

## **How to Prepare My Child for Kindergarten**

### **Quick tips for parents of young children**

Many parents may ask themselves “When is it the best time to get my child ready for Kindergarten? It should be known that it is never too early to begin preparing our children for school. Try this: turn off the television and the radio. Hang up the phone, and give your child a big hug. Then do something with her, and talk about it while you work or play together.

You could read a book with her, fix a healthy snack, shop for groceries, pretend you are in a parade or take a walk along the street looking for ...who knows what! Repeat this every day – at least twice on those days when you aren’t working outside the home.

While you are doing these things, model the kind of good social behavior you would expect if you were spending time with a peer – talking calmly and allowing her to express her thoughts, sharing, showing self-control and encouraging positive behavior with positive feedback. You will have a great time and your child will be preparing for school in every moment.

Why does this work? Children are born learners, so what you are doing is giving your child a chance to exercise the curiosity she was born with by providing lots of different concrete experiences that are shared with others. The hugs and physical closeness are also important. Learning improves when children feel emotionally safe – that is, they feel comfortable with the others they are with, and don’t feel at great risk of embarrassment when they try something new.

Teachers will tell you it’s great to have kids in Kindergarten who know their ABCs, but what’s even more important to your child’s success is showing up at school curious and willing to share her knowledge. You are also helping her learn to interact successfully with others and manage basic personal tasks – even geniuses ought to know how to do that!

Reach your local Michigan 4C agency with your questions about young children by calling 1-866-4CHILDCARE during business hours from your home phone. Look for more child care tips on this web site or visit [www.mi4c.org](http://www.mi4c.org).

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