

Kindergarten 1,2,3...

For those children who will be entering kindergarten in the year ahead, the new world of school will bring many changes. Even for those who have previously attended preschool, kindergarten is a significant step because it often means a new school, new faces and new routines. To ease your child into this transition, Trinity Academy kindergarten teachers Nancy Lentini and Michele Sweeney recommend following these six simple steps.

- **Familiarize Your Child.** Visit the school, tour the kindergarten classroom and, if possible, let your child meet his or her teacher. Talk to your child about what his or her day will be like. This familiarization will help ease any anxiety your child may be feeling about beginning kindergarten. Don't forget to talk about all the fun things your child will do in school!
- **Practice Self-sufficiency.** Primary care educators Nancy Lentini and Michele Sweeney explain that independence yields greater self-esteem, which leads to higher success levels, positive behavior and a productive learning environment. In order to promote self-sufficiency, they recommend practicing shoe tying, buttoning/unbuttoning, proper lavatory use, and packing/unpacking a book bag.
- **Work on Language Skills.** Trinity Academy's kindergarten program provides a rigorous academic curriculum that provides a solid foundation for the upper grades. Help your child prepare for the academic component of kindergarten by identifying what language skills the teacher expects your child to know and weave these skills into everyday activities. For example, choose a "letter of the day" and see how many things you can find that begin with that letter. Practice counting, measuring, and identifying shapes and colors while cooking or gardening. Read to your child as often as possible to promote literacy and build comprehension skills. Keep it light and fun, without pressure.
- **Refine Motor Skills.** Trinity Academy kindergarten students learn and develop critical thinking skills by engaging in stimulating hands-on activities. Help your child prepare for school work by providing opportunities to manipulate scissors, pencils and crayons; trace with control; and use utensils properly. Previous exposure to these skills will help your child feel more comfortable in a new environment. If your child finds any of these skills or concepts difficult, talk to the teacher about ways you all can work together so that your child is successful.



- **Enable Social Development.** Social skills are an equally important part of the kindergarten process. These skills include listening, sharing, following directions and taking turns. Your child will need to adhere to the rules of the school and the classroom, so reinforcement at home is ideal. It is also important that your child can be away from you for an extended period of time.
- **Don't stress.** Parents sometimes worry unnecessarily about what their child can or cannot do. Always focus on what your child knows and remember that children come to school to learn. Never worry about how your child compares to other children. Remember that each student is an individual and has his or her own special talents and learning styles. Concepts introduced in kindergarten should be comfortable, not stressful, for your child.

Remember, kindergarten is the cornerstone of your child's education. It is not only a time to begin to learn, but to love the process of learning. Following these simple steps will ensure that your child's transition to kindergarten will be an exciting and positive experience.

For more information about Trinity Academy's progressive full-day kindergarten program, visit www.trinityk8.org, or call 973-226-3386, ext. 10.

