

# VIP Value In Parenting

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## School Readiness

By Sharon Sabine, Manager, RECAP/WOC Head Start; Linda Martini, Asst. Director, Child Care Council of Orange County, Inc.; and Paula Spector, Prevention Educator, Pius XII Youth and Family Services

It may seem strange to think about school readiness when the school year is almost over! In fact, getting children ready for school is really about getting children ready for life. Therefore, it is more than learning ABCs and 1-2-3s; school readiness involves children being physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually prepared. School readiness is more than simply getting ready for kindergarten. Children of all ages need preparation and support to become the best student they can be. As a parent, you can put your child on the road to success by providing a home that encourages learning and supports healthy growth and development.

### Why are families important to children's readiness to learn?

Families provide the environment that children are raised in. From the first week of life, everything that the child does affects the family, and everything the family does affects the child. The child's healthy development depends upon the family's provision of a balanced diet, medical and dental care, proper exercise, plenty of rest, and age appropriate experiences. Families furnish love, security, opportunities for learning, and discipline. The home is a place of unconditional love where children can feel good about themselves even when they make mistakes. Children want to fit in, be accepted, and feel like they belong. The family's teaching of morals,

### Children Learn What They Live

- If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.**
- If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.**
- If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.**
- If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.**
- If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.**
- If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.**
- If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.**
- If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.**
- If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.**
- If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world**

*Author Unknown*

values and customs helps children form an identity. Families are children's first teachers and most enduring friends. Long after formal education ends, children will continue to feel their family's influence. School can give little to a child unless his family is involved in the giving. When children feel good, are well rested, and are well nourished, they are more ready to learn.

### How to Provide a Healthy Start




A healthy start for school and life begins with good prenatal care. Visiting the doctor, eating nourishing foods, avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful drugs, and getting plenty of rest during pregnancy are important to the birth of a healthy baby. Some children are born with problems in spite of good prenatal care. Those children may need special support services; therefore, it would be a good idea for their families to consult with the doctor, school district, or Early Intervention for assistance.




A healthy breakfast is especially important to help children do their best in school. Breakfast provides a child's young brain and body with the fuel needed for their long day. School-age children can concentrate better in class after eating balanced meals. Include foods such as grain and dairy products, fruits, meats, and

*(Continued on next page)*

vegetables in your child's daily diet. Children may be picky eaters, but if parents can consistently provide nutritious food - sometimes in creative ways - children will learn to eat what is good for them. For more information on feeding kids from infancy to adolescence, contact your child's doctor or local Cooperative Extension service. Because everyone requires nutritious food, Food Stamps and Food Banks are available for families in need.

 Take your child to the doctor for regular wellness visits. Have your child immunized against diseases.

Some diseases could affect a child's physical and mental development. Be sure that your child visits the dentist for routine dental care by the age of 3. Everyone needs adequate health care; income eligible families can find health care through Medicaid or the State Child Health Insurance Program.

 Children learn through play. From patty-cake to baseball, play and exercise are important to the development of healthy minds and bodies. As children throw balls, run, jump, climb, and dance to music, they learn to control and develop their muscles. As they play with puzzles, blocks, crayons, scissors, and board games,

## HELPING YOUR CHILD: Guidelines for Healthy Development and School Readiness

**Be warm and loving:** A loving environment develops a sense of security and feelings of belonging that will be the basis of all your child's later relationships.

**Talk, read, and sing to your child:** Communicating with your children helps to develop their love of language and books. Children learn through repetition, and by modeling the behavior of the adults around them.

**Establish routines and rituals:** Daily routines such as reading before bed and talking over the day's events at dinner develop close bonds to you and the family. When routines are safe and predictable children feel secure and they tend to do better in school.

**Encourage safe exploration and play:** Play is important. Play is the work of young children. It is how they learn to interact with the world and with others. When children grow they can be encouraged to take healthy risks. Providing a safe environment for play is always important.

**Make TV watching selective:** Limit TV time and programming to what is age appropriate. Whenever possible watch programs with your child and talk about what you are seeing. Notice how much advertising is aimed at children.

**Choose quality childcare and stay involved:** Be sure your caregiver provides what you want your child to have while you are away: warmth, caring and creativity. Make sure the site is clean and safe. Make sure your child gets individual attention.

**Recognize the uniqueness of your child:** Each child is unique. Judge your child's readiness to take the next step by responding to their cues rather than by what other children are doing. Children have different temperaments, abilities and gifts. Acknowledge them with specific praise. Enjoy and celebrate each child for who they are and what they bring to your family.

**Take care of yourself:** If you are not meeting your own needs it will be difficult to meet the needs of your child. Caring for children is very demanding and sometimes draining. Parents and caregivers need some time and recreation for themselves. If you feel overwhelmed, ask for help; reach out to family, friends, your pediatrician, or your child's teacher. Call one of the local resources listed in this newsletter.

they develop the muscles needed for holding a pencil or a pen and the knowledge needed for future academic skills. Children learn useful social skills through organized sports and games. Playing promotes learning, friendship and personal development in ways that are fun and natural to children.

### How to Provide a Happy Start

Give your child attention, encouragement and lots of hugs. Children do well when they feel secure and loved. Youngsters have a positive attitude toward learning when parents applaud their efforts to try new things and nurture their self-esteem. Children are naturally curious and it is important that they have the courage to try, fail and try again. Encourage your child to finish what s/he starts; persistence is important to the learning process.

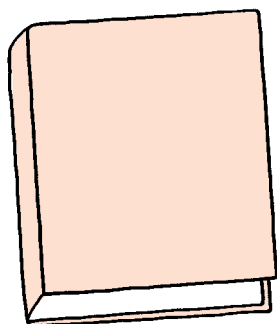
Friends are important for a child's social development. Providing playmates for children helps kids learn to cooperate and problem solve. Positive discipline methods that set limits and give choices plus consequences help children become responsible. Responsible, happy children are more likely to succeed in school.

### How to Provide a Smart Start

Children begin their first learning experiences through their senses - seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Families support learning by making the child's world a place of acceptance and a place to explore new challenges.

Learning language is necessary to help children understand the world around them. Families support open communication by providing "two-way talk". When your child speaks, listen to what he or she says, and then respond. Encourage your child to talk, express ideas, and ask questions because the ability to communicate is important to your child's effectiveness in his or her relationships with others.

Families who read together will grow together. Sharing favorite songs, poems and stories help children develop their minds and imaginations. Take your child to the library and fill your home with books and other reading material.



Television may be one of the most influential teachers that your child has; therefore, monitor your child's television viewing. Some TV programs can be educational but some can be harmful. Take the time to watch television with your child to help him or her distinguish between fantasy and reality.

### Families have a role in school readiness.

Children do better in school when their families are involved. From preschool to high school, participate in your child's education. By meeting the teacher, reviewing homework and providing a quiet place to study, families send the message that education is valuable. Talk with your child about what is happening in school. Let them see your excitement about their learning. They, in turn, will become excited learners.

Families are a child's life support system. Consequently, the most important support a child can receive comes from the home. Families fulfill their role by making sure that students arrive at school rested, fed, and ready to learn. With your help, your child can become confident and able to handle the challenges of school.

### For more information on this topic:

**Orange-Ulster BOCES (School Readiness Team):**  
Emma Klimek, 291-0120

**National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC),** 1834 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009 1-800- 424-2460

**Child Care Council of Orange County, Inc.:** 294-4012

**RECAP/WOC Head Start:** 343-4191

**Pius XII Youth and Family Services:** 294-3501

**Cornell Cooperative Extension:** 344-1234

**Early Intervention (Orange County Department of Health):** 291-2332

**Orange County Department of Social Services:** 294-8000

**New York State Child Health Insurance Program:**  
1-800- 698-4KIDS

## Healthy Orange Community Day

May 18, 2002  
10 AM to 4 PM

at Orange/ Ulster BOCES in Goshen, NY

**Events ♦ Exhibits ♦ Education  
Fun ♦ Games ♦ Prizes**

For information call Sue Stenson at  
(845) 294-8308

# Learning Through Play

Make this recipe and have fun learning the natural way:

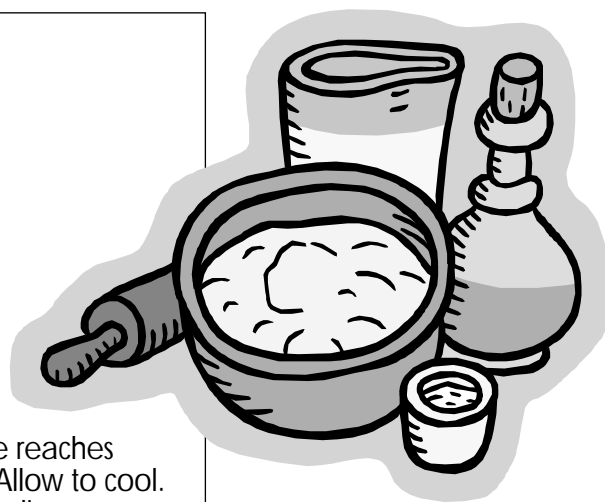
- 1) physical skills – measure, mix, pound, pull and shape the dough.
- 2) thinking (math and science) skills – count pieces of dough; take apart and put together. What happens when you add color?
- 3) language skills – talk about what you are doing as you make and play with the dough.
- 4) emotion and social skills – enjoy spending time with your child – take turns, share ideas and express your feelings.

## Play Dough Recipe

By SUNY Training Strategies Group

- 1 Cup Flour
- 1 Cup Water
- 1 Tbs. Oil
- 1 Tbs. Cream of Tartar
- ½ Cup Salt
- 2 Tbs. Vanilla

Mix all dry ingredients together. Add oil and water. Cook over medium heat stirring constantly until mixture reaches consistency of mashed potatoes. Remove from heat. Allow to cool. Work in vanilla or color (2 drops food coloring) by kneading.



## The School Readiness Team is the newest Action Team of Healthy Orange and Partners for Children.

The members of our team are early childhood educators, college educators, school administrators, and Head Start professionals among others. We are also parents!

Our mission is; "to support parents, caregivers, early childhood professionals and school administrators, as they create an environment that promotes optimal early childhood development and practices leading to success in school."

### SAVE THIS DATE!

The School Readiness Team will be providing fun learning activities for families and children at Family Night at the Galleria on April 12th, 2002, 5:30 - 7:30 PM. Learning is fun – come play with us!

## VIP Value In Parenting

For more information on parenting education and/or the Orange County Parenting Coalition Action Team, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension at 845 - 344 - 1234.  
[www.cce.cornell.edu/orange](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/orange)



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