

Steps to School

Your Source for Kindergarten Readiness in Durham County

Steps to School—Transitions

Welcome to the spring/summer edition of the Steps to School newsletter, a quarterly pre-k parent newsletter focusing on transitioning to kindergarten. Each issue focuses on a different area of early learning and includes information, activities, events and resources. This issue focuses on your preschooler's social and emotional development as he/she transitions into kindergarten.



What Do We Mean by “Transition to Kindergarten”?

The word transition refers to the process of change. Transitioning to kindergarten is one of the most significant changes a child will experience. This is a time that can be very stressful for a young child. They are leaving either the familiar environment of their pre-K classroom or their home to enter a new place. Your child will be expected to learn a new set of rules, adjust to a new peer group, interact with a new teacher, perhaps ride a bus for the first time, eat in a cafeteria, and the list goes on!

What Do We Mean by “Social and Emotional Development”?

Social and emotional development in young children has to do with how young children feel about themselves (such as confident, fearful, eager to learn, proud of their culture, afraid of being wrong), how they behave (such as constantly fighting, easily upset, able to deal with conflict), and how they relate to others, especially people who matter to them (for example, parents, teachers, and friends).

Ways Parents can Promote Positive Social and Emotional Development:

- Teach ways to communicate needs and desires in a socially appropriate way.
- Interact frequently with your child each day by talking and listening.
- Provide opportunities to play with other children and form relationships.
- Teach socially acceptable ways to disagree.
- Encourage values such as helpfulness, cooperation, sharing and concern for others.
- Demonstrate common expressions of courtesy and praise your child for using them (such as please and thank you).

Preparing for Kindergarten: This summer is the perfect opportunity to spend time with your child and to try new activities that will prepare and spark excitement for entering school.

- **Visit the school.** Attend an orientation at the school in the spring, play on a school playground or visit the school library over the summer. Durham Public Schools posts school open houses, back-to-school lists and other information on the “SmoothStart” Website during the summer. www.dpsnc.net/smoothstart
- **Practice “cafeteria style” eating** at a local restaurant and practice opening food packages. Also, allow your child to serve him or herself from bowls at home.
- **Adjust your child’s sleep schedule** several weeks before school begins — remember that a child needs about 10 hours of sleep each night.
- **Help your child choose a school bag** and label it with his or her name. Also choose a place in your home to put things each night to take to school each day.
- **Talk about what will be familiar at kindergarten** as well as what will be new.
- **Add a family photo** to your child’s book bag.
- **Be positive** — your child takes cues from you.

Books about Kindergarten

Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!
by Nancy Carlson

Tom Goes to Kindergarten
by Margaret Wild

When You Go to Kindergarten
by James Howe

Welcome To Kindergarten
by Anne Rockwell

Additional Resources;

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) is focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5.

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>



Activity: Routine Book

In this fun and creative activity, you can help your child read one of his/her own typical days in a personal book.

What You Need:

- 10 pieces of cardstock paper
- Photograph of your child
- Glue Stick
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- Three-hole punch and three clip-on "rings"

What to Do:

1. Working with your child, start with a cover. Write a title in big block letters, such as "My Regular Day." Have your child glue his/her photograph onto the middle of the page and write his/her name at the bottom.
2. Next, separate the nine pieces of paper so you have three sets of three pages. The first three pages are for "morning" activities, the second for "afternoon" and the third for "evening."
3. Write in clear block letters across the bottom of each page. Keep it simple and aim for repetition in words because "predictable" texts are a key aspect of early reading instruction. Be sure that you have only one sentence per page. Here are some suggestions:
 - *In the morning, I eat breakfast.*
 - *In the afternoon, I come home from school.*
 - *In the evening, I read/play/take a bath.*
4. Above each sentence, have your child draw him or herself doing that action.
5. Have your child put each page in the correct order. Use the three-hole punch in the margin of the pages, and bind the book with the three clip-on rings.
6. You can read it to your children at first, but as soon as they are ready, invite them to read to you. Go through it nightly as a reassuring message that there's lots of change in kindergarten, but a lot of things stay the same.



Editors

The Steps to School Newsletter is a joint publication of Durham's Partnership for Children 919-403-6960 (www.dpfc.net) and Durham Public Schools 919-560-2000 (www.dpsnc.net/kindergarten), part of a collaborative Transition to Kindergarten Initiative.