

Steps to School

Your Source for Kindergarten Readiness in Durham County

Steps to School—Health Issue

Welcome to the spring edition of the Steps to School newsletter. This is the second newsletter of Steps to School, which aims to help you prepare your child for kindergarten. Each issue will focus on a different part of early learning and include information, activities, events and resources. This issue focuses on health.



Live Healthy, Stay Healthy

Preparing for kindergarten is an exciting time, and one of the most important parts of getting your child ready for kindergarten is making sure they are healthy. It is important to instill healthy behaviors in your child early on, from proper hand washing and teeth brushing to regular well-child visits and immunizations, you will play a big role in keeping your child well. Remember, they learn not just from what you teach them, but what they see you do. It's important that you follow these healthy behaviors as well!

Steps to a Healthy Start

1. Kindergarten Health Assessment form. In order to begin kindergarten, your child will be required to have a completed Kindergarten Health Assessment (KHA) form on file. Parents will receive the KHA form at school registration and will be asked to return the form within 30 days, completed by your child's pediatrician. This form includes information such as medical conditions, current medications, vision, dental, hearing and developmental screenings as well as your child's immunization history. The KHA is a great tool for communication between you and your child's doctor.

2. Make sure your child's immunizations are up to date! This is an important part of the kindergarten registration process. Students must have the required immunizations to keep themselves and their peers safe. For more information on North Carolina's immunization requirements, visit www.immunizenc.com or check out the Durham Public Schools Kindergarten Registration page at www.dpsnc.net/kindergarten.

3. Inform your school about medication. If your child needs to take any kind of medication at school, it is important to let the school know. There is someone at each school who is trained to administer medication to students. They will need to know the type, dose and frequency for each medication.

4. Keep injury prevention in mind. Remember, in North Carolina all kindergarten-aged children should be riding in a booster seat in the back seat of the car. Make sure your smoke detectors are working and medications and household poisons are out of children's reach. Keep emergency numbers close to the phone and remind your child to wear a helmet when riding a bike, skateboarding or rollerblading.

Good Nutrition and Meals

Good nutrition has been linked to healthier children, lower childhood obesity rates and multiple benefits at school. Parents are encouraged to establish routines and general times for each meal. When your child gets up, offer a healthy and filling breakfast. Examples are oatmeal, eggs, waffles, bagels, yogurt, or whole grain cereal. Try to find out what time your child will be eating lunch at school. Set your lunch time as close to this time as possible. This way when school starts your child will be hungry when it's time for lunch.

Sleep Habits

An important part of getting ready for kindergarten is getting enough sleep. Generally, school-aged children should be in bed by 7 or 8 pm. Try moving their bedtime to earlier in the evening if they are sluggish or having a difficult time in the morning. Then map out what their "bedtime routine" will be and figure out how long the bedtime routine will take. Once you've established a set routine, those bedtime activities will send cues to your child's brain that it is time for sleep. Activities such as video games, watching TV, or roughhousing make it difficult for your child to calm down and fall asleep. Try to stop these activities at least an hour before bedtime.

H1N1 and the Flu

Everyday preventive actions:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (long enough for children to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.

For more information on the availability of seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccinations please contact the Durham County Health Dept. at 919-560-7882.

Healthy Reading

Take a trip to the library and look for wellness books.

Say Ahh!

by Sonja Fiedler

Germs are Not for Sharing

by Elizabeth Verdick

The Tooth Book

by Doctor Seuss

Does a Tiger Open Wide?

by Fred Ehrlich

February is National Children's Dental Health Month!

Activity Idea: Taking out the core, cut an apple into slices. Then, spread peanut butter on one side of each apple slice. Place small marshmallows on the peanut butter. Next, put another apple slice on top of the marshmallows, and your snack will look like a mouth. While making and eating this fun snack, talk to your child about the importance of brushing and taking care of your teeth!



Get Ready for Kindergarten

Upcoming Events:

Steps to School: Parent Night

February 25, 6:00-7:45 pm

DPS Staff Development Center

Kindergarten Welcome Session

March 9, 6:30-8 pm

DPS Staff Development Center

For more information on upcoming transition events, please contact Kate MacDonell at 919-560-9403 or visit the DPS Kindergarten website: www.dpsnc.net/kindergarten



Editors

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Kindergarten Registration

Registration for 2010-11 begins March 15. Register at the school your child will attend. Hours are 8 am until 4 pm.

Bring these documents to register: Social Security card, original birth certificate, immunization record, health assessment form, proof of residence.

You can obtain a copy of your original birth certificate at the Office of Vital Statistics 919-560-0493

For information on obtaining a Social Security card, please contact Social Security Administration 1-800-325-0778