



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2006

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School Preparedness Tips for Parents - Hands-on FUN You Can Do All Summer

Teaching or reinforcing skills children need for kindergarten can (and should!) be fun. Here are some learning activities that both you and your child will enjoy!

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 is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed. Along with partners EdVenture Children's Museum and Voices for South Carolina's Children, First Steps designed the Countdown to Kindergarten program to leverage local resources to help prepare S.C.'s most at-risk children into kindergarten, to target early parent involvement and increase community awareness of the importance of school readiness. Over 1,100 children and their families across the state will participate in this year's Countdown program. Countdown teachers conduct a series of eight visits to each participating family's home to prepare the child for starting school and open the relationship with the child's family.

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