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**Preschool Learning Activity: Stimulating Children's Minds**

**By Jennifer Houck**

It is important for those who work with preschoolers to choose a preschool learning activity

carefully. Teaching preschoolers is a rewarding experience and young children are like pliable putty in their preschool teacher's hands. Those who teach children, especially preschoolers, experience one of the finest joys that life has to offer. If you have ever watched a young child's eyes widen in amazement as they see a new creature emerge before their sight – as with a science-based preschool learning activity, then you understand the true rewards of teaching children.

Choosing the best preschool learning activity for young children will enhance their skills, prepare them for kindergarten, and help them develop important emergent skills. Some skills that are critical to early childhood development include:

· Language Arts/ Literacy · Mathematics · Science · Social Studies/ Character Building · Physical Education/Health

You should make sure that any preschool learning activity that you select will enhance the child's understanding and awareness of these core skills and developmental areas. Language skills are critical for developing an understanding of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and communicating. Some simple Language activities may include listening games, rhyming, and following oral directions.

Mathematics is essential for the early learner's awareness of numbers, spatial concepts, patterns, and how mathematics pertains to their daily environment. Mathematical preschool activities may include counting, estimating, reading books that focus on numbers, and using items such as toy cash registers and number based puzzles.

Science and Social Studies skills are essential for children to develop an understanding and awareness of the world around them. It is important to teach children how to draw conclusion, ask questions, and observe the world that they live in.

Teaching children the importance of health and physical fitness through play is not only fun, but it is also vital to develop their sense of self. Activities should promote safety, hygiene skills, and health

through proper nutrition.

Jennifer Houck is the owner of the online Parent Center at

<http://www.ilovebeingamom.com>

to where

you can find many more resources and arts/crafts to help in raising in your preschooler.

## **Is Your Child Ready For Preschool**

**By Jonathon Hardcastle**

Parents know that children do not always follow the experts when it comes to physical and intellectual development. As the closest observers of their individual child's temperament and abilities, parents are the best judges on whether a child is ready for an academic preschool program.

An academic preschool program differs from a daycare program in that it focuses on early learning skills, pre-reading readiness and linguistic development. While there is time for free play, preschool is a learning rather than care giving environment. In past times, preschool programs were designed for children who stayed home with a parent. Children attended preschool two or three mornings a week, spending the rest of the time at home. Today, because so many parents work, preschools have been restructured to full-day programs.

However, many children in the two to three year old age group may not be emotionally mature enough for a full-day academic experience. Younger children frequently get tired and upset after too much stimulation and many still need an afternoon nap. In this case, parents should seek a program that offers academic experiences in the morning and play time, naptime and other, less structured, activities for the rest of the day.

At three, the age most children begin preschool, children have developed the ability to speak in short sentences. At this age, adults can understand about three quarters of the words children say. A functional level of verbal ability can help a child more easily navigate preschool as he or she can ask for help, to use the toilet, or whatever else they may need.

Most schools require that children attending preschool be toilet trained. The consistent ability to use the bathroom during the day is an important part of preschool readiness. While teachers are accepting of accidents, they are teachers and not daycare providers and can't be expected to change diapers. Additionally, children should know how to pull down and pull up their undergarments and to wash and dry their own hands.

Children should also have mastered basic life skills before beginning preschool. Snacks are definitely served at preschool and often lunch is served as well. Your child should be able to manage finger foods and use a regular cup without a spout in order to manage preschool meals. Also, they should be

able to put on their own shoes and coat although teachers at this level fully expect to help with buttons and zippers.

Jonathon Hardcastle writes articles for

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