CHICAGO Early Learning | DFSS Department of Family and Support Services | Chicago Public Schools

Getting Ready for Pre-K

Pre-K is the beginning of a new phase in your child's development. Give your child a strong start with these activities before the first day.

Five Tips for **Preparing for Pre-K**

1. **Visit Your New School:** Make a plan to visit the school/program a few times before the first day. A walk around the building or playing on the playground helps familiarize your child. Reach out to your school/program for opportunities to visit. **Bonus Tip:** Arrange a playdate with new friends.
2. **Create a New Routine:** Practice "bedtime" and "wake-time." Pick a bedtime that will give your child a good night's rest and an early wake-up time so that you are not rushing. **Bonus Tip:** Establish a routine of picking out clothes the night before.
3. **Share Your School Memories:** Share memories and pictures of your first day of school/work! Describe what it was like to start at a new school with new people. **Bonus Tip:** Ask family members to share pictures of their first day of school/work.
4. **Create a Goodbye Plan:** Saying goodbye can be hard for you as a parent and your child. Work on a plan to make the transition easier and assure your child of your return. **Bonus Tip:** Sing a song or create a special goodbye handshake.
5. **Build Social-Emotional Skills:** Young children are learning to express their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Building these skills helps them navigate how to handle situations.
Bonus Tip: Name feelings when they happen. Go beyond "happy" and "sad" with words like "joyful" and "displeased."



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Try some of the activities below to help prepare your child for the reading, talking, counting, playing, and connecting they will do when they start school!

Math Activites

Math is everywhere and can be a fun part of daily activities.

1. Count, count, count! Whether climbing the stairs or marching, count from 1-10 and beyond.
2. Look for numbers on the go! Have your child identify a specific number on license plates while on the bus or driving home.
3. Name the number! While grocery shopping, count objects as you add them to your shopping cart.
4. A world of shapes! Reinforce recognizing and naming shapes like circles, triangles, and squares around your home.

Literacy Activites

Reading together is a great way to foster early reading skills!

1. Use silly voices! Read a story multiple times. Change the voices of the characters each time.
2. Pause for questions! Every 2-3 pages, ask a question about the characters or the plot.
3. Find the letter! Choose a letter to find on each page! When you find it, point to it, name it, and cheer!
4. Make the connection! Each letter has a sound. Find things at home that start with the same sound. Add more letters as they master the sounds.

Great Books to Read!

The books below are about children going to school or saying goodbye. Visit your local library or bookstore to check out these titles!

- **We Don't Eat Our Classmates / Los niños no se comen |** Ryan Higgins
- **Our Class is a Family / Nuestra Clase es una Familia |** Shannon Olsen
- **The Kissing Hand / Un beso en mi mano |** Audrey Penn
- **The Day You Begin / El día en que descubres quién eres |** Jacqueline Woodson



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