

What Will Your Child Gain by Attending Preschool?

Preschool Prepares Children for Kindergarten

Preschool provides a foundation for learning both socially and academically that will help your child succeed in elementary school.

Preschool Promotes Social and Emotional Development

Young children learn social skills and emotional self-control in "real time." Three- and 4-year-olds learn through their experiences and good teachers make time for those "teachable moments" when they can help children learn to manage frustrations or anger. They don't automatically step in to resolve children's conflicts for them; they have a well-honed sense of when to let children work out their own problems and when to intervene.

The Preschool Environment is Structured

A structured environment helps young children learn to make friends and play well with others. The structure of a high-quality preschool classroom is largely invisible to children. Classroom space is organized to encourage social interaction, and minimize congestion and conflicts.

Children Get to Make Choices

Children have several choices of activities; a child who is wandering aimlessly is encouraged to choose one that interests him. Teachers are alert to a child who can't figure out how to enter other children's play and may offer him suggestions on ways to join the group.

Children Learn to Take Care of Themselves and Others

In a high-quality preschool program, children are introduced to the behaviors required to function successfully in a kindergarten classroom. For example, during group activities such as "circle time," children learn to focus attention on the teacher, listen while others are speaking, and wait their turn to talk.

Preschool Promotes Language and Cognitive Skills

Preschool-age children's language skills are nurtured in a "language-rich" environment. Between the ages of 3 and 5, a child's vocabulary grows from 900 to 2,500 words, and her sentences become longer and more complex. Children have many opportunities to sing, talk about favorite read-aloud books, and act out stories.

Preschool Teachers Nurture a Child's Curiosity

Preschool-age children have active imaginations and learn through make-believe play..

The imaginary play area in a high-quality preschool is well-stocked with costumes, "props," and child-size household items such as stoves, sinks and cupboards. It's often in this activity area that preschool-age children progress steadily from solitary play, to one-on-one play, to complicated group play.

Preschool Activities Boost Pre-Math and Literacy Skills

Young children show growing interest in pre-math and pre-literacy skills. To sustain children's excitement and motivation for learning, high-quality preschool and child care programs introduce early literacy and math skills not as isolated exercises, but in the context of activities that are interesting and meaningful to children.

Preschool Provides Opportunities to Develop Motor Skills

Physical coordination improves, allowing the child to explore her environment — and to challenge herself-in new ways. High-quality preschool programs provide several opportunities daily for children to run, climb, and play active games. Activities are offered to help children develop fine motor skills, such as threading beads or cutting with scissors. And children are challenged through a variety of activities to build their hand-eye coordination and balance.

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