Welcome to Kindergarten

GETS ALONG WITH OTHERS, SHARES, PLAYS AND TAKES TURNS

Learning to share may seem to be one of the biggest challenges that young children face. Supporting your child in their efforts and encouraging them to think of others will help them play well with their peers and enhance their social and emotional development. What you do:

• Encourage your child to develop sharing rules for their toys. When they have friends over or are playing with siblings, help them notice that there is only one (or a few) of a certain toy, and that they will need to figure out a way to share so everyone gets a turn with the toy. For example, show them how to use a timer such as an hourglass or kitchen timer. Help them learn that when the timer runs out, that means it is someone else’s turn to explore the new object or toy.

• Look for opportunities to model turn-taking behavior by playing games such as “I Spy” or “Follow the Leader.” Give each participant a turn to be the leader of the game.

• When on the playground, remind your child when someone is waiting for a turn to use the equipment they are using.

• Comment when you see your child displaying appropriate sharing behavior with others. “I noticed that you were enjoying playing your drum, but when Carrie asked you if she could have a turn, you handed the drum to her. That was a thoughtful thing for you to do and you made Carrie very happy.”

CAN RUN, JUMP AND HOP

Many children love to move their bodies through space in different ways. This activity encourages your child to be active while helping them master spatial concepts. You will need: masking tape, sidewalk chalk and a large open floor space or outdoor area. What you do:

• Use chalk outdoors or masking tape indoors to create a path of “stepping stones” around the space.

• Invite your child to jump from stone to stone. As they move, help them notice where they are in relation to their surroundings. I see that you are near the door, but you are far from the window.

• Encourage them to describe where they are in relation to you or any other people participating. Whom do you think is closest to you? Who is behind you?

• Switch places, and continue the activity by moving along the stones and asking your child to describe your position as you move. Where am I now? What am I next to?

• Vary the game by placing the stones in a different area of the room or outdoor space.

• Continue the activity for as long as your child is interested.
Today, families are bombarded with social media and digital gadgets. In fact, children spend an average of three hours a day watching television. Children spend more time indoors, spending less time moving and more time sitting still. Exercise is now something that needs to be planned or embedded into the day’s schedule. The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention states that, “Children should be getting at least one hour of physical activity every day.” In order for children to be healthy, physical activity is essential. Exercise doesn’t have to be a chore or work...it should be fun! Large motor development is significant for growing children. Physical activity should be age-appropriate. For young children, exercise is using their muscles and simply moving their bodies. Parents play a significant part in helping their child become more physically active. Listed below are 11 ways suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics to get started:

- **Talk with your pediatrician.** Your doctor can help your child understand why physical activity is important. Your pediatrician also can suggest a sports activity that is best for your child.
- **Find a fun activity.** Help your child find a sport that they enjoy. The more they enjoy the activity, the more likely it is that they will continue. Get the entire family involved. It is a great way to spend time together.
- **Choose an activity that is developmentally appropriate.** For example, a seven-year-old is not ready for weight lifting or a three-mile run, but soccer, bike riding, and swimming are appropriate activities.
- **Plan ahead.** Make sure your child has a convenient time and place to exercise.
- **Provide a safe environment.** Make sure your child’s equipment and chosen site for the sport or activity are safe. Make sure your child’s clothing is comfortable and appropriate.
- **Provide active toys.** Young children especially need easy access to balls, jump ropes and other active toys.
- **Be a role model.** Children who regularly see their parents enjoying sports and physical activity are more likely to do so themselves.
- **Play with your child.** Help them learn a new sport.
- **Turn off the TV!** Limit television watching and computer or digital game use. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 1 to 2 hours of total screen time, including TV, videos, computers, and video games each day.
- **Make time for exercise.** Some children are so over-scheduled with homework, music lessons, and other planned activities that they do not have time for exercise.
- **Do not overdo it.** When your child is ready to start, remember to tell her to listen to her body. Exercise and physical activity should not hurt. If this occurs, your child should slow down or try a less vigorous activity. As with any activity, it is important not to overdo it.