

Preparing Children for Preschool and Kindergarten

- Read to your child every day! Encourage him/her to picture read to you from a favorite book.
- Contact the Humphreys County Board of Education (931-296-2568) and ask for information about entering your child in the *Dolly Parton Imagination Library* program. The books are free to all children from birth to 5 years of age. All it takes is your name, address, phone number, child's name, date of birth, and sex of the child. Please remember to provide a change of address if you move, so the books will follow your child.
- Take your child to the library. Let him/her check out a book. Picture walk through the book and make up a story before reading it, then compare the predictions. While reading hold or sit beside your child and trace your finger slowly under the print as you pronounce each word. Help him/her find various objects on the page or cover the pictures and have them tell you everything they saw. Have them predict what is going to happen next. Then, help them retell the story in sequence.
- Reciting nursery rhymes, poems, or simple songs increases your child's memory and language.
- Talk about things that happened in the past and will happen in the future. Help your child plan for future events, such as birthdays, holidays, and trips. Create memories with your child and provide them a way of sequencing events.
- Designate your refrigerator door for artwork. Record the conversation about their drawings on the pictures, so everyone will understand their meaning. Having them tell you a story and writing their words down helps children understand that print is just talk written down.
- Teach colors and prepositions in everyday conversations, "Get your red shoes off the bottom shelf."
- Practice printing their first and last names using capital and lower case letters in the appropriate places. Preschool only requires their first name. Kindergarten requires first and last names.
- Teach children important information about themselves: Their complete name, address, phone number, and about calling 911 in case of an emergency; also, teach them what your full name is and how to reach you if they get lost.
- Engage your child in activities designed to increase their attention span. Children who are read or talked to come to school with an attention span of up to 20 minutes, which is the duration of time expected by teachers. This will help them at circle time to sit quietly and wait their turn to talk.
- Use a kitchen timer and have your child work independently for 7 – 10 minutes with minimal adult interaction. Then, practice putting everything away before starting a new activity. This will help children transition from one center to another one at school.
- Help your child learn to group objects into meaningful sets: all the blue cars versus the red or green ones, all the black socks versus the white ones, or kitchen dish clothes versus bathroom clothes. Have him/her tell you why they are alike (similar) or different. Don't be surprised if their category is different than what you expected. If it is logical, praise him/her for being creative and show them other ways of grouping items.
- Setting the table helps a child understand one to one correspondence: each person must have one fork, spoon, knife, glass, plate, and napkin. Counting the objects before beginning the task helps a child realize that each time they place an item on the table it relates to an amount or specific number. If there are four members of the family, the child must count out four of each item and place them in a certain sequence on the table.
- Help your child separate from you by leaving him/her with grandparents, at nursery school, in the nursery at church, on a play day with a neighbor's child. This will help them understand that you will return to pick them up and that he/she can have fun without you.