" "What was your favorite part?"
- ▶ Read an alphabet book. Talk about each letter and the sound that letter makes.
- ▶ Form letters with playdough, in shaving cream, or by putting salt on a cookie sheet. You can also write letters with sidewalk chalk.
- ▶ While driving in a car, think of words that rhyme with objects you see (car-star, tree-bee, man-pan).

Writing

Pre-K writing is mostly focused on building fine motor skills, which means properly holding a writing tool, such as a marker, crayon, or pencil.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Always have crayons, pencils, markers, and different types of paper available for scribbling and drawing.
- ▶ Provide playdough or clay to help develop hand muscles.
- ▶ When ready, teach your child how to write his/her name. Have your child then "sign" all drawings and artwork.

Math

Sorting and comparing, knowing numbers, and learning how to count are important early math skills.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ As you drive around town, point out the numbers you see on buildings, billboards, and street signs.
- ▶ When reading a picture book, count the number of objects on a page.
- ▶ Ask your child to bring you a specific number of objects, such as two books or four crayons.
- ▶ Sort items such as socks by size and/or color.
- ▶ Take loose change and sort the coins into groups (pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters).
- ▶ Look for opportunities to compare objects by size, shape, and weight, such as "Which tree is taller?" or "Which glass has more juice?"

Support Your Child

Pre-K students are learning many new things, and they may become frustrated at times. If your child is feeling discouraged or frustrated, provide encouragement, keep a positive attitude, and be available to help.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, or are looking for additional ways to help build your child's skills at home, talk to your child's teacher.

