

PRESCHOOL PRESS



A Publication of the Anchorage School District STeP Center and the Early Childhood and Elementary Special Education Department

April, 2006:
Volume 3, Issue 7

In This Issue. . .

In this issue of *Preschool Press* you will find articles for parents of preschool children on the following topics:

* Frequently Asked Questions: Kindergarten

* TV & Your Preschooler

* Parenting Tips for Preschoolers with Attention Difficulties

* Boardmaker for Parents

* Parent-Teacher Institute

About The *Preschool Press*

This publication is designed for preschool families in the Anchorage School District. It is mailed at the end of each month. Email subscriptions are also sent out so if you wish to receive this mailing, contact:

loutrel_barbara@asdk12.org or call 742-3868.

Past Copies of the *Preschool Press* can be found on www.asdk12.org/dept/step

Frequently Asked Questions: Kindergarten

Question: Will my child still ride a bus to school?

Answer: Many children who enter kindergarten will be in walking distance of their neighborhood school. Children who live within 1.5 miles from school ride the regular education bus. The bus stops at various locations in the neighborhood, but not in front of individual houses. Children will walk to and from the bus stop. In some cases, the district has identified hazardous routes, and a regular education bus may be provided in neighborhoods where the walking route has been determined as hazardous by the school district. Some children have physical, cognitive, or emotional problems that prohibit them from walking to school or riding the regular education bus.

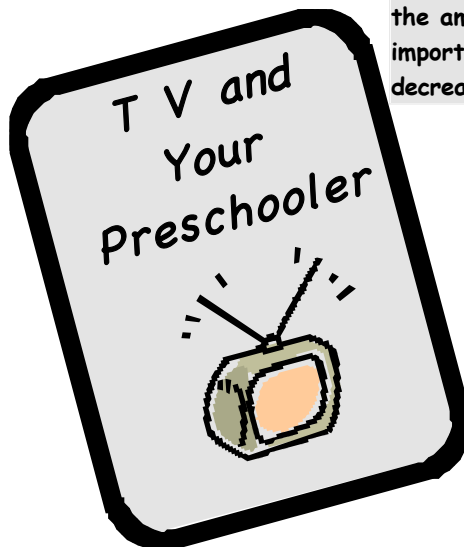
In these cases, the child's IEP team (teacher and related services staff) will document the problem that requires special education busing on the child's IEP (Individual Educational Plan) and then a special education bus will be provided.

If your child will be walking to a regular education bus stop, or to and from school, you will want to spend some time with them this spring and summer teaching them the way to school and about traffic safety. You may want to walk with them the first couple of days. You might even consider getting together with your neighbors and arrange for other children to go to and from school with your child.



Why and to what extent should parents control their children's TV watching?

There is certainly nothing inherently wrong with TV. The problem is how much television a child watches and what effect it has on his/her life. Research has shown that as the amount of time spent watching TV goes up, the amount of time devoted not only to homework and study but other important aspects of life such as social development and physical activities decreases.



Here are some basics....

TV can be a positive family interaction:

1 Try to select shows that are appropriate in content and for the age level. If possible when your child is watching the TV program, try to watch it with him/her. Preschoolers seem to enjoy having their parents on hand to laugh with them and occasionally to explain what is going on. Afterwards lively discussions can result. "Was that real or make-believe?" "Do people really act like that?" It can also be a great opportunity to expand language concepts and vocabulary.

What if there is nothing suitable for my child to watch?

2 Parents can demonstrate while the child is still very young that TV is a medium to be used selectively. They can quite literally point children in the direction of informative, educational programs. There are some remarkable things for a preschooler to see and enjoy on television, and parents can impart the wonders of it while discouraging undesirable programs. If there is nothing available you should offer other choices for activities. If other family members are watching programs that are inappropriate for the preschooler, be firm and give your youngster other activities. Or if you are able to postpone watching the show by taping it, you can watch it later when your preschooler has gone to bed at night. Remember, you can always turn the TV off.

I work all day and when I get home I need a break.

3 Many preschoolers just want to be with you and have your attention when you get home from work. This can be trying, and the temptation is to say, "Go watch TV". What can you replace TV with? Perhaps you can have your preschooler in the kitchen while you are preparing dinner. Your child could be doing an independent activity such as washing the carrots or coloring a picture. If you are reading the paper, tell your child to play on the floor with some toys or look at a picture book. Just being in the same room may be enough. Or you may have an appropriate videotape that your child can watch.

Parenting Tips for Preschoolers with Attention Difficulties

Preschool children with attention difficulties may be difficult to parent. They may have trouble understanding important directions. This can be a challenge to adults. You may need to change your home life a bit to help your child.

The next two editions of *Preschool Press* will be offering tips for dealing with attention difficulties. The first 4 tips are presented in this edition:

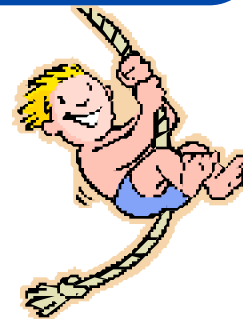
- Organize your schedule at home
- Set up house rules
- Be positive
- Make sure your directions are understood
- Be consistent
- Make sure someone watches your child
- Watch your child around his/her friends
- Help with school activities
- Focus on effort

Set up house rules. Make the rules of behavior for the family simple, clear and short. Rules should be explained clearly. It's important to explain what will happen when the rules are obeyed and when they are broken. The punishment for breaking rules should be fair, quick and consistent.

Make sure your directions are understood. First, get your child's attention. Look directly into his or her eyes. Then tell your child in a clear, calm voice specifically just what you want. Ask your child to repeat the directions back to you. It's usually better to keep directions simple and short. For difficult tasks, give only one or two directions at a time. Then congratulate your child when s/he completes each step.

Organize your schedule at home. Set up specific times for waking up, eating, playing, doing homework, doing chores, watching TV or playing video games and going to bed. Write the schedule on a backboard or a piece of paper and hang it where your child will always see it. If your child can't read yet, use drawings or symbols to show the activities of each day. Explain any changes in routine in advance. Make sure your child understands the changes.

Be positive. Tell your child what you want rather than what you don't want. Reward your child regularly for any good behavior-- even little things such as getting dressed and closing doors quietly. Children with attention difficulties often spend most of their day being told what they are doing wrong. They need to be praised for good behavior.

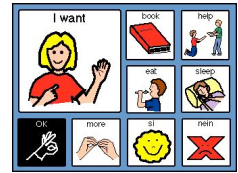


Remember when you work on behavior with your child:

1. Prioritize one behavior to work on (do not work on everything at once).
2. Give it time--there may be resistance at first.
3. Be consistent, Be consistent, Be consistent!
4. Implement the behavior system across settings so everyone who works with your child is using the same method (school, daycare, home, babysitter, etc).

Guess What's New at the STeP Center (Student-Teacher-Parent Center)!

Boardmaker has arrived! It is a graphics database with over 3,000 Picture Communication Symbols that allows you to print selected symbols for use with communication. The STeP Center is interested in finding how many parents would like to have access to this program for using the pictures at home, in the community, on trips, etc. Please call Barb Loutrel at 742-3868 if you are interested.



***The Next Parent-Teacher Institute
is Saturday, April 29
At Wandler Middle School
8:30-1pm***



"Looking Forward: Academic Success for All"

KEYNOTE: Through the Looking Glass: Thinking and Learning Styles

BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

ADHD: Strategies for Success

Positive Behavioral Supports: An Overview

Toolbox of Strategies: Support for Elementary Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Access for All: Successful Secondary Experiences for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Advocacy & Special Education

The New Alternate Assessment for Students on the Non-Diploma Track

Using Assistive Technology for Academic Success

Transition From School to Adult Life

For **FREE CHILDCARE** or **ADA accommodations** call the STeP Center at 742-3874.

Our last Preschool Press will be in May. Look for information on summer programs and activities, important school dates, and more.

