



September 2024

Reminders for Our Parents

As the new school year begins, we'd like to remind all of our parents of a few policies which will help make Poko Loko a safe and happy environment for everyone:



1) When you arrive in the morning, please remember to sanitize your hands and sign in your child at the front desk.

2) Please send your child with clothes that are appropriate for the day's weather. Please also make sure that your child has a change of clothes in the cubby. Remember, no outdoor shoes are allowed in any of our classrooms so children should have socks, indoor shoes, or slippers.

3) When you depart in the evening, please remember to sanitize your hands and sign out your child at the front desk.

4) Please do not share the entry code to the building with anyone! This includes other people who may pick up your children such as grandparents or neighbors as well as your own children.

5) Never leave your car running unattended in our parking lot when you come into the building. It is illegal and creates a hazardous situation for everyone by inviting thieves who may not exercise caution around our children.

6) Do not bring any nut related products into the building to protect our children who have severe and possibly life threatening allergies.

7) Remember to update your personal information, i.e., phone numbers, work hours, address, etc. if anything changes so we can always quickly communicate with you if the need arises.

8) Remember to update your child's medical information, i.e., shot records, allergies, etc. and inform us of all illnesses as they might occur. This helps us keep all of our children healthy and makes all parents aware of any illnesses which might be going around.

Thank you for your assistance.



September Schedule

Sept. 2 - Happy Labor Day
Poko Loko is Closed

Sept. 6 - Bears Day (wear your Bears gear!)

Sept. 8 - Grandparents Day

Sept. 11 - Patriot Day

Sept. 12 - Nothin' Bundt Cakes sales at Poko Loko in the afternoon

Sept. 19 & 20 - Picture Day

Sept. 22 - 1st Day of Fall!



When You Thought I Wasn't Looking

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I thought it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a cake just for me, and I knew that little things are special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me goodnight, and I felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's alright to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked ... and wanted to say thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking.



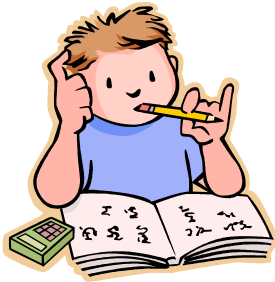


What Kids Really Learn in Preschool

By Barbara Solomon

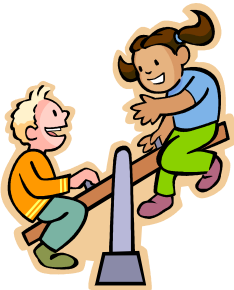
How to be a student. To a visitor, a preschool can seem chaotic, because children are free to choose from a roomful of activities, toys, and playmates. Yet underlying this easygoing atmosphere are many rules and routines designed to teach children how to conduct themselves in a classroom and be part of a group. Kids as young as 2 know where to put their finished art projects, how to line up to go outside, and where to sit when it's time for a snack, notes Beth Graue, Ph.D., a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, in Madison. They also learn that they must control their impulses. At storytime, for example, they can't wander away from the group or interrupt the teacher the way they might do when reading at home with Mommy.

How to make friends. Of course, many 3- and 4-year-olds have already had experience interacting with others in day care, on the playground, or via other activities. Yet preschool offers additional opportunities for learning how to forge friendships and settle differences without the help of a parent or caregiver.



"Preschoolers learn how to approach other children and be comfortable around them," says Lilian G. Katz, Ph.D., director of the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "They figure out how to start up a conversation by focusing on the other person -- by saying, 'What are you doing?' instead of 'I can build a bigger tower than that.'" This social savvy benefits kids as they get older and need to work on school projects in pairs and groups.

How to be independent. Parents automatically tend to help their 3- or 4-year-olds with the small tasks of everyday life, such as fastening buttons, brushing their hair, or carrying their show-and-tell treasure from the car to the classroom. But preschool teachers, who may need to get 12 or more kids quickly into their coats and out onto the playground, encourage students to take more responsibility. "Children learn how to put on their shoes, open their own juice boxes, and remember to wash their hands after going to the bathroom," Dr. Katz says. This early practice in self-care skills will help give your child confidence in other settings, such as at day camp or at a friend's house, where you're not around to intervene.



How to tell a story. Although experts believe that pre-schoolers should not be pushed to learn

to read, these young students can still develop a love of books. "Three- and 4-year-olds should feel that books open up the whole world to them," says Betty Farber, M.Ed., a former preschool teacher and editor of *The Parents' & Teachers' Guide to Helping Young Children Learn* (Preschool Publications, 1997).

Children in preschool have plenty of opportunities to hear stories as well as to tell them and act them out with their friends, she adds. Listening to stories helps them grasp the concept that a plot has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and it also motivates them to want to read on their own. "Children begin to realize that print is something very meaningful," Farber says.

How to ask for help. You can't have fun on the playground if your tummy hurts or there's sand in your sneakers but you're too timid to tell the teacher. Though it's not easy to elbow your way past other kids who are also clamoring for attention, preschoolers develop the confidence and inner strength to speak up. Research has shown that having caring, responsive relationships with their first teachers helps children form productive relationships with subsequent teachers and other adults. "Young children will approach new relationships with confidence if they've already had some positive experience in accepting authority from adults outside their family," Dr. Katz says.

How to cut and paste. Those scribbled drawings and gooey collages your preschooler brings home each week are more than expressions of his creativity. When children work with scissors, glue sticks, and crayons, they're developing the fine motor control that will help them form legible b's and d's in kindergarten and even take class notes in high school.

"This small-muscle development is critical during the preschool years," explains Sylvia Rimm, Ph.D., director of the Family Achievement Clinic at the Cleveland Clinic and author of *Raising Preschoolers* (Three Rivers Press, 1997). "Young girls tend to be more interested in arts and crafts than boys, but it's very important that all children spend time doing these activities," she says. "Otherwise, writing may always be a struggle for them."

How to build a block tower. Research has found that preschool block builders hone their spatial skills and gain hands-on math experience. Unfortunately, though preschool boys may not spend enough time at the art table, girls often neglect the block corner. "When children play with blocks and other 'manipulatives,' they learn to sort and classify," explains Diane Trister Dodge, a former preschool teacher and founder and president of Teaching Strategies Inc., a Washington, D.C. -- based training and publishing company that specializes in early-childhood education. "If they're building a tower and run out of long blocks, for example, they'll discover that they can use two short blocks instead." This experience gives kids a solid foundation for understanding division, fractions, and geometry.

How to recognize symbols, concepts, and rhymes. Though they may not be ready to read,

preschoolers are usually able to identify numbers and letters. Kids practice saying and writing the letters in their name, reciting simple number sentences, and even learning the letters in their classmates' and teachers' names. They generally develop a useful understanding of colors and shapes -- knowing, for example, that mixing two colors will create a third or recognizing that someone's hat is shaped like a triangle.

Learning nursery rhymes and songs also helps children academically. Kids who know how to rhyme will learn to read more easily, Dr. Rimm points out, and evidence suggests that music instruction at an early age can help children in math. Researchers at the University of California at Irvine found that preschoolers who participated in group singing and piano instruction outperformed their peers in tasks involving spatial reasoning, such as piecing together a puzzle.

How to hop, skip, and jump. Preschoolers usually play outside nearly every day, strengthening their muscles and developing their coordination. "Running, sliding, climbing, and playing with balls are all important ways in which children learn how to control their bodies, refine their large motor skills, and develop self-confidence," says Dodge.

Time spent on the playground also gives preschoolers opportunities for independent problem solving ("How do I wrap my legs around the fire pole to slide down?") and social interaction ("Want to build a castle with me in the sand-box?"). This free play is a very different experience from going to the park with a parent or caregiver, who will watch a child more closely, offer suggestions for navigating the equipment, and applaud every achievement.

How to investigate and explore. Preschoolers are natural scientists, and they benefit from having plenty of opportunities for hands-on, self-directed experimentation. In a study of various teaching methods, Rebecca Marcon, Ph.D., a professor of developmental psychology at the University of North Florida, in Jacksonville, compared play-centered classrooms, in which children were encouraged to choose activities and classroom materials on their own, with more academic preschool classrooms, in which the teachers tended to choose and lead all the class activities. "By fourth grade, the children who had been more autonomous had zoomed ahead of the others," Dr. Marcon says. "The students who had the teacher-directed preschool experience were used to being told what to do, and they were less prepared to do the kinds of independent projects that higher grades require."

The findings underscore much of what we know about the benefits of preschool, Dr. Marcon points out: "It may be hard for parents to understand how their children can be learning in an environment that seems unstructured, but the fact is that children learn best when teachers order the environment to provide kids with interesting materials and new ideas to explore."



Summer Fun

