



A Newsletter for Parents of Young Children

FALL 2014

The Parent Line



Off to School... Preparing Your Child for a Smooth Transition

The new school year will be a great time for your child, making new friends and learning new concepts. But what if your child has never been to school before? What can you and your child expect? Each child is different and even if you have sent one off to school successfully with no crying what if this time is different?

Here are some tips that teachers recommend in preparing your child and yourself to head off to school.

- **SET UP A TOUR:** If the school can accommodate a tour, bring your child to see the campus. Visit the playground, the classroom and meet the teachers if possible.
- **PRACTICE SEPARATING FROM YOUR CHILD:** Leave your child with others for short periods of time. This will reinforce that you will return and help reduce anxiety.
- **BACK PACK & LUNCH BOX:** Have your child help you pick out a backpack and lunch box if you will be providing home lunch. If they will be staying all day and

having a rest time send a favorite blanket. Make sure to label all items as they may get misplaced.

- **FOCUS ON YOUR CHILD:** Make the whole experience as fun as possible. Give your child your full attention on the way to school. Phone calls can wait. Tell her stories about when you were a little girl and how much you liked school. Sing songs. Try a spin-off version of "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands." Make it, "If you're excited to go to school, clap your hands!" Be excited, smile a lot, and be happy for her.
- **COMMUNICATE:** Tell your child it is okay to be afraid and that there are always adults to help them and they can ask for help anytime.

Promise your child that you will pick him/her up in a few hours or after a certain activity at school—like when the teacher sings a certain song or reads the last book of the day.

- **DON'T LINGER:** When it's time for drop-off, keep your goodbyes short, sweet and simple. Give her a quick hug, tell her how much you love her, and leave her in the hands of the capable teacher. Even if she's crying hysterically, she will likely only cry for a few minutes once you're out of sight. But if you linger, the crying will probably last longer.

Fall Art Activity

ACTIVITIES THAT TEACH GRATITUDE

Thanksgiving is the perfect time of the year to help children verbalize what they are thankful for and to teach them about gratitude. You can use stories, art or simple projects to help them develop a sense of caring for others. As your young child moves from a world of “me” to a more interactive style of play and learning, jump on the opportunity to teach them about being thankful.

- **PICTURE COLLAGE:** Use magazines to cut out pictures of what your child is thankful for. Glue them to a piece of construction paper and then write down in their words what they are thankful for.
- **SOCKS OF LOVE:** Fill one sock with necessities (toothbrush, soap...), put the other sock in too and donate socks of love to homeless shelters and such.
- **SERVICE ACTIVITY:** Choose a day to serve each other inside your own home. Take out the trash for your husband, encourage your children to pick up their sibling’s toys, and show appreciation for one another.

A Parent Asks

Q: Recently, we’ve noticed our son looking curiously at our bodies. Is this normal for a two-year-old? As parents, we want to address these concerns but sometimes it can be embarrassing and difficult to know what is age appropriate. Do you also have any talking tips or supports?

A: Yes. It is quite normal for both boys and girls to be interested in parents’ bodies. A toddler’s curiosity about everything is intense. Interest about physical and sexual development is no exception. As your child gets older, he will start to ask questions. Answer these questions honestly and simply. At first you may feel surprised and uncomfortable with these questions. But with practice both you and your child will be able to handle these questions in a more relaxed manner. Don’t be surprised if he asks the same questions over and over. This is the way children learn about everything. The Sex Abuse Treatment center has a very helpful workbook that may be a great starting point.

Special Days to Remember

October is Infant Safe Sleep Month

- September 2: Labor Day
- September 8: Grandparent’s Day
- October 31: Halloween
- November 11: Veteran’s Day
- November 27: Thanksgiving Day

SUGGESTED READING

From Head to Toe
by Eric Carle

It’s Time for Preschool
by Esme Peji Codell

Wow! School!
by Robert Neubecker

Starting School
by Caryn Jenner,
Arthur Robins



Spotlight on Safety:

Autumn holidays like Halloween and Harvest Day are fun times for children of all ages, who can dress up in costumes, enjoy parties, enjoy fall fruits and vegetables, and eat yummy treats. These celebrations also provide a chance to give out healthy snacks, get physical activity, and focus on safety.

- H...** Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating
- A...** Always walk with your child(ren)
- L...** Look both ways before crossing the street
- L...** Limit the amount of candy your child eats each day
- O...** Only allow your child to eat commercially wrapped candy
- W...** Wear reflective gear like tape or glow stick necklaces for safety
- E...** Examine the candy for choking hazards and tampering
- E...** Explain to children they should go only to homes where the residents are known and have outside lights on as a sign of welcome
- N...** Never allow your child to walk in the street

Kindergarten Enrollment Changes

DID YOU KNOW...

Starting August 2014, a child must be 5 on or before July 31 to enter kindergarten. The change is a result of Act 183 of 2010 and Act 178 of 2012 (Session Laws of Hawai’i). If your child will be attending preschool due to missing the birthday enrollment date you may be eligible for financial assistance.

Resources for interested income-eligible families:

Department of Human Services: <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/child-care-program/ccch-subsidies/>

PATCH: <http://patchhawaii.org/families>

A Happy Start...: For more info for preparing for kindergarten contact Hawai’i Department of Health.