

Starting Kindergarten is a big step

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PARENTING POINTS

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The first day of Kindergarten is a milestone that is full of excitement and worries for both you and your child. Fortunately, there are many things you can do with your child to help ensure a smooth transition into Kindergarten.

Play and read with your child every day. Looking at picture books or playing with toys together builds your child's vocabulary and imagination. They learn colours, shapes, sizes and quantities as you talk about what you see. They practice counting, rhyming, and predicting cause and effect. Through play, your child is constantly learning and preparing himself for future learning in school.

Provide a variety of craft supplies for your child to practice their fine motor skills. You do not need anything elaborate. Starting

with crayons, paint, glue and scissors, you can build an art kit using a variety of supplies from around the house. Save flyers and wrapping paper, envelopes and small boxes. Collect scraps of fabric, yarn, old puzzle pieces, buttons, beads, and used stamps. Let your child create and explore with art.

Your child develops gross motor skills through active play. Spend as much time as you can outdoors where they can run, jump and climb. Practice throwing and kicking a ball back and forth and help them learn to ride a tricycle or bicycle. Sing songs

with actions such as clapping, pointing to body parts, or other specific movements.

Give your child opportunities to practice social skills. Have play dates, go to play groups or visit the park to allow your child to meet and play with other children. Practice sharing and taking turns at home. Help your child express how they are feeling and how their actions might make others feel.

Help your child work towards independence. They should be able to zip up his coat and tie his shoes. They need to know their full name,

and it is helpful if they can spell and print their first name, as well as recognize it in print. They should know their parents' first names, their phone number and home address.

Visit your child's school before the first day of classes. This gives them a chance to meet the teacher, become familiar with the classroom, and see where the washroom, the gym, the library and other important areas are. Play at the school playground often before school starts.

Answer your child's questions, keeping in mind that what might seem silly or

trivial to you could be a big worry in your child's mind. Make sure they understand that they can ask their teacher for help if they have any questions when they gets to school.

Starting Kindergarten is a big step, but your child has been preparing for this for a long time. It is just one more milestone on the journey through childhood, and it is the start of an exciting new chapter for both your child and yourself.