

Orientation for New Parents of Three Year Olds Around the First Day of School *David Kahn*

INTRODUCTION – On Readiness

1. Academic readiness is really not the issue. Your child is not on trial. Whether the child can count, identify colors, use scissors properly, etc. is not the focus. The Directress is interested in the whole child, the child's ability to communicate and cooperate, and most important the child's willingness to accept and master new experiences.

Based on this precept, it is important not to push skills on the child to make him ready. "You must learn your colors or you will not know what to do in school" is an anxiety producing statement. Do not connect your home discipline matters with what will happen at school.

2. Your children are coming to this school because you have perceived readiness. Perhaps it's because they have exhausted their toys, or they seem bored, or you need a break...maybe your child has already had some experiences away from you, and they have been positive. Also, readiness has been determined by our preschool team. They have observed separation. They have interviewed your child. **YOUR CHILD IS READY. EVERYONE AGREES.**

GOING TO SCHOOL – Immediate Challenges

You have chosen the school to widen your children's social and academic exposure. Here are some skills which they will be developing right away:

1. Keeping track of belongings. School provides specific storage areas. You keep track of your children's keeping track of their clothes, shoes, etc.
2. Understanding order: putting things back, having to take turns...you can encourage the same habits at home by spending time with your child when things are being put away.
3. Doing things for oneself. (Zipping, buttoning, etc. are skills which will come out of the necessity of taking care of yourself in a classroom setting. Parents do not have to push. The children will want these skills as they see older children having to do them.)
4. Sharing an adult. Child realizes he can't have the undivided attention of an adult.
5. Inner controls related to environment. Child must learn to observe the limits of the environment and the community because he wants to belong.
6. Development of language. New feelings and experiences will eventually broaden your child's range of expression.
7. Desire to work. Children experience a strong drive to improve themselves in relation to the school community.