

Dear Preschool families,

We all really miss spending our days with your preschoolers! The best thing is that you have preschoolers and children this age learn best through PLAY!! A variety of play experiences provide the building blocks for all future learning. There are a lot of suggestions going around on social media, but it can be a lot to sift through to find out what is age-appropriate so I thought I'd highlight some tips here. Please use your discretion. Your child is the best barometer. If it doesn't hold their interest right now, they probably won't learn from doing it. Learning shouldn't be a battle.

- **Routine** - Children thrive on routine. When they know what to expect, they feel in control and their behavior is better. Some children “go with the flow” better than others. If your child thrives on routine, try creating a Visual Schedule (picture schedule). That can really help with transitions. At preschool, we also find warnings help (“5 more minutes until we clean up”).

- **Independence** – We all have plenty of time on our hands these days so it's a great time to allow your child to do things independently. Independence is a great school-readiness skill! Your confidence and encouragement are important. It's a great opportunity to encourage them to help around the house! Things your child can do alone:
 - Get dressed
 - Put on jacket (try the preschool flip)
 - Put on shoes
 - Go potty
 - Wash hands
 - Put away toys
 - Put away silverware
 - Put away clean clothes

- **Play** – As I mentioned, preschoolers learn best through Play!
 - Go outside! - Bundle up and go out for some fresh air! You can fill a lot of time with sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, hula hoops, balls, even a bucket of water and paintbrushes, dig in the garden
 - Build – Legos, blocks, cardboard boxes
 - Pretend – Dolls, action figures, stuffed animals, trains, cars, dress-up clothes (even a cape made from a dish towel can transform play)
 - Playdough or Clay – make letter and number shapes, animals, buildings, etc.
 - Water – measuring, pouring, etc.
 - Draw/Write - Give your child a purpose to encourage drawing/writing
 - Provide a variety of materials – pencils, washable markers, crayons, paint, etc.
 - Note to grandparents
 - Create own books (you can fold up scrap paper of any size/color/type)
 - Pretend you have a restaurant – take orders
 - Use your imagination

- **Circle Time** - This preschool teacher is doing a live circle time at 11am each weekday. I watched on Tuesday and it was very fun. The songs won't be the same ones your child knows but it's always fun to learn new ones and then you can have them teach you some of ours!
<https://www.facebook.com/PlayToLearnPS/>

- **Story Time** – Kids love to hear the same stories read to them over and over, but if you need a break from reading, here are a couple things to try:
 - Astronauts read picture books to children from space: https://www.scarymommy.com/astronauts-story-time-in-space-kids-books/?fbclid=IwAR0m-PupluKW7aev4IlqgTBM9RSnkDHRCWd-lyWWxbUnnEqmZ6_mIsYb5wQ
 - Josh Gad (kids will recognize Olaf’s voice anywhere!) reads a story a night on his Twitter feed: https://chipandco.com/actor-josh-gad-is-reading-books-to-kids-online-every-night-during-coronavirus-quarantines-383789/?fbclid=IwAR0Tyg_FoPjGV6KDO7EPYybwuJ6Rxcb1tuYjx3srYevzs1wCO8Z336G5Gq4

- **Screen Time** - Since we know children learn best through play, it’s good to limit the amount of time they are on screens and make sure the time they are on screens is mostly valuable. Sometimes turning on a favorite show is valuable for the grown-up’s sanity, I remember, but you already know what those shows are. Here are some other resources:
 - Our preschool subscribes to the Scholastic Magazine “My Big World” for our 4-year-olds. You can check out the issues we are missing at www.scholastic.com/mybigworld. The access code is PHDKZ3X. Your child can read through the issue, watch a video, and play a little game.
 - Learn all about geography and fascinating animals! - www.kids.nationalgeographic.com
 - Hang out with your favorite characters all while learning! – www.pbskids.org

I hope some of these ideas help you out. I’ll continue to share ideas as I come upon them.

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