The Road to School Success!

Going to school is a big step for both children and parents. This guide lists examples of basic skills that help children get ready for school. If your child cannot do every item on the list, it does NOT mean that they aren't ready for school. Your child will gain new skills and independence when you practice these activities together.

EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

Early literacy skills are those skills that prepare the child to learn how to read, write, listen, speak and think. Literacy is the basis for our learning – we use it to learn everything.

- Identify letters in their own name
- Rhyme words
- Identify cover of book and turn pages
- Tell about a story they have heard

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

- Read. Read. Read. Everyday!
- Go to the library together and let your child pick out books
- Talk about the cover of the book and ask what they think the story will be about
- Pick stories that help develop skills like counting and rhyming or that build social skills like sharing and friendship
- While reading together, ask your child questions to help think about what is being read. "What do you think is going to happen next?"

MEMORY SKILLS

Memory skills help your child recall things such as the letters of the alphabet and the names of colors. Helping your child develop a strong memory ensures that they will build on other areas of learning.

- Recite nursery rhymes
- Identify colors and name them
- Sing simple songs
- Say or sing alphabet

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

- Practice nursery rhymes like *Jack and Jill* and *Humpty Dumpty*
- Talk about colors in everyday situations. "Do you want the red or blue cup?"
- Point out colors and shapes of everyday objects that you see when driving in a car or taking a walk
- Watch TV programs with your child such as Noggin or Sesame Street and learn songs together

PERSONAL SKILLS

Personal skills are those skills that your child needs to take care of themselves. They include dressing, using the bathroom and following instructions. If your child can take care of their basic personal needs, they will feel more confident and independent.

- Use the bathroom and wash hands
- Put on shoes
- Fasten and unfasten buttons, snaps and zippers
- Blow nose with a tissue; sneeze and cough into elbow
- Put on and take off a coat and hang it up

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

- Practice two-step instructions such as "Take off your boots and hang up your coat."
- Help your child to tell when they are feeling upset, sick or hurt
- Create morning and bedtime routines
- Learn their full name, age, address and telephone number
- Encourage your child to get dressed themselves

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Gross motor skills are those skills that require the large muscles of the body, such as jumping, running, kicking and catching. Gross motor skills are important for ensuring a healthy body.

- Catch and bounce a large ball
- Jump up and down with both feet
- Jump forward
- Hop on one foot

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

- Give your child opportunities to play with balls of different sizes. Encourage them to catch, kick and bounce the ball
- Have organized play activities, songs and dances that involve listening to directions and movement like "Simon Says" and "Hokey Pokey"
- Encourage outdoor activity everyday

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Social and emotional skills are developed as your child plays with other children and understands how to relate to each other, how they express their feelings, and how well they can listen. These skills also include rules and routines which provide the structure necessary for your child's success at school.

- Start and finish an activity
- Take turns and share
- Use words to express and resolve a conflict
- Make new friends
- Can separate from parent easily

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

- Involve your child in conversation and discussion, taking turns listening and talking
- Give your child small chores to learn responsibility such as setting the table, helping put away groceries and sorting laundry by colors
- Have your child share their toys, games, books or stuffed animals with you or a sibling
- Help your child learn to follow directions by giving simple steps or playing a game

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Fine motor skills are those that use the smaller muscles in the hands and require eye-hand coordination. Your child needs good fine motor skills to hold a pencil, to cut paper with scissors or to use a knife and fork to eat.

- Use child safety scissors to cut paper
- Scribble, draw and write
- Stack blocks, build Legos® or use play dough
- Play with puppets and instruments

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

- Encourage your child to use pens, pencils, markers or chalk
- Pick up small objects with kitchen tongs to build fine muscles
- Use different materials like glue, beads or strings to create artwork
- Put a puzzle together with your child

NUMBER SKILLS

Number skills include being able to count and understand how many there are of something. It also includes an understanding of the basic shapes.

- Touch objects as you count them
- Sort objects by color or shape
- Use words to talk about position (over, under, in, top, bottom, etc.) and order (first, next, last, etc.)
- Count to 10
- Identify basic shapes (circle, square, rectangle, triangle and oval)

PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

- Practice using words to communicate an understanding of numbers, "Do you want more milk?" or "Which glass has less juice?"
- Help your child identify basic shapes in pictures, books and objects around the house
- Have your child tell you how many of something they want. "Do you want one cracker or two?"
- Practice identifying position. "Is the book on the table or under the table?"