

PRESCHOOL PRESS



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

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

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About The *Preschool Press*

This publication is designed for preschool families in the Anchorage School District. It is mailed each month. E-mail 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

Growing Up: Toilet Training

Toilet training can be a difficult accomplishment. This is especially true for children with disabilities. Here are some tips to keep in mind when working on toilet training with your young child.



Schedules:

You may often hear that children should be kept on a strict schedule to make training successful. Follow a schedule that works best for your family. Some families may find it most convenient to take trips to the bathroom every hour or two. Other families work better with a natural schedule. Natural schedules consist of a timeframe determined by naturally occurring events such as meals, certain activities and periods of rest or sleep.

Special Note About Habit Training:

To increase the likelihood of successful habit or trip training, try to select regular "potty times" at times when your child is likely to urinate or defecate. Observing your child and noticing when he or she typically wets or has a bowel movement can help you determine what might be appropriate potty times. Also, try to avoid asking your child if they need to use the bathroom at scheduled times, simply prompt them that it is time to go. If your child wets or soils between toileting times, calmly help them clean up with minimal social interaction, and continue on with the established schedule of potty times.

Benefits Of Schedules

- o Schedules ensure the person will have access to the toilet during times of elimination is likely to occur
- o Adds predictability to these new behavioral expectations

Dressing For The Occasion

Common clothing styles that you might consider choosing during training:

- o Pull-on pants or shorts with an elastic waistband, like sweatpants or loosely fitting knit pants
- o Pants that are loose fitted, but not too baggy
- o Skirts that are loosely gathered
- o Skirts or dresses that are knee-length or shorter
- o Clothing made from soft materials that are not bulky
- o Shirts that are hip length or shorter

Should I Teach My Son To Sit Or Stand?

Things you might consider when deciding if you will teach your son to sit or stand. If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then learning both standing and sitting may be an option. Otherwise focus on starting with sitting on the commode.

- o Does the boy distinguish between when he needs to urinate and when he needs to defecate?
- o Does he observe situations and make choices appropriate to that particular situation?
- o Is there a male role model present whom the boy observes and tries to imitate?
- o Does he have the coordination, focus and control needed?

Source: Wheeler, Maria (2004) *Toileting Training for Individuals with Autism & Related Disorders: A Comprehensive Guide for Parents and Teachers*

Preschool Art: Process vs. Product

It is often said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This is possibly never truer than when viewing preschool art. As your child progresses through the preschool program, you are likely to receive a wide variety of art projects during the course of the year(s). Here are just a few things to keep in mind when viewing the creations of your child.

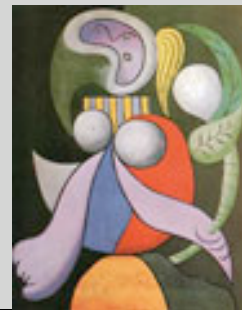


During the years of early childhood, children are developing their self esteem, which will greatly impact their personalities and attitudes about themselves and the world around them. Sharing positive comments about your child's efforts will help them learn to have faith in themselves. Children with this type of self-confidence are much more likely to be willing to take risks and try new things.



Art time is an opportunity for your preschooler to express their creativity and imagination. Art projects, which you receive that are a bit more abstract than you might expect are likely an indication that your child was actively involved in the project. Most preschool teachers would much rather have a unique creation by an actively involved student than a picture perfect model that was created while the child passively watched or was physically motored through.

How a child creates a piece of art, either through self-expression or by following some type of teacher-made model provides a wonderful look into the child's abilities, perceptions and development. While it may seem strange to receive a picture in which your child has drawn the eyes under the mouth, keep in mind, abstract artists, such as Pablo Picasso, have become quite famous creating art exactly like this. Watching your child's creations evolve over time can also give you a wonderful opportunity to observe learning and growth in your own child.



Make Learning Language Practical, Easy and FUN!

by Keri Spielvogle, M.C.D., CCC-SLP

There are many activities that incorporate many language skills. Many of these are everyday activities and some are common children's games that don't require a lot of specialized materials or planning.

Cooking - To elicit language skills, allow your child to participate in a variety of cooking activities. Allow the child to be in control of some of these activities. Make some Jell-O, a sandwich, or some other easy-to-make foods and allow the child to "take charge". This addresses such areas as requesting help, sequencing, giving directions, adjectives, asking for information, following directions, categorization, and helps to build vocabulary. As a parent, teacher, or therapist attempt to build on this language opportunity by elaborating on a child's utterances. To do this, if the child says, "Give me the spoon", you could respond by saying "Do you want the short, red spoon closest to the bowl?" This introduces concepts and enhances a child's auditory processing skills.



Playing with the Telephone - This is a great activity that encourages verbalization from all children. It is also a great activity to promote turn-taking skills and the use of pronouns such as you, I, me and yours. It also promotes skills such as asking questions, requesting information and the formulation of negative statements ("It's not for you."). also, the difficult area of presupposition is addressed by the speaker providing information based on the needs of the listener. (Since no visual information is provided, this makes it more difficult.)

Playing Games - Playing a game that requires the child pretending to be an object and describing him/herself to the listener is a great game that addresses many areas of language development . It encourages and promotes creativity and describing skills. It helps the child understand and use such grammatical structures as nouns, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, and articles. It encourages the child to provide information based on the listener's needs (presupposition) and promote the understanding of categories. A sample game might sound like this: "I'm a red fruit." "Are you a strawberry?" "I'm not a strawberry. I have a peel." "Are you a cherry?" "I'm not a cherry. I am made into sauce." "Are you an apple?" Allow the child to provide as many clues as possible before guessing the correct answer.





What's New with
Stone Soup Group?

Stone Soup Group is pleased to announce that their agency has been awarded the Parent Training & Information Center (PTI) grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education Office of Special Education programs. They are responsible for facilitating parent training & information dissemination across the state addressing topic areas related to special education. They will be presenting a series of "community conversations" to determine what the training needs are for families. Please contact them if you would like to receive an invitation to these meetings or provide suggestions for the project.

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The STeP Center: One Stop Shopping

Need information about resources, where to turn? Call the STeP Center (Student-Teacher-Parent Center): 742-3868

The STeP Center has a library of books and media on a variety of disability topics that can be checked out. It also has two full time special educators to assist with questions, provide resources, and help with understanding the ASD Special Education Department. In addition to the library, the STeP Center hosts a wonderful website at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/step/> that includes an extensive disability topic section as well as links to the four newsletters that are published throughout the school year. Current issues as well as back issues of the publications are available for downloading and printing. Plus, the STeP Center has Boardmaker, a computer program to create and print pictures for communication boards and picture schedules that is available to the public by calling Barb Loutrel at 742-3868.



Special Education Community Forum
Saturday, April 14, 2007
Wendler Middle School
8:30am to 1:00pm



Sponsored by The ASD STeP Center with collaboration from Stone Soup Group

Making Changes: Helping Ease the Way for Changes in the Lives of Children with Special Needs

Come join us over a cup of coffee for our Saturday disability information workshop. Learn about different disability topics, join discussions, and have the opportunity to earn credit for certification programs, salary advancement or training requirements.

Keynote: "Using Technology to Accommodate the Special Needs of Individuals"

Breakout sessions will include topics on ADD/ADHD & Medication, Planning for Success: Community Transition Services, Autism, and more.

Free childcare provided by calling 742-3872, 24-hours in advance.