



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW SET OF SCHOOL PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR PARENTS

South Carolina First Steps today released its second set of weekly school readiness tips for parents. This week's tips inform parents on activities parents can do throughout the summer to help prepare their children for school:

Hands-on FUN You Can Do All Summer

Spending time with your child this summer to ensure that he or she is ready to start school is the best gift you can give. Here are some activities that will be fun for both of you.

Word Play: Have fun with the sounds in words. Clap out the rhythm of your name and have your child do the same. Then try other people's names (Jon-a-thon, La-toy-a).

- Say words that start with the same sound as your child's name: Sam, soap, and sandwich.
- Say the word slowly so that you hear the first sound. Have your child try to do the same.
- Find the rhyming words in Mother Goose or other rhymes.
- Say two words and ask your child if the words begin with the same sound. If your child can do this, then try words that end with the same sound.
- Suggested books for this activity are *Sheep on a Ship* by Nancy Shaw, *Hand Rhymes* by Marc Brown, and any collection of Mother Goose Rhymes or children's poetry.

You've Got Mail: Have your child draw a picture and write (or scribble) a note to himself/herself. Address the envelope and write the return address.

- Talk about why you write a return address and why it is important to know your own address.
- Put a stamp on your letter and explain why.
- Take the letter to a mailbox or the Post Office and ask: "How long do you think it will take for the letter to come back to us?" See if you are right.
- To have writing materials ready to use, make a writing box. Decorate a shoebox and put writing materials in it such as: pencils, crayons, note pad or scrap paper, scissors, glue stick, scraps of yarn or cloth, old greeting cards, stickers. You can keep this in a special place in the house for writing/drawing projects.
- Take the writing box with you when you travel (by car, bus, subway, plane).
- Lift the flap on an envelope to make the shape of a "house." Write your address on it and have your child decorate it. Put it on your refrigerator.
- Send a card or letter to a friend or relative.
- Have your child draw a picture of someone they love and mail it. This is a good opportunity to talk about feelings: loving someone, missing someone, being sad, being happy, or mad, etc.
- Suggested books include *Letter to Amy* by Ezra Jack Keats, *Mailing May* by Michael O. Tunnell, *Dear Mr. Blueberry* by Simon James, *Loving* by Ann Morris.

Source: Countdown to Kindergarten, Boston.

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South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness ('First Steps') is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed. Public and private support are combined through county partnerships to enable individual communities to address the unmet needs of young children and their families. First Steps' Countdown to Kindergarten is designed to leverage local resources to aid successful transitions of SC's most at-risk children into kindergarten, and to target early parent involvement and increased community awareness of the importance of school readiness. Nearly 1,300 children and their families in 34 SC counties will participate in this year's Countdown program.

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