

Riverpark

ON THE BRAZOS

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Build Trust and Routine to Reduce Jitters

10 WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Written by Brandi Muse owner, Primrose School at Summerwood

This fall a new group of 5- and 6-year-olds will embark on a significant milestone of their educational journey – starting kindergarten or first grade. Whether you've been through years of preschool or not, the transition into "big kids' school" can cause parents and children alike some first-day jitters.

"Kindergarten and first grade are full of excitement and fun! There's no need to be nervous," says Dr. Mary Zurn, vice president of early childhood education at Primrose Schools. "If you prepare your child for the transition with a few simple adjustments to your routine, you will end up enjoying the milestone and dispel some of those natural twinges of sadness as you see your 'baby' grow up." To help ease the transition to independence, Dr. Zurn suggests the following 10 tips to help calm kindergarten jitters:

Establish a daily routine that fits your family's schedule and ask everyone to do his or her best to stick to it. Consistently begin morning activities at the same time every day. Don't wait until school begins - start at least two weeks before the first day and continue the routine throughout the year.

Nighttime routines are important, too. The whole family can help make mornings easier by taking care of tasks the night before. Try making it a habit to pack book bags, complete homework and pick out the next day's clothes in the evening to avoid morning mayhem.

Get your rest. Read a bedtime story early enough in the evening for children to get a good night's sleep. Many morning issues can be avoided if everyone is rested and ready to begin the day.

Read, read and read some more. It is often the anticipation of the unknown that makes children anxious about kindergarten. Reading about starting school gives children an opportunity to imagine their own experience and express their fears. The following books are fun to read and can help children prepare for the feelings they might experience when school starts:

When Mommy and Daddy Go to Work by Joanna Cole

First Day by Joan Rankin

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Don't Go by Jane Breskin Zalben

5. Prepare your kindergartener for longer periods of separation in increments. Before leaving your child at school for the first time, have him or her stay with a grandparent or a babysitter for increasingly longer periods of time. This will teach your child to trust that you will always return.

Tour the school with your child. Visit the classroom, meet the teacher and tour the playground so the places and faces they will see on the first day feel familiar and safe. Afterward, talk about what both of you saw and how fun the different activities looked. Refer to the teacher by name to help your child think of her as a person you know and trust. Reinforce the idea of school as a safe place to learn and play.

Set the stage. Talk to your child about kindergarten and help him or her visualize what the day's activities are likely to be. "On Monday when you go to school, you will see your friends, play on the swings and read stories. Ms. Smith will be there to help you. It will be a great day! And mommy or daddy will be there to take you home when school is over for the day."

Shop for school supplies. Children love shopping for school supplies. Give your child the opportunity to pick out a few items he or she likes (within reason, of course) to provide a sense of ownership and responsibility in the decision-making process.

Say a quick "goodbye" and promise to come back. When dropping your child off at school, give a quick hug and kiss, cheerfully say goodbye and promise to return later. When you linger, you undermine your child's confidence that you feel good about where you are leaving her.

Establish a partnership with your child's teacher. Children look for emotional cues from mom and dad's behavior. The more comfortable you are with your child's teacher, the more comfortable your child

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Build Trust... - (Continued from Cover Page)

will be. Discuss with your child's teacher how your child is adjusting over the first few weeks of school. The more visible you can make the connection between home and school, the more secure your child will feel.

These tips can help parents adjust to their child entering kindergarten just as much as they can help children.

“Starting kindergarten or first grade should be an exciting time for families, not a source of anxiety,” says Dr. Zurn. “If you feel confident and prepared for the transition, your children are likely to feel the same.”

For more tips and ideas from Dr. Mary Zurn, visit www.DrZandFreinds.com or www.PrimroseSchools.com. To learn more about Primrose School at Summerwood, visit www.primrosesummerwood.com or call 281.454.6000.



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Immunizations: Not Just for Kids

By: Concentra Urgent Care

Although most toddlers in the United States have received all recommended vaccines, many adults and adolescents have not. These missed vaccinations increase their risk for infection, hospitalization, death, and disease spread, and they contribute to the estimated \$10 billion that is spent annually on vaccine preventable diseases in the United States.

Evidence shows that currently approved vaccines are safe and effective. However, coverage rates for persons of all ages vary nationwide. Reasons cited include lack of health insurance, unfamiliarity with vaccine recommendations, limited access at physicians' offices, or the perceived cost of vaccines.

What you need to know is that obtaining recommended vaccines in a timely manner can prevent disease. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends the immunization schedule to the right for generally healthy adults and adolescents.

For more information about immunizations and where to get them, contact your health care provider, your Concentra health specialist, or visit the CDC's Web Site at: www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

**Specific recommendations for individuals may vary depending on age, prior immunization history and the presence of other existing conditions; please see the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/default.htm>*

IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE RECOMMENDATIONS

INFLUENZA:

Yearly, especially if at risk

MENINGOCOCCAL:

One dose, age 11-12 or 13-18 if not previously immunized

TETANUS-DIPHTHERIA/TETANUS

One dose, age 11-12, then booster

DIPHTHERIA-PERTUSSIS:

every 10 years

HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS

Three doses, age 11-26 (females only):

MEASLES - MUMPS - RUBELLA:

If born after 1956, one or two doses if never immunized up to age 65

PNEUMOCOCCAL:

One dose, at or after age 65

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Gratitude is the key

Unlocking The Doors To Treasures In Our Children

By Sugandha Jain

Gratitude is an instant mood converter. Gratefulness is the knife that melds impatience to patience, fear to love and anxiety to peace. Enveloped by the clouds of thankfulness, we can soar high in the air of optimism. Our aura is immediately cleansed when we fill our thoughts with praise. Relationships glow under the varnish of a positive expression in mutual affection.

We only have to look around us to realize how blessed we are. Being mindful of the generosity of people, beauty in our surroundings and the uniqueness of our own spirits can help us appreciate our fortunate existence.

Opening ourselves to receiving divine grace that is already a part of our lives makes us acknowledge our own sacredness. We appreciate our oneness with the universe and what we feel as a result, is gratitude on being a part of the whole. We feel love, we feel complete.

Modeling gratefulness with our families can help children open their hearts to the love and light in everything they do. Daily writing in their Gratitude Journal can gradually shift children's consciousness to a higher dimension.

Constantly reminding children to see the lessons presented by events instead of sulking on challenges can be an exercise in life-long learning. When we encourage children to make choices, evaluate them and re-choose options that help them feel grateful, we show them how to be free.

Together, we find that our interactions with each other have always been complete; the missing link in the puzzle in seeking out and seeding in the Om of smile- the symbol of thankfulness.

Sugandha Jain is a Master Registered Texas Trainer and Director of Accreditation at a local preschool.

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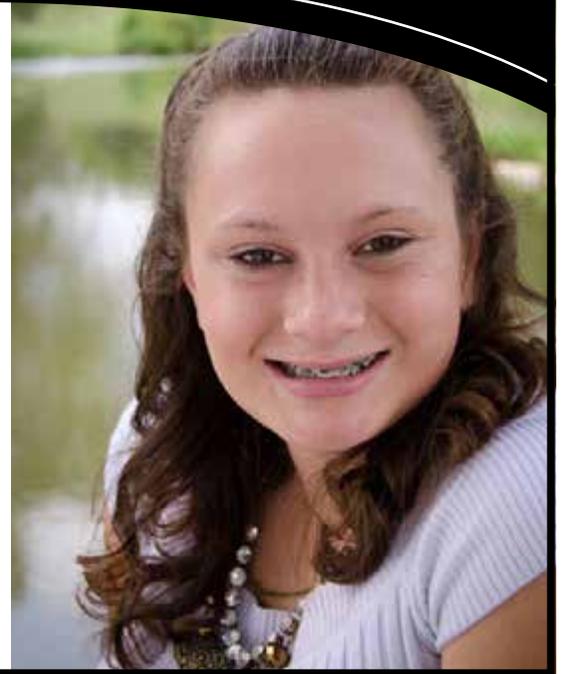
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ADOPTION COALITION OF TEXAS

Kelly

APRIL 20, 1997

Kelly is a friendly and outgoing young woman. She enjoys playing soccer, basketball and volleyball; Kelly also participates in her school FFA and adores animals. She enjoys swimming and has told her caseworker, that she doesn't care if it is a lake, river or swimming pool, she wants to swim. With her current foster family, she enjoys going to the swimming pool, shopping, eating out, rodeos, vacation bible school, church, youth group, dances, and a variety of other community and school events. Kelly thrives in any situation where she is given the attention that she needs, but freedom to be a teenager. She would do best in a home where her adoptive parents can give her the attention and proper guidance she requires. Kelly needs a good role model and a structured setting. For more information contact Grace Lindgren at the Adoption Coalition of Texas at (512) 810-0813 or gracelindgren@adopttexas.org



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