



JULY 2008



Family Time Work Time

A BALANCING ACT

Building Strong Families

Homework Before Kindergarten



DO YOU HAVE A CHILD GOING TO KINDERGARTEN THIS YEAR? YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO GET OFF TO A GOOD START. Here is some homework for you to do to find out if your child is really ready for school. Some things to look for are listed below:

- To do well in school children need to be able to take turns and share with others.
- Can your child sit still and pay attention for things like reading a story or playing a game?
- Being able to problem solve is an important skill for all children to have. This means being able to solve a conflict by talking about it instead of using aggressive actions.
- Children need to be able to follow directions.
- Does your child work well with others? Your child should also be able to work alone on a project and complete it.
- Good listening skills are important.
- Is your child able to communicate well with others?
- Can your child dress herself? How about using the bathroom and washing her hands by herself?

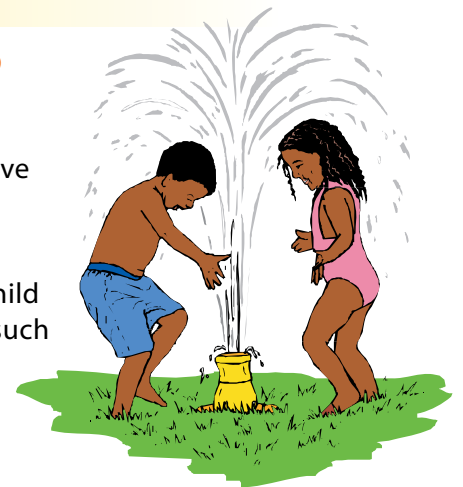
These social and self-control skills are important. Take some time to see if your child can do these things. Practice those that your child needs to work on. You may notice that academics skills such as ABCs and counting are not listed. They are important and your child may know them now or will learn them soon, but the ones listed above are equally important. They will help your child do well in school and in life.

Fitness Counts

THERE ARE MANY CONCERNS THESE DAYS ABOUT CHILDREN SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME SITTING IN FRONT OF THE TELEVISION OR COMPUTER AND NOT GETTING ENOUGH EXERCISE. With rates of childhood obesity rising in our country, parents need to make sure their children are getting enough active times every day. Set limits for time at the computer or in front of the television.

Become a fit family. Take walks and ride bikes together. Encourage your child to play outdoors as often as possible. You can play some sports together such as playing ball or swimming. You can play tennis or basketball with older children. Do jobs around the house together. Your child can help put groceries away, dust the furniture, and put laundry away.

Fitness counts. Your whole family will be healthier by being physically active and can have fun while doing things together.



Snacking Can Be Good for You

THE WORD SNACK SOMETIMES GETS A BAD RAP. SNACKS ARE OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS UNHEALTHY EATING. That's because people often associate snacks with junk food. Snacks can be healthy and children can benefit from them. Here are some ideas for healthy snacks:

- Fruit shakes can be made with low-fat milk and fresh fruit such as bananas, berries, or peaches.
- Yogurt sundaes are refreshing and healthy. Top some low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit.
- Freeze fruit juice for a cool summer treat.
- Keep a supply of fresh vegetables cleaned, cut up, and ready to eat in your refrigerator for last-minute snacking. If your child enjoys a dip with veggies, make one from either cottage cheese or yogurt mixed with dried ranch dressing.
- Celery spread with cream cheese or peanut butter is a favorite. It can be sprinkled with raisins or shredded carrots.
- Sliced apples or banana chunks make good snacks.
- Cheese cubes make a tasty snack.
- Avoid sugary drinks. The best drinks for children are water and low-fat milk.

Be creative and use healthy foods for your child's snacks. Many can be prepared ahead of time and kept in the fridge ready to eat.

***CAUTION** – Be aware that infants and young children can choke easily on some foods such as nuts, popcorn, fruit seeds or pits, pieces of hot dog or bacon, some raw vegetables such as celery and carrots, and even peanut butter or cheese. Using finely grated or chopped foods may reduce the risk of choking. Never leave an infant or young child alone while eating.



Health and Safety Tips for Parents

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS HAS A SECTION FOR PARENTS ON ITS WEB SITE WITH LOTS OF INFORMATION ABOUT A VARIETY OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES. THE SITE CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.HEALTHYCHILDCARE.ORG.

The Web site has information about children of all ages. One example is recently updated information on preventing a baby's risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome.) There is also information on immunizations, child development, early brain development, finding a doctor and dentist for your child, child passenger safety, behavior, and much more.

Family Time/Work Time: July 2008

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