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## Preparing for Kindergarten at The Classical Academy

There is no one quality or skill that children need in order to do well in Kindergarten. A combination of factors contributes to school success. These factors include physical well-being, social and emotional maturity, language skills, an ability to solve problems and think creatively, and a general knowledge about the world. School success also depends upon the “match” between a child’s skills, his knowledge base, and the expectations of the school. Planning an observation in a kindergarten classroom is one way to understand the world your child will be entering and to gain an appreciation of the learning environment at TCA.

### Parental Support for Kindergarten Success

**Background knowledge** is the most important factor contributing to your child’s success in reading and listening comprehension. Give your child a vast variety of experiences in order to provide a broad base of background knowledge. Reading and listening comprehension correlates directly to success in learning not only in school but throughout life. Take nature walks around your neighborhood, in our local parks, and up in our beautiful mountains. Visit museums, zoos, nature centers, botanical gardens, art displays, government buildings, concerts, dance performances, farming and ranching communities, and other historical sites. Travel to other cities, states, and countries where your child will experience other customs and cultures. Explore all of the above in a vicarious way by reading fiction and nonfiction books and periodicals to your child that will open up the world to them even beyond what you are able to do through actual travel.

**An expansive vocabulary** is the second most important factor in setting up your child for success in reading and listening comprehension. As you do all of the above, purposefully talk about the new words your child is encountering through all of these experiences. Vocabulary is expanded as children are exposed to new words in meaningful context in conversation, by being read to or through experiences. The more you talk with your child about the new words, and use them in your own speech, the better chance that they will actually become a part of your child’s vocabulary bank. Be purposeful in having conversation at the dinner table where each family member talks about their daily adventures and/or the books they are reading. When traveling in the car, pop in books on tape or children’s radio theater productions. Turn off or limit TV, video and computer games. Rather let your child be saturated in an environment of real human interaction with words – exposure to rich vocabulary, especially if it is above their own speaking level, expands their own vocabulary from birth on.

**Read to your child daily.** Read to them often and from a variety of genres. This not only expands their vocabulary and knowledge of the world, but gives them an ear for sounds, cadence, and directionality that needs to be in place for reading to begin. This cannot be overstated. Books and conversations about books plow the soil for a future passion for reading. Nursery rhymes and fairy tales are especially good for your young children. Two titles you might look for are a *Treasure of More than 300 Classic Nursery Rhymes and Mother Goose’s Nursery Rhymes* by Robert Frederick (please do not use the Disney version).

**Promote creativity.** Developing hand/eye coordination and building small motor skills are equally important. Provide opportunities for your child to paint, draw, do puzzles, cut fun shapes, build with Legos, sew etc.

**Practice multi-step directions.** Continue to give your child opportunities to follow multi-step directions. Increase the number of steps incrementally and have your child tell back the steps they are to follow. For example: brush your teeth, put on pajamas and bring me your favorite book. This will help them learn to listen and follow directions in class and do things in an orderly fashion.

**Be outside.** Enjoy the great outdoors with your child as much as possible. It helps hone their powers of observation to have them describe objects such as leaves, stones, and animals. Developing gross motor

4/12/2014

movements is also important for your child. Teach them to skip and hop, swing a bat, ride a bike. Enjoy other outdoor activities with your child as much as possible.

**Develop responsibilities.** Give your children chores to do on a regular schedule so they develop life-long habits and become familiar with routines. Examples: bedtime, story time, dishes, trash, putting their toys away.

**Instruct your child on basic safety rules:**

Traffic lights, Driveways, Carpools, Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Strangers

**Health:** Make sure your child has all their immunizations. It is better if you do not associate these shots with school. Establish a consistent bed time as they will need a good night sleep, for the routine of the classroom will stretch them for the first month or so.

**Home is a Classroom:** Every part of your life can be a learning experience. Every event can be a teaching moment from folding towels in half and then in fourths, to pruning trees and planting flowers. Other examples might include: finding letters on signs, spotting colors of cars, listening for the sounds outside, counting the number of people you see at the park, and measuring and counting while preparing a meal together.

**Independence:** Encourage your child to tie their shoes, zip their jackets, and button buttons. Don't do everything for your child. He/she will be expected to take care of their own things during class. They should be able to go to the bathroom unassisted. Please teach them to wash their hands well after they use the restroom. This really cuts down on illnesses.

**Respect:** Respect is a very important character trait. Your child needs to be taught this before they enter school. They need to learn to respect you, others, their things and to be helpful to their classmates. They need to listen to the teacher and not interrupt. If they are interrupting you or others, then now is the time you should stop them and make them wait patiently and politely.

**Communication:** Begin now asking your child about their day. After school "talk time" is invaluable for you and your child. You will open the lines of communication for a lifetime. Once they know that you are interested in them, they will let you in on all, or most all, of their adventures.

**Skills Helpful to Have in Place before Kindergarten**

- Formulate their thoughts to communicate an idea. For Example: When asked "What did you like about that book?" The child would response, "It was funny when Goldilocks broke the chair and fell."
- Identifies and names all of the 26 letters (upper and lower case)
- Takes turns and shares with peers and adults
- States her/his name (first and last)
- Writes first name using a capital at the beginning followed by lower case letters
- Identifies numbers 0-25 and counts 0-25
- Identifies colors and basic shapes (circle, square, triangle and rectangle)
- Sits, listens, and stays focused for a period of 15 minutes or more at a time
- Hop, skip, balance on one foot and throw a ball
- Trace a line or simple shape
- Use scissors to cut simple shapes

Enjoy your children and laugh a lot with them. Make this new voyage a joy. Your goal is to enrich them and prepare them for their life-long journey into knowledge.

Each class will have an orientation meeting before school starts in August.