

# Pointers For Parents

## What Is Your Role In Your Child's Education?

(NAPSA)—Your child's education begins long before he or she is enrolled in school. As the first teachers of children, parents are always teaching—with examples, words and experiences. But many parents don't realize how important their role is and, if they do, they don't always know how to participate most effectively in their child's education.

"There are many things parents can do to encourage their children to learn," says Barbara Anderson, Ed.D., vice president of education for KinderCare Learning Centers, which operates more than 1,250 early childhood education and childcare centers nationwide.

Anderson says: "Children learn all the time, through all their senses: touch, taste, hearing, sight and smell. These sensory experiences form an intellectual understanding that will be refined and developed as a child grows."

Listening is an important skill in learning. Encourage your children to ask questions about what they hear. Share your favorite poems and songs with your children. Read to them and tell them family stories. You may want to limit television time, but talk about the things you watch together.

Learning to follow directions is important to developing new skills, too. When you show your children a new skill, demonstrate each step and let them participate. Even young children can help with such household chores as meal preparation. They'll learn sequences by first washing their



Photo Credit: KinderCare Learning Centers

hands, then setting the table, tearing up lettuce or tossing the salad.

Using the daily newspaper, parents and children can talk about the weather report, which often includes illustrations of the forecast. Then go outside and look at the clouds. If it's raining, wade in the puddles or play in the mud. Experiencing abstract ideas in a concrete way like this can help children make intellectual connections.

Pick up toys together and ask your child to collect all of the blue toys, then all of the red. Count the number of toys before stashing them in the toy box, turning cleanup into a learning experience.

Showing your children that learning is fun will help them enjoy it as a lifelong pursuit.