



PARENTING POSTS

A newsletter for parents of kindergarten students.

What to Expect From Your Developing Child

Kindergarten children come to school with very different backgrounds and personalities. Yet despite this diversity, they often share certain characteristics.

Children entering kindergarten probably will:

- like a fairly routine schedule
- behave better with consistent rules and guidance
- like opportunities to show independence
- seek affection (hugs, kisses), security and support at home
- be independent with toileting, feeding and dressing themselves and going to sleep

Most children of kindergarten age also will show certain physical and social characteristics, although children vary developmentally in these areas. **Physically**, most kindergarten children will:

- be extremely active for short periods, separated by longer periods of calm and quiet
- be maturing in large (arms and legs) and small (hands, fingers) muscle control
- be more susceptible to childhood diseases
- begin to lose primary teeth and get permanent teeth
- be somewhat farsighted because their eyes are not yet fully mature
- lack full development of hand-eye coordination
- be in the process of learning to snap fingers, whistle and wink

In addition, **socially and emotionally**, children in kindergarten likely will:

- have a creative and vivid imagination
- show pride and concern about possessions
- argue with peers occasionally or become upset
- like immediate results, not long-term goals
- have difficulty understanding and remembering rules
- change their mind often
- be very curious
- procrastinate in completing tasks, especially adult-directed tasks



Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Knowing what to expect at your child's stage of development is important so you can be sure that activities your child participates in are appropriate for them.

Stress Less Activity



Stress is part of everyone's life. Even young children! Try this activity with your child to help reduce stress and enjoy time together.

Choose a time to turn off all screens and noisy machines for 10 minutes. Sit or lay still comfortably with your eyes closed. What do you hear? Can you hear your own breathing? Pay attention to times you need quiet and take a break from all of the noise.

Toys as Tools for Growth

Toys are tools for learning. Kindergarten children learn about art, literacy, science, math and social situations, and they even practice growing up. Children's development will benefit if they have access to these types of materials: mirrors, dress-up clothes, dolls and role-playing items such as play money, keyboard and telephone. Also, make available "large muscle" toys such as blocks, trikes, bikes, balls, cones, outdoor play equipment and kid-size construction materials, including boxes. Music, art and exploration materials such as art and craft items, stringing and beading, measuring items, small people and cars, memory games, checkers, dominoes, guessing games, puzzles, books, musical instruments and rhymes. Make sure that items are child-appropriate and safe for play.



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Helping a Child Develop

You can help meet the developmental needs of your child by encouraging them to:

- Ask permission to use other people's toys. Teach them to understand that respect for personal property must be shown to others if they want their possessions respected.
- Go shopping with you, make a purchase, pay for the item and receive the change. This develops math skills.
- Talk on the telephone with friends and relatives to gain experience with phone manners.
- Know that words such as "excuse me," "please" and "thank you" should be used consistently.
- Know that they can expect a reasonable amount of personal privacy. Teach them to knock on closed doors before entering a room and expect all family members to do the same.
- Understand that they must wait for their turn in group activities, but allow them to be first some of the time.
- Establish relationships with friends their age.
- Have opportunities to talk about themselves and their activities and know that someone is listening. Parents tend to talk *to* their children rather than *with* them.
- Have responsibilities, such as picking up toys, caring for pets or putting away their own clothes. Jobs that fit the child work best.
- Know that they are accepted. Refrain from openly comparing your child to other children, especially siblings. Avoid name-calling and negative labels always.
- Enjoy 20 minutes or more of relaxing reading time with you every day. This experience is where your child will learn to love reading and learning.
- Know that they are loved. The greatest gifts you can give your child are your time, attention and affection.



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