



## Ways to Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten:



On my son's first day of Kindergarten, I hid outside to see if he would interact with other children after his indoor lunch. I watched for about 15 minutes until it was almost time for him to go back inside his class room. He stood there alone until another child came over to him and they went inside the school. I breathe a breath of fresh air. He came home that evening to say he met a new friend.

However, throughout the afternoon I kept saying did I do a good job to prepare my child for Kindergarten?

Today, kindergarten preschool readiness programs are available through various Non-profit organizations, Parenting groups, Libraries, Faith groups and Community groups. These groups vary in their contexts but are based on practical, educational and social skills to help parents get children ready for kindergarten.

### **Here are four simple ways to help prepare your child for Kindergarten:**

**1. Invite your child into conversation with you.** Talk with your child early and often. For example, chat with your child while pushing he/she in the stroller or riding in the car. Your child's response may be verbal or non-verbal, but the most important thing is to talk to your child and listen closely for the response. Ask the question again and let the child know that you are listening for an answer. You have to be a really sensitive listener to your child.

**2. Give your child time to play.** All children need free time to simply play. Giving your child time to play is not wasted time. It's the opposite as playing provides children with many developmental benefits. Physical play helps children develop their motor skills. Working on the physical development areas like getting dressed, putting on and zipping their coats, and even tying their shoes - although they may not learn to tie their shoes until later in the first grade. It is also good to concentrate on following routines, following directions and cleaning up toys and games. Being able to clean up is a great asset in Kindergarten.

Group play helps children learn social skills, much of the benefit of social play comes when children learn to work out their own conflicts, with as little assistance from adults as possible. Social play helps them with great interacting skills, choosing a preschool that gives children ample time to play is very beneficial to children and get them ready for kindergarten.

**3. Provide experiences away from you.** Enroll your child in preschool or another activity, such as a Religious education class, Swimming lessons or Story time at your local Library, Community centre or EarlyON Child and Family Centres in your area. "Four-year-old Mary started Kindergarten last year, and her mom, Sarah, credits her easy transition to her preschool experience, and the fact that Mary was comfortable taking directions from and listening to other adults".

**4. Keep learning fun and relaxed.** Does your child need to know how to read when he or she begins Kindergarten? No. It is important to teach letters in a fun, play-based manner and to expect that there will be instruction in Kindergarten to support your child's literacy skills. Instead of drilling your child on their ABCs, you can point out letters on signs and while reading to your child.

In addition to recognizing letters, teach your child how to say their first and last names, their phone number, street address, names of family members, colors and shapes.