

## **When the Bell Rings.....**

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It's that time of year again! A letter from your child's new teacher, school supply lists and that oh so familiar new sneaker smell! Yes, it's September and you've survived the first week of school. While the 'old pros' (parents who have done this so many times that they have Staples on speed dial) are familiar with the procedures for the first week of school, here are a few tips to ease the pain for our 'newbies'.

For the parent who has a child starting kindergarten, let's answer the most frequently asked questions first: What's expected of my child? The Connecticut State Department of Education has put together the following list of typical behaviors that teachers expect from your child upon entering kindergarten:

### **Speak and Listen**

- Use and understand many words
- Speak in complete sentences
- Ask lots of questions
- Say and notice words that rhyme
- Make up and share personal stories about their interests

### **Read and Write**

- Select familiar books and tell why they like them
- Retell favorite stories from books
- Hold a book upright
- Identify letters of the alphabet
- Recognize letter sounds
- Recognize, copy & print their first name
- Hold a pencil and write with it

### **Use Mathematics**

- Recognize and count up to ten items
- Recognize the number symbols 1-10
- Describe and talk about objects that have different sizes, colors, shapes and patterns
- Sort items by 'same' and 'different'
- Use the words 'near', 'far', 'top', 'bottom', 'under', 'first', 'second', 'last'
- Sort objects from smallest to largest, shortest to tallest and lightest to heaviest

### **Participate and Cooperate**

- Understand and participate in conversations
- Stay involved in directed activity to its completion
- Follow routines and directions
- Work and play together with other children

Now, does this mean your child must know *everything* mentioned above? No. Every child masters behaviors in their own unique way. But it is important when meeting with your child's kindergarten teacher to ask the following questions: what are the kindergarten expectations/curriculum at the school, what can you as a parent do to help

reinforce what is learned in the classroom, and what programs are offered to your child to help master state expectations.

To help ensure your child's school success, it is important to develop a schedule together. For example, your child should have a set bedtime and wake-up time to insure your child has an adequate amount of sleep. You should plan what he/she is going to wear the night before and make sure backpacks are ready to go! In preparing morning routines, decide with your child a consistent area in your home to keep backpacks and other school materials.

Now that school has started, set aside a time of day to talk with your child about their school day, their fears/concerns, and check homework or notes from school. Displaying work on refrigerators, cabinets, or sliding glass doors emphasizes the importance of the work your child completes at school. From this 'share time', your child will observe the value you place on their education. In return, they will understand the importance of their education and take pride in their accomplishments.

The secret to having an easy transition to the start of a new school year is organization and communication. Practice and discuss the daily routine with your child, allows your child to be part of the decision process (ex. choosing a healthy snack, planning a quiet time together), and develop a positive communication between you and your child's teacher (ex. scheduled conferences, e-mail, phone calls). Enjoy the beginning of your child's school year! We look forward to sharing suggestions and advice to help your child in the early elementary years. If you have any topics/questions you would like addressed in future articles, please send e-mail to [LINDAMASSUCCI@aol.com](mailto:LINDAMASSUCCI@aol.com) (make sure to include the town you live in)

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