

Pointers For Parents

Making The Move From Playtime To Preschool

(NAPSA)—Transitioning your toddler from the playpen to preschool and kindergarten doesn't have to be as overwhelming a task as it may seem, if you know what to expect.

Experts on education say children who are engaged in learning activities at an early age can most easily adapt to the new formal school environment. Parents can help make the transition easier by preparing a home environment similar to the classroom and engaging children in educational activities.

"Young children are naturally curious and eager to learn," explains Dr. Mary Mokris, education specialist for Kumon Math and Reading Centers. "Instilling a love of learning at an early age will help make the transition a positive experience."

Dr. Mokris suggests the following activities to foster a child's love of learning even before entering the classroom:

Reading

Since literacy skills develop in toddlerhood, parents can give their children an early start by exposing them to printed material.

- Read aloud to your children daily. This activity exposes them to language, teaches them about books and helps them start identifying words and their sounds.

Math

Numeracy skills development has become a high priority for many school systems. Aid your children's number savvy with simple and fun activities.

- Count random objects from fingers and toes to fruits and vegetables. Once children learn basic numbers, they'll probably want to count everything they see.

- Sing and say common counting rhymes such as "one-two-buckle my shoe" and "one potato,



For young children, playtime is learning time.

two potato" to reinforce numbers or be creative and make up your own.

Social Skills

Learning social skills is an essential part of early childhood development. The more children interact with people other than their parents or siblings, the better they will be able to adapt to classmates and teachers.

- Participate in a "playdate." The intention of a playdate is to give children time to interact freely with others while fostering friendships. Search parenting websites for information on groups nearby.

For parents seeking more resources, there's an interactive program for preschoolers and kindergartners called Junior Kumon. Students learn pre-literacy skills and pre-numeracy skills so they can achieve more on their own once they enroll in school. Parents say they appreciate how the program fosters positive family time together at home and an engaging learning environment at the Kumon Center.

For information about programs for young children, call (800) ABC-MATH or visit www.kumon.com/juniorkumon.