

Ten Ways to Encourage School Success

1. Show that you support education. Ask your children about school every day. Insist on good attendance and punctuality at school.
2. Make a "School Checklist" so your children leave for school and come home with everything they need.
3. Create a study routine. Set a time and quiet place for your children to work every day. Have all study tools easily accessible.
4. When children are studying or preparing "homework" be available to help.
5. Make home a place for learning. Stimulate your children's creativity with books and other educational materials for them to use when ready.
6. Encourage independent thinking. Allow children to make mistakes and learn to accept the consequences.
7. Reward big and small steps of progress. Words of praise, small gifts, a favorite dinner or a handmade "certificate of achievement" all encourage future progress.
8. Read, read, read! Read with your children or have them read to you every day. Make it fun—talk about what you have read.
9. Get involved. Meet with your children's teachers, attend school events and help out at school if you can.
10. Ask for help if needed. Don't let failures mount. Consult with your child's school counselor or seek other professional help.

Signs of a Good Kindergarten

1. Children are playing and working with materials or other children, not aimlessly wandering or forced to sit quietly for long periods of time.
2. Children have access to various activities throughout the day, such as block building, pretend play, picture books, paints and other art materials, and table toys such as legos, pegboards, and puzzles.
3. Children are not all doing the same things at the same time. Teachers work with individual children, small groups and the whole group at different times during the day. They do not spend time only with the whole group.
4. The classroom is decorated with children's original art work, their own writing with their own spelling and dictated stories.
5. Children learn numbers and the alphabet in the context of their everyday experiences. Exploring the natural world of plants and animals, cooking, taking attendance and serving snack are all meaningful activities to children.
6. Children work on projects and have long periods of time (at least one hour) to play and explore. Filling out worksheets should not be their primary activity.
7. Children have a chance to play outside everyday as weather permits. Playtime is never sacrificed for more instructional time.

Saying Good-bye to Pre-School

All children even those who seem to take every thing in stride, can benefit from some extra attention at the end of the program year. Helping your child leave school may be as important as getting settled in when the year starts. They've learned new routines, made new friends, and learned to trust and count on their teachers. And now it's time to learn about another part of school: saying goodbye when it's over. Here are a few ways you can help with the transition:

- ⇒ Show your child when school will be over. Use the squares on a calendar or make a paper chain to track the days. Time is more understandable to a child who can see and touch it.
- ⇒ Say, "Your teacher will miss you, but we will come back to visit." Children need to know that people still care about them, even though their time together is over.

- ⇒ Put your own feelings, both sad and happy, into words: "I'll miss seeing you play with your friends. But I'm happy you will have a chance to make new friends at school."
- ⇒ Find ways for your child to be part of the good-bye process. Have him/her draw a picture to leave in the classroom on the last day, or write a list of favorite things about the past year.
- ⇒ Work on some ways to keep in touch over the summer. Give your child's friends or their parents postcards already addressed to your child; set a date to get together for a picnic or outing over the summer.
- ⇒ Keep other changes to a minimum at this time. One big change at a time is about all young children can handle.

There's a lot to learn about saying good-bye to people and places you care about. But helping your child through these first lessons may make the process of leaving and moving on less painful in the years to come.



It's your time!

National Women's Health Week is a weeklong health observance coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [Office on Women's Health](#). It brings together communities, businesses, government, health organizations, and other groups in an effort to promote women's health. The theme for 2011 is "It's Your Time." National Women's Health Week empowers women to make their health a top priority. It also encourages them to take steps to improve their physical and mental health and lower their risks of certain diseases. Those steps include:

Getting at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate [physical activity](#), 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both, each week

[Eating a nutritious diet](#)

Visiting a health care professional to receive regular checkups and [preventive screenings](#)

Avoiding risky behaviors, such as [smoking](#) and not wearing a seatbelt

Paying attention to [mental health](#), including getting enough sleep and managing stress

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw/>

Did you know?

Women should get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate [physical activity](#), 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both, each week. Children and adolescents should get 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily.

The Office on Women's Health is supporting the *Million PALA Challenge* of the President's Challenge, a program of the [President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition](#), by encouraging participants and supporters of the Woman Challenge group to be physically active on a regular basis. The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) is a great way to get recognized for your accomplishment. All it takes is an almost daily commitment to physical activity for 6 out of 8 weeks. Stick with the program and you will receive an award in less than two months.

New Pediatrician

Maine Coast Memorial Hospital welcomes Dr. Douglas N. MacGregor, MD to their team in Ellsworth. Dr. MacGregor is accepting new patients. For more information call Maine Coast Pediatrics at 664-7744; 32 Resort Way; Ellsworth. www.mainehospital.org



CONTAINER TOMATOES

Cherry tomatoes are easy to grow in containers on a sunny porch, patio or deck. The plants yield more tasty fruit than regular tomato plants. A couple of good varieties are Sungold (yellow to orange in color) and Super Sweet 100 (red cherry tomatoes).

Buy organic potting mix instead of using garden dirt. This will avoid transferring diseases or pests, and provide better container growth. Check the soil daily to see if it's dry and water as necessary to keep consistently moist. It will require a minimum of six hours of sun daily.

Use a pot that holds four to six gallons of soil. Plastic, fiberglass and foam work well. These containers will hold the water so it won't evaporate, but any kind of container will do — from a terra-cotta planter to a garbage can. Make sure it has drainage holes in the bottom. Use a hammer and nail to make the holes in the bottom of a bucket.

Start with seedling plants from a nursery, if you have not already begun your own indoor plants. Late May or early June is a good time to move the plants outside, after the danger of frost. Buy indeterminate varieties, they produce tomatoes all season, rather than all at once.



Children's Lunch Soup

1 to 2 pounds lean beef chunks—round or sirloin
1 large can tomatoes
2 c. chopped celery
2 c. Chopped onion
2 c. chopped cabbage
1 c. zucchini, optional
2 bay leaves
2 cups water
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp. oil

Brown the beef chunks in oil then add all other ingredients. Bring to a boil in a large pot. Turn the heat down and simmer one to two hours until meat is tender and vegetables are soft. Serve with whole wheat bread and a green salad. Reheats well. A portion of this soup can be frozen to reheat later in the microwave or on the stove top.

Eye-Appealing Snacks for Young Children

Treasure Logs: Cut thin slices of roast beef, ham, or turkey. In each piece roll a slice of cheese.

Stuffed Cucumber: Remove seeds from center of pared cucumber with an apple corer. Stuff with cream cheese or a cheese mixture. Chill, slice 1/4 inch thick and serve.

Fruit Kabobs: Slip colorful pieces of fruit on a toothpick.

Merry Go Rounds: Spread peanut butter on a thin apple slice and stand an animal cracker in the middle.

Polka Dot Open-Face Sandwiches:

Cut bread into shapes with a cookie cutter. Cover with tuna/mayo mixture and put a small cube of cheese on the top. Brown in the broiler.

Veggie Snacks: Add other vegetables to your carrot stick routine.

Try raw zucchini wheels, thin slices of cauliflower, whole cherry tomatoes, and red and green pepper sticks or rounds. Keep a container on hand in the refrigerator for a quick pick-up snack whenever needed.

SUNFLOWERS

A garden with sunflowers makes for a happy summer. They tower over tomatoes and cucumbers. Sunflowers can grow to over eight feet high. Planted close together in a tight square or circle, they make an enchanted summer playhouse for kids. Sunflowers also come in dwarf varieties which are perfect for growing in pots or in the front of flower beds.

Growing large sunflowers for their edible seeds is a thrill. Eat them raw or remove the shells and toast them in the oven. Even sunflowers with smaller seeds make food for the birds. Let the seeds mature on the plant, then cut the heads and offer them to the birds in the fall. Put a few dried flower heads on the porch and watch through the window as the birds eat them up.

Sunflowers are ideal plants for children to grow. Plant the traditional sunny yellow variety as well as the more unusual pale yellow and maroon varieties such as pale yellow or maroon.

Introduce kids to sunflowers and get them interested in planting with these books:

A Handful of Sunshine by Melanie Eclare (Ragged Bears, 2000) has big lush photographs and a simple story of a little gardener named Tilda growing sunflowers. Perfect for pre-schoolers.

Sunflower House by Eve Bunting (Voyager Books, 1996) is a rhyming story of a boy who grows and plays in a house made of sunflowers. Or visit the gardening section of your local library.



You can find sunflower seeds at your local nursery or grocery store seed display area. Grow them in a sunny window—plant outdoors when the ground is warm. Or select a cheerful dwarf sunflower, such as Big Smile— for a cheery container garden.

Some Characteristics of a 5-year-old's Relationships:

- ⇒ **Many 5-year-olds fall in love with their kindergarten teachers.** Everything the teacher says may become law and the child may often misinterpret what the teacher tells them.
- ⇒ **Although 5-year-olds love their teachers, their closest ties are still to parents.**
- ⇒ **Socially, one-to-one contacts are best** and they easily choose friends of either sex as playmates. However, their playmates may change from day to day.
- ⇒ **Five-year-olds have a great need to be first, to win, to be the best.** They often tell one another, "You are a dumb painter" or "You run to slowly to be on my team."
- ⇒ **Five-year-olds will bribe peers with grand promises, at least for a while** (for example, "If you let me go first, I'll bring you gum tomorrow.") However, by the end of the year, they begin to recognize which children follow through with promises and which don't.
- ⇒ **Nearly every 5-year-old reports at some time that, "No one likes me,"** or "Sarah never lets me play." or "Everybody is mean to me."
- ⇒ **Five-year-olds like to role play and to be picked for special jobs.** They are able to choose their activities and friends more easily at this age than they will be able to just one year earlier.

From The Growing Years Child Development Fact Sheet, University of Maine Cooperative Extension



A Primer for Parents: Preparing Children for School

When your children are about to start elementary school, you may worry: "Are they ready?" "Have I done enough." Actually, you may have taught them more than you realize. You have helped them learn basic survival skills. You have taught them to feed themselves, cross a street and get along with others. By teaching them language, you have given them the foundation for all later learning.

You have also given your children attitudes toward school and education. Those attitudes are far more important than numbers and letters. Attitudes determine how children feel about school and how hard they try. Making sure children form positive attitudes is one of your most important tasks.

Most young children are eager to go to school. They talk and talk and talk about it. They want to learn how to read, and they are anxious to please and do well. In fact, most children feel so excited they begin to get "butterflies" inside.

Even if a child has been in school settings before — pre-school, day care and Head Start — the start of formal school is a new experience. In their minds, this is the day the child begins "real" school. Like any big change, it brings apprehension as well as joy.

US Consumer Product Safety Commission Product Recalls:

Troy the Activity Truck by Infantino: The hazard is the plastic beads on the truck's bead runs; they can detach causing a choking hazard. "Infantino" is printed on the front of Model number 153-210, 206-110, or 506-110C - printed underneath. The truck plays music and the back wheels spin when turned on. Sold at retail stores from September 2009 to February 2011 for about \$15. Take this toy away from children and contact Infantino at (888) 803-3111 to receive a free replacement. Visit the website at <http://service.infantino.com>

Arm's Reach Concepts-Infant Bed-Side Sleepers: When the fabric liner is not in use or is not securely attached, infants can fall from the raised mattress into the loose fabric or can become entrapped between the edge of the mattress and the side of the sleeper, posing suffocation risks. The recall includes all Arm's Reach Original and Universal styles with dates between September 1997 and December 2001. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled bed-side sleepers and visit www.armsreach.com/instructions to download correct assembly instructions. For more information call (800) 954-9353.

Pampers and Natural Stages Pacifiers by Key Baby: The pacifier did not meet federal safety standards and pose a choking hazard. Only "Stage 1" pacifiers are recalled. They were sold between April 2010 through February 2011 in a package of 2 for about \$6. Immediately take the pacifier from infants. Call 800-447-1224 or visit the web site at www.key-bsaby.com for return information.

Tea Lights by Pacific Trade: The candles have a clear, plastic cup that can melt or ignite, posing fire and burn hazards. The brand names are Chesapeake Bay Candle or Modern Light. Only tea lights that do not have any lettering imprinted on the bottom of the cup are included in the recall. They were sold at Marshalls, Target, TJ Maxx and other retailers nationwide between July 2009 and February 2011 for between \$1 and \$12. Over 7 million candles have been sold! Immediately stop using the candles and return to store where purchased for a credit. To learn more visit the website at www.chesapeakebaycandle.com or call 800-331-8339 for more information.

Listening and Learning

From kindergarten to third grade, kids' ability to read grows by leaps and bounds. Although teachers provide lots of help, parents continue to play a role in their child's reading life.

Kids who are first learning to read get more information from listening to books than from reading them independently. This is especially true of vocabulary — they will learn more about what words mean by hearing books read aloud and discussing words with parents than from reading on their own.

Even as your child's reading skills improve, reading aloud together can foster a sense of closeness and help improve vocabulary and reading skills.

Kindergarten is the time when most kids begin learning to read. By the end of the school year they will probably know most letters and their sounds, match words by beginning and ending sounds and be able to read and write several simple words. They may be able to read simple text as well!