

The Herald-Sun SCHOOLS AND MORE

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SECTION D
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2009

Optimizing a child's readiness for school

BY MARSHA BASLOE
Durham Partnership for Children

Even though your family may not be thinking about kindergarten, it's never too early to begin supporting your child's school readiness beginning now through the summer months to help transition your child from pre-K or home to kindergarten.

Oftentimes, parents ask what is required to be "ready" for kindergarten. For typically developing children, parents and caregivers often are more focused on preschoolers' ability to recognize colors, alphabet characters, numbers and shapes than social skills such as group play, following directions and actively participating in class activities. Both areas, known as domains of learning, are important basic competencies that enable children to start on the right track.

Knowing that school readiness is a communitywide endeavor, here are some tips to help families of preschoolers begin to prepare for school:

Set consistent routines and daily activities

Licensed child-care programs follow daily routines. If your child is in regulated care, work with his or her teacher to find out more information for you to talk about the day's activities at home with your child and try to follow a similar routine on the weekends. If your child is cared for at home, make sure your child is spending time every day reading, playing outside, socializing with other children and expressing himself or herself verbally. Make time have meaning so that your child has an understanding of general times of day, especially mornings, afternoons and evenings and can associate these times with activities, such as breakfast and bedtime.

Read to your child every day

Spend time reading to your child every day. Reading and discussing stories with your child instills a lifelong love of books and helps your young child develop language skills that will turn them into confident readers when they enter school. Make trips to the library and check out books about going to kindergarten.

Practice independence

Have your child practice brushing teeth, buttoning shirts, pants, coats and zipping up zippers. Encourage your child's independence by having him or her help you with daily activities, such as packing lunches or preparing meals. Help your child learn to listen by giving two- or three-part directions to follow. For example, brush your teeth, put on your pajamas and pick out a story to read.

Support new exposures to learning

Limit television and find new "hands-on" environments for learning. Take a nature walk along the Eno River. Visit the

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BEST BET 'SAMPLING

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2010. Today's highlights in history:

1836: The siege of the Alamo began in San Antonio, Texas.

1945: During World War II, U.S. Marines on Iwo Jima captured Mount Suribachi, where they raised the American flag twice. (The second flag-raising was captured in the iconic photograph taken by Joe Rosenthal.)

1954: The first mass inoculation of children against polio with the Salk vaccine began in Pittsburgh.

BIRTHDAYS

Actor Peter Fonda is 70. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Fred Biletnikoff is 67. Author John Sandford is 66. Actress Patricia Richardson is 59. Rock musician Brad Whitford (Aerosmith) is 58. Singer Howard Jones is 55. Rock musician Michael Wilton (Queensryche) is 48. Country singer Dusty Drake is 46. Actress Kristin Davis is 45. Tennis player Helena Sukova is 45. Actor Marc Price is 42. Rock musician Jeff Beres (Sister Hazel) is 39. Country singer Steve Holy is 38. Rock musician Lasse (loss) Johansson (The Cardigans) is 37. Actress Emily Blunt is 27. Actor Aziz Ansari is 27. Actress Dakota Fanning is 16.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

'Clash' of 3-D movies to hit underprepared cinemas



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

Disney's "Alice in Wonderland," starring Johnny Depp as The Mad Hatter, is one of several 3-D movies set to be released in the spring. The surge in 3-D movie production is expected to cause problems for many movie theaters that are not prepared for multiple 3-D movies.

LOS ANGELES — Movies in 3-D are becoming such big moneymakers that Hollywood studios are cramming them into the nation's theaters, even though there aren't enough screens available to give each film its fullest possible run.

That will mean an unprecedented number of 3-D movies for film fans to choose from this spring, and smaller profits for Hollywood studios.

The pileup was created in part because studios want to capture some of the excitement surrounding "Avatar," the James Cameron epic released in December. In addition to the novelty experience that might drive more people to see a 3-D movie, tickets to 3-D movies also cost a few dollars more.

Around the time "Avatar" came out, Warner Bros. decided to convert a remake of "Clash of the Titans" from 2-D to 3-D.

That will be the third 3-D movie to hit the market in a short span. DreamWorks Animation SKG Inc.'s "How to Train Your Dragon" comes out a week earlier, and The Walt Disney Co.'s "Alice in Wonderland" hits theaters March 5.

But a limited number of theaters can show these movies in 3-D, because not all theater owners have bought new digital projectors and undertaken other upgrades necessary to show movies in the format. About 3,900 to 4,000 3-D-ready screens are expected to be available in the U.S. and Canada by the end of March.

'Heroes' actor Adrian Pasdar charged with DUI

From wire reports

LOS ANGELES — Court records show actor Adrian Pasdar has been charged with drunken driving, and his arraignment is scheduled for

later this week.

The 44-year-old actor was arrested Jan. 27 after authorities say they spotted him speeding and veering over two lanes of traffic on a Los Angeles freeway.

He was charged with one count of driving under the influence on Friday. City attorney spokesman

Frank Mateljan says Pasdar's arraignment is scheduled for Wednesday.

The actor's manager, Will Flaherty, declined comment.

Pasdar plays Nathan Petrelli on NBC's "Heroes." He's married to Dixie Chicks singer Natalie Maines.



PASDAR

SCHOOLS AND MORE

SCHOOL

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Museum of Life and Sciences. Even routine trips to the car wash, grocery store and playground can be learning labs if you

talk about the sights and sounds with your child. These experiences are opportunities to introduce new words and talk about what is happening in our community.

By following some of these easy tips, you can help support your child's

cognitive, physical, emotional and social development.

For the past 15 years, Durham's Partnership for Children has worked to make sure its investments in Durham's early childhood system help young children and their fami-

lies in a variety of ways. Partnership programs range from enhancing the quality of child care programs to enabling child care teachers to access professional development and continuing education to supporting families with consulta-

tion services for children with special needs and parenting classes for young children with challenging behaviors. The partnership is working to ensure families can access high-quality early learning and understand the importance of sup-

porting their children's healthy development.

Marsha Basloe is the executive director of Durham's Partnership for Children. She can be reached at marsha@dpfc.net. This is the eighth of 12 articles published in Schools and More on the last Tuesday of each month.