Helping pre-schoolers prepare to learn

Lifelong learning habits are formed long before a child enters school. When an eagerness to learn is instilled at an early age, the school years can be a joyful and successful experience. Plus, the self-esteem that goes along with learning something new is unparalleled. Consider these tips on how to help your child enter school with a desire to learn:



Read with your child every day. Even reading for a few minutes does wonders for building your child's vocabulary and reading ability. When the story is familiar, ask your child what happens next to exercise memory skills.

Let your child see you read. Show your child that reading is an important part of your daily routine. Keep newspapers, books and magazines around the house.

Work numbers into your child's daily routine. Introduce your child to math and make it fun. Have your child count out silverware, count out groceries at the store or help with measurements in a recipe.

Encourage creative thinking. Keep pencils, paper and crayons handy so your children can write down or draw a picture of their thoughts.

Help your child break big jobs down into small tasks. Whether it's getting dressed, putting away toys or doing homework, your child will enjoy a great sense of accomplishment when he or she completes a big assignment. Provide a little guidance on how to get started and how to break the task into manageable steps.

Introduce your child to cultural activities. Does the museum have a dinosaur exhibit? Is there a children's play in town? Take your child to a historical landmark in your area. Cultural outings tailored to a child's interests can spark a desire to learn more.

Show your child that you're always learning, too. Children learn by example. Enthusiastically share new things you've learned. Discuss current events and their relevance to your family. Be your child's strongest lifelong learning advocate.

Although it's easy to become distracted by the excitement of your child's first day of school, encouraging effective learning is important. For additional advice and resources to foster learning at home, speak to your child's teachers and/or principal.