

The Knowledge House Guide to:

HOMESCHOOLING PRESCHOOLERS

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"Proceed slowly and steadily. Don't rush. It will come. When you plant a seed and nurture it with food, water, and sunshine, you don't see it for a while. But the roots are growing, and eventually it will burst through the soil and you will see a beautiful blossom! And so it is with a student!" ~*Shinichi Suzuki*

You don't have to be an expert in early childhood education to know that children learn best in an environment of safety and security, surrounded by people who love and care about them. This means that your home is the perfect place for learning! There are many things that you can do to create an atmosphere of learning in your home and within your family. The most important thing is to develop an awareness of the learning opportunities that present themselves each and every day.

Parents have a wonderful opportunity to teach their children at home from the day they are born. The toddler and preschool years are an especially fun time to homeschool. That's when children are the most self-motivated and eager to learn about anything that comes their way. Homeschooling a preschooler doesn't require any formal instruction. You can simply delight in being with your child and participating in his or her discoveries.

Anyone who observes young children will see that they are constantly learning. They are naturally inquisitive and curious about everything, and they are intensely interested in exploring the world around them. All you have to do is spend plenty of time with them and give them lots of love, and the learning will automatically occur.

Homeschooling a preschooler is actually a lot like unschooling. Unschooling is a form of homeschooling in which the learning process is child-led, giving them complete freedom to choose what they learn, when they learn and how they learn. Unschooling seems to be a lifelong continuation of the more casual style of preschool education, in which children simply learn as they go, where school and life are completely integrated.

There are plenty of fun and informal learning experiences that you can do with your preschooler. Read books. Recite poems. Sing songs. Play games. Draw and color. Do puzzles. Make crafts. Go on nature walks. Visit zoos and museums. Name and count everything in sight. Bake cookies. Plant a garden. Practice sorting and matching colors and textures in the laundry. Say the names of trees and other objects as you walk down the street. Ask children to look for specific letters, numbers, shapes or colors on signs and packages at the grocery store.

You can get some basic phonics and math workbooks and/or educational computer software. However, the best learning activity is reading books together. Go to the library regularly and check out lots of books, both fiction and nonfiction. Read to your child often, even if it's reading the same book over and over again. This will develop their ear for phonics and the rhythm of the language, as well as their listening, sequencing, and comprehension skills.

Toddlers and preschoolers like to participate in whatever the rest of the family is doing. Ask them to help you around the house. If you have older children as well as younger ones, let the younger children color or do some other quiet activity while you teach the older ones. You will be surprised at the things they will pick up just by being in the same room. But do allow them to go and play when their attention span is gone.

Since preschoolers are so full of wonder and curiosity, you can utilize this learning time to its full advantage. When they ask questions like "Why is the sky blue?" don't just shrug and guess at the answer. Look in an encyclopedia or log onto the internet and find out the real answer as soon as possible after they asked it. This introduces them to the concept of looking up information and researching for facts. After all, knowledge isn't so much what you know, but rather knowing how to find it out.

Finally, relax...there's no need to hurry and no need to worry - there are no educational emergencies when it comes to preschooling at home! The home provides a convenient, integrated learning environment. Every day is another opportunity to instill a love for learning that will last a lifetime. Just go with the flow. By starting early and proceeding gradually, eventually you will find that you have covered everything they need to know.

Preschool Homeschool Resources

Books

Preschool ABC series, by Rod & Staff Publishers. (Adventures with Books, Bible Pictures to Color, Counting with Numbers, Do it Carefully, Everywhere We Go, and Finding the Answers.)

Comprehensive Curriculum of Basic Skills: Preschool, by American Education Publishing Company. (A complete basic skills workbook with carefully structured lessons, sequentially organized so the student can master each skill in the order of importance.)

Get Ready to Learn, by Nancy Champion Chupp. (This is a step-by-step learning program for pre-kindergarten children. The book contains 11 weeks of easy-to-implement activities using typical household items to teach your child a solid base of skills.)

Learning at Home: Preschool and Kindergarten, by Ann Ward. (A Christian parents' guide complete with 36 weeks of lesson plans using the library as a resource. Includes a scope and sequence; developmental profiles; sample schedules; recommended resources; and basic equipment needed.)

Teaching Your Child Concentration: a Playskool Guide, by Lee Hausner and Jeremy Schlosberg. (Teach your child the essential skills of concentration with simple, enjoyable games and activities that you can play anywhere, even in the car, using common household objects.)

Teach Your Children Well: A First Grade Teacher's Guide for Parents, by Jay Davidson. (The author encourages parents to take an active role in their children's education. You will see how easy it is to include learning experiences as part of your everyday family life, build a strong foundation early in your child's education, connect your child's learning to all areas of school curriculum, and mold your child's attitude to become a lifelong learner.)

Teaching Preschoolers: First Steps Toward Faith, by Thomas Sanders and Mary Ann Bradberry. (This book is designed to help teachers understand how preschoolers learn, what teaching methods are best, and the importance of laying strong spiritual foundations in the lives of preschoolers.)

Software

Jumpstart Toddlers • Jumpstart Preschool • Jumpstart PreK • Jumpstart Kindergarten
Elmo's Preschool Deluxe • Fisher Price Ready for Preschool • Fisher Price Ready for School
Reader Rabbit series • Scholastic's I Spy series

Websites

www.knowledgehouse.info/articles_preschool.html (Preschool skills, activities, and resources.)

www.preschoolathome.com (Preschool at Home.)

www.preschoolingathome.msen.org (Preschooling at Home.)

www.geocities.com/Heartland/Forest/2468 (Homeschooling for Preschool, with skills lists.)

www.coreknowledge.org/CKproto2/Preschool/PreKGlance.htm (Preschool Scope and Sequence.)

www.coreknowledge.org/CKproto2/Preschool/othermaterials.htm (Preschool materials and supplies.)

www.coreknowledge.org/CKproto2/resrcs/lessons/Prek.htm (Preschool Lesson plans.)

www.suite101.com/links.cfm/homeschooling_preschool (Homeschooling Preschool and Primary.)

<http://preschoolerstoday.com/resources> (Preschoolers Today.)

www.preschoolpower.com/Pages/Links.htm (Preschool Power.)

www.preschooleducation.com (Preschool Education.)

www.angelfire.com/mo/sasschool/preschoolers.html (Activity Ideas for Preschoolers.)