

Did You Know?

What You Can Expect From 5 Year-Olds

Pre-K's and Kindergarteners Show: Parents Can Help By:

Learn through hands-on experience by using *all* their senses and manipulating objects

Provide interactive learning materials such as blocks, puzzles, patterns, tracing, lacing, play dough, cooking. Teach concepts by active games & activities—not “seat work” or worksheets. (Examples: Find the letter, match the seashells, magazine letter hunt, circle the letter in the newspaper, etc.)

Enjoy conversation and like to plan and discuss

Listen to their ideas and let them talk about them. Take questions seriously. Talk about what happens and why.

Can share and take turns

If needed, teach how to bargain, negotiate, and apologize.

Like cooperative play with invented stories, roles, and rules

Offer lots of opportunity to play with one or more children, allowing plenty of time and space for “pretend” play.

Want to be good

Praise and empathetic understanding usually work well. Give specific praise so they understand the true value of their actions.

Can be known to lie

Avoid shame. Because they want to be good, it's hard for them to admit they were wrong. Look for the underlying “need.”

Have “best friends”

Help them to use their words and be sensitive to excluding children when they don't want to play with others.

Want to make representational art

Encourage creativity by having paper, markers, paints, glue, art, and carpentry materials easily available.

Like to match, sort, count, group, and sequence things

Give opportunities to practice these skills in everyday life: set the table, count the turns, sort the socks, match fabric swatches, play lotto and “fish” games (matching pairs).

Like telling stories and reading

Read lots and lots of books. Fives love jokes, so read humorous books, too. Read poetry. Ask “what if...?” questions. Ask for different endings. Have them dictate their own stories to you.

Enjoy collecting things

Be patient with untidiness and clutter. Honor this need for collecting by designating shelf space or “collection boxes.”

Understand and respect rules

Make clear rules. Follow through with consequences, even when challenged. Fives appreciate the certainty and structure that rules provide, which is why they invent their own games with their own rules.

Have better self-control

Help them cope with strong feelings by giving them words when they are angry or sad. Give a short time apart to “calm your motor” or “get yourself together,” when having difficulty controlling themselves.

Show greater body coordination

Encourage skipping, galloping, hopping, and balancing. Jump rope to music. Teach simple movement and dance.

Use a lot of energy at school

Pace the rest of the day with a balance of rest and activity, and time alone and time with others.