Looking forward to kindergarten at ISD 318

Parents, teachers, and health-care professionals know that our children need to be well-rounded, and that while paying attention to academics is important, we need to also foster social, physical, and emotional development. How can you best prepare your child for starting school?

Here are three recommendations for starting school:

Talking: From day one, take time to talk with your child. Whatever you are doing together, use your words to describe, explain, and answer the questions that will come with increasing frequency as your child gets older.

Learning: At this stage, children learn from whatever they are doing. Of course it is important that they are exposed to the ABCs and 123s, so find opportunities to identify letters and count whenever possible. Expose children to tying their shoes and zipping their jackets. Also, take advantage of the library, which has wonderful resources.

Sharing: Working together really is important in kindergarten, college, and beyond. An important first step to preparing for starting school is to practice sharing. Sharing encourages the use of good manners and lots of opportunity to say "please" and "thank you."

Help your child learn more about kindergarten

Wonderful books to read with your child about going to kindergarten:

- Off to Kindergarten by Tony Johnston
- Kindergarten Rocks by Katie Davis
- Llama, Llama Misses Mama by Ann Dewdney
- Countdown to Kindergarten by Alison McGhee

Activity ideas

As your preschooler is learning their letters, here is a fun activity you can do at home: Write all the capital letters in the alphabet (or a few depending what your child is ready for), and then write the same letters in lowercase form and cut them up individually.

Have your child "match" the lower case letters to the upper case letter by putting the individual letter on top of the capital letter. You can also say the sound of each letter!

Children First! events are free. To learn more visit www.getlearning.org or call 218-327-5730.