

## # 072 School readiness skills for preschoolers

Last week, I wrote about the importance of limiting the time children spend watching videos or playing video games in order to facilitate more learning from written words. It is very important that parents spend time teaching children certain skills that they will need when they begin formal schooling. Being able to form visual pictures from words that they hear or read is one of those skills. I would like to touch on some other important skills.

Children should be taught to listen to and carry out verbal instructions. Begin with one instruction and advance to a series of three or four instructions such as “Go to your room. Find your Pooh book. Bring it to me.” Teach your child to stop what he is doing to listen to instruction. Ask him to look at you when you begin to speak. Do not give him instruction until you have his attention.

Children must be taught to sit quietly when asked to do so. As preschoolers, they may need to sit quietly in church, doctor’s offices or restaurants. That is not great fun but is a skill they will need for school.

Preschoolers should be taught to respect the property of others. At home, they should know that their parents’ and siblings rooms are off limits unless they receive permission to enter. Later, in the classroom, they should not bother things on the desks of the teacher or other students.

In preparation for school, children need to learn to respect the authority of teachers and other adults. They need to learn how to ask for permission, accept correction and appeal to a teacher. Another week, I will explain the appeal process and how to teach children to use it.

Sending your child to kindergarten without these skills will make school difficult for him even if he is very bright. Group learning is very different than the one-on-one learning of the first

five years of his life. These are skills to help him fit into a classroom setting and receive instruction in a group.