



Preparing Your Children for School

Part 1 – Parents as First Teachers and Listeners

(Compiled from various professional articles and counseling experience. Exact sources are unknown.)

If your children are entering kindergarten, middle school, or high school, or if they are enrolling in a new school, preparing them for the transition will influence their success as students.

While schooling is foremost about academic learning, it is also about socialization, emotional growth, decision-making, cognitive development, communication, written and oral self-expression, and assimilation. If we are concerned about developing the whole child, then math and science are not enough.

How can we help our kids attain competence in all these areas?

As their child's first teachers, parents play a role that is vital to their youngster's success. Parents establish the basics of language, numbers, communicating with others, and the importance of learning and schooling. Parents also must convey the importance of being able to read and write, speak and listen, work in groups, and lead and follow.

Family trips, whether to a museum or grandma's house, help prepare students for school. Geographers tell us that it is difficult to teach a child about geography if he or she never travels. Additional lessons occur as the child is exposed to other people and places. Family dinner conversation – where world and national events, work experiences, and school events are discussed – is a major springboard for learning how the world works and instilling your own family values.

Listening is an extremely important skill for parents who are interested in helping their children succeed in school and in life. Authoritarian parents who make all of the decisions reveal to the child that listening is not important and, by extension, neither is he nor she.

