

Early Learning Parents' Pages

August 2018

- Back-to-School Time
- Skills for School Readiness
- August is Family Fun Month
- Special Days in August



It's "Back to School Time"!

If you have a child who is starting childcare or preschool this can be both an exciting and challenging time for your family.

Starting this new adventure the right way will influence your child's attitude, confidence and performance and your attitude towards the school. Your child's temperament, age, and social development will affect the transition process, but planning ahead, setting realistic expectations and maintaining a positive attitude will go a long way in making this a successful experience.

Before School Starts

Immunizations and Physicals – Make sure your child has all of her [immunizations up to date](#). Schedule a well-visit with your health care provider and make sure to ask questions about any physical or social-emotional concerns you may have about your child. Use the [Well Visit Planner](#) to prepare for your child's health-care visit. If your child is happy and healthy, the transition to school will go much smoother.

Information from School – Read and review all information sent to you from the teacher or child care provider. There may be important

information about schedules, classroom location, your child's new teacher, supplies needed, the calendar, health and emergency forms, and meetings or events for families. Keep the information in a file folder or located where you can locate it quickly when you have a question. Make extra copies of your child's health information and emergency contacts to use as needed during the year.



Mark Your Calendar – Make a note on your calendar of upcoming parent meetings, conference days and holidays.

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Coming
in
September

Sept. 26, 2018
Dads Take Your
Child to School
Day

Grandparents

Safe babies

Special Days in
September

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It's "Back to School Time"!

Establish Routines - At least a week before your child starts child care or preschool put your child to bed so that she gets at least 8 hours of sleep each night. Reading a book to your child or singing songs together is a good way to get her to relax and fall asleep. Eating breakfast at the same time every day will prepare your child to be ready to get to school on time. Select a place to put your child's backpack and lunchbox and put it there several days before school starts. Tell your child to leave her backpack and lunchbox in the designated place every day when she gets home from school. This will make it easy for you to check the backpack for letters and notices from the school.

Visit the School with your Child – A few weeks before school or child care starts, walk or drive your child to the school and visit a classroom and the playground if possible. If there is a school visitation night or parent night before school starts make sure to go and take your child with you if allowed.

The First Week of School

Be Available – Keep extra projects and appointments to a minimum if possible so you can be free to help your child adjust to school or child care and talk to her about her day after she comes home. Spend a little time in her classroom to help your child adjust to the new setting if the school or child care allows parents to stay.

Communicate with the Teacher - Send a brief note to your child's teacher to find out how the teacher prefers to communicate with parents and ask for phone numbers or email addresses you may need to keep in touch if you have not received this information. Make sure that you attend any special events or parent meetings scheduled. You will learn a lot about the school and student/family expectations at these meetings.

Helping your Child Adjust – Let your child know you care about her by putting a note or picture in her



her lunchbox. Keep a positive, supportive attitude and talk about all of the good experiences and things to look forward to at school or child care. Children absorb their parents' feelings so be as positive and confident as possible. If your child is anxious and shy the first few days, try not to over react. After the first day, when you drop your child off at school, tell her you love her and will see her when school is over. Then, leave her with the teacher instead of lingering. Soon she will be involved in the classroom routines, make new friends and everything will be okay.

Volunteer - If your schedule and family obligations permit, volunteer to help in the classroom. If your child is too clingy or acts shy with you in the classroom, volunteer to help in other classes or do things at home to help the teacher.

Going to school or child care is an important part of your child's life. Your confidence and positive attitude will make a difference in the way she approaches this exciting experience.

Most children are very resilient and will adjust to school quickly with their parents' encouragement and support and will continue to thrive throughout their school experience.

For more ideas and tips to help support your child's first day of school or child care, look for the **Back-to-School Activities** on the Office of Early Learning's website.

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Skills for School Readiness



As a new school year begins, parents worry that their child may not be ready to start school. If your child is starting preschool, pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, you want him to be ready for school. You may wonder: “What are the most important school readiness skills and when should I teach these skills to my child?”

You have taught your child many of the skills that help him get ready for school because [school readiness begins at birth](#). The relationship you have with your child as an infant helped him learn how to interact with others to get his needs met, the first step in learning how to communicate with others. When he reached out for you and you picked him up and held him, you were teaching him to trust others. As he grew, he watched you interact with other family members and friends and began to model his interactions with others on your interactions. When he fell down and hurt his knee, you comforted him and put a bandage on his “boo-boo”. This was the beginning of his understanding of [empathy](#) for others. You may have seen him putting a bandage on a stuffed animal or toy dog and saying, “This will help you feel better.” In school, when he shows empathy and concern for a friend who fell down on the playground, it is a result of the empathy and concern you showed him at home. Social interaction is built on the relationships your child has with you, other adults and children. This is how he learns to play together with other children, take turns, help his friends and cooperate with others. These are essential skills for success in school.

Research has shown that [social and emotional skills](#) are as important if not more important for young children’s readiness for school than academic skills. Problem solving, [persistence](#) and curiosity will help your child want to learn and find different ways to learn. [Cooperation](#), empathy, [self-control](#) and a [positive attitude](#) will help him make and keep friends, interact positively with the adults at school, be able to listen, ask questions, share, and wait his turn.



As you read to him each day, sang songs when you were riding in the car, gave him toys to play with and talked with him as you went about everyday routines, he was learning words and concepts and you were encouraging his curiosity about the world around him. Children’s successes in [academic skills](#) are closely tied to the amount of [words and talk they hear](#) as infants and toddlers and to the social skills they learn from watching and interacting with their family and other care givers every day. Counting his toes and fingers as you dressed him and helping him build towers with blocks was his introduction to math skills. Science concepts were introduced when you gave him a seed to plant and had him water the seed. When you talked about the stalk, leaves and flowers on the plant as you watched it grow together, he learned about the life cycle of a plant, an important science concept.



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Encouraging your child to explore his surroundings helped him learn about his environment. By providing lots of time for your child to play and explore, asking him questions to focus his thinking and giving him answers to all of his questions, you encouraged his development of a love for learning. He will be eager to continue learning new ideas, words and skills when he enters school. When he was learning to walk and fell, you picked him up and encouraged him to keep trying. As he babbled and cooed, you repeated words until he began to make and combine sounds that he used for words such as dada for daddy and ba for baby. You responded with excitement when he said "mama" or "daddy" while pointing to you. Your response encouraged him to learn new words and to keep trying no matter how many times he fell or how many times it took him to learn a new word. You were teaching him to be persistent and that he will need a lot of practice to learn new skills.

When your child starts school, he will know many of the skills that will help him be successful. Continue to encourage his love of learning at home as well as [social skills](#) such as persistence, cooperation, problem solving, and empathy that will help him succeed in school and in life.

Special Dates in September

- Sept. 9 - Grandparents Day
- Sept. 16 - Play Doh Day
- Sept. 24 - National Family Day
- Sept. 25 - Better Breakfast Day
- Sept. 27 - Dads Take Your Child to School Day
- Sept. 28 - Good Neighbor Day



Try these Activities for the Special Days in August

National Cupcake Day is **Aug. 20**. Let your child help you bake their favorite kind of cupcakes for dessert.

The night of **Aug. 25** is National Bat Night. Read *Stella Luna* by Janell Cannon or listen to the [book read](#) on YouTube and make [bat snacks](#) with your child.



Aug. 26 is National Dog Day. You and your child take your dog or a neighbor's dog for a walk. If there are no neighbors that have dogs and you do not have a dog, take your child to visit an animal shelter and volunteer to walk some of the dogs.

Aug. 30 is National Toasted Marshmallow Day. Toast some marshmallows and make s'mores with your child.



Early Learning Parents' Pages

August is Family Fun Month

Florida is a great place to raise your family. There are so many places to visit and activities for families in Florida. August is Family Fun Month and a wonderful time for you to enjoy special trips or activities with your family. You may have favorite activities or places you visit that you enjoy as a family or have some ideas of new activities you would like to try.

Many free family activities are available through the [state parks](#) and the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) such as swimming, fishing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, camping. [Tubing](#) down a river or springs is a great way for your family to cool off on a hot day. Florida is known for its' beautiful beaches so don't miss an opportunity to take your children to explore a beach, learn about the sea and beach creatures and spend time cooling off in the water.

Spend a day exploring the [libraries](#) or [museums](#) in your area. Many [museums](#) are free or have children's days with reduced entrance fees. There are children's museums with organized activities, museums that focus on the history of Florida, art museums, science museums, museums that feature animals, birds, insects, butterflies, manatees and sea shells. There are forts, old schools, pioneer houses, the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Big Cypress Indian Reservation, and a working farm. Your family can learn about water skiing, drag racing, auto racing, military airplanes and ships, fossils, the citrus industry, and underwater diving. Visit your local library to check out books, use their computers, listen to stories being read, try the online learning games, or participate in a special event such as back to school programs or summer learning programs.



Just spending time together at home can be a real treat. Play a board game together or make up new rules for games you enjoy playing. Have a picnic at home or in a nearby park. Take a nature walk through your neighborhood or in a park. No matter what your family enjoys doing, make sure to have fun together and make special memories that will last through the years. At the end of the day, read a book to your children, sing your favorite songs together, dance to your favorite music or just talk about all of the fun you had as a family.



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