

# Home Is Your Child's First School

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Since children start learning the moment they are born, you are their first teachers and your home is their first school. Following are some simple ways you can make the most of the time they have with you at home. Think of these tips as building blocks to help your child develop the skills and attitudes they need for a happy childhood today and for a successful and enjoyable educational journey in the years to come.



- **Love, Value, and Acceptance**

Show your children that you love them through your words and actions. Allow them to participate in decisions and chores to help them feel that they are important members of the family. Celebrate the unique interests and abilities of your children while you help them learn how to share, take turns, follow instructions, and cooperate with others. Have FUN with your children!

- **Health and Fitness**

Good nutrition, outdoor play, sufficient sleep, and daily routines that engage their growing muscles are essential to helping children develop strong bodies and minds. Make time in your day to play with balls, dance, take walks, and enjoy the many ways we can move our bodies. Restrict sweet treats and non-nutritious drinks, limit screen-time (televisions, computers, video games, and cell phones!), and don't be afraid to say no. Children learn by your example, so provide lots of opportunities for them to engage with you in healthy interactions and fun activities.

- **Talking and Listening**

Children who have lots of opportunities to listen to and talk with others develop good speech, rich vocabularies, and the ability to focus on what someone else is saying. Good talking and listening are the most important skills for learning to read and write, and they can be practiced anywhere, anytime, and without any extra cost!



- **Books, Reading, and Story Telling Every Day**

Make reading books and telling stories a natural part of your child's everyday experiences. While waiting for an appointment, riding in the car, getting ready for bed, waiting for meals, or whenever there is down time, encourage your child to look through books, listen to you or another person read a story, or tell a story about some recent event or experience. Visit your local library on a regular basis and be a good reading role model.

- **SMARt: Science, Math, Art, and Technology**

A child's world is filled with opportunities to begin learning important concepts in science and math. Through art activities, cooking, daily play, and taking time to observe the world around them, children can learn about colors, shapes, counting, patterns, seasonal changes, tools, and how our world works. Using their abilities to hear, see, smell, touch, taste, and imagine can help children learn about themselves and the world. Keeping growth charts, caring for plants, building with blocks, exploring dramatic and artistic expression, and allowing imaginations to soar are all important activities that support your child's learning and growth.

