laying a solid pre-school foundation

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**Discipline Guidelines**

1. **Disciple** your children… Love, accept, teach, train

--to train their **wills** from *willfulness* to *willingness*.

--To cultivate their **character**.

1. **Model** expected behavior—behavior is learned. Occasionally explain reasons (waiting in line).
2. Train your child to **hear** your voice and **obey** promptly, willingly, cheerfully, and completely.
3. Be **consistent**. Beware of the power of randomly reinforcing unacceptable behavior by “giving in.”
4. Teach them that “**No**” means no. (No should often be simply “*No*” rather than “*No, because.*”)

(Don’t expect their understanding of your **explanations** to direct their behavior.)

1. Seek to **understand** age-appropriate behavior & emotions (recognize symptoms)…

--Recognize common **fears**: dark, storms, being alone, rejection, the unknown, failing, etc.

1. Teach **expectations**; set limits. (Fold hands, shut eyes, wait quietly, sit at table.)

**--Encourage** them—let them know whether they are reaching your expectations.

1. Remember that the “**rod & reproof** bring wisdom.” (Prov. 29:15) But don’t expect rod to do it all.
2. **Pray** with and for your children by name; bless them.

**Helps for emotional development**

1. Teach them to handle their **feelings**: surprise, fears, frustration, anger, impatience…
2. Provide opportunities for them to **care—**for people, plants and animals.
3. Encourage **trying**… “You can do it.”
4. Encourage affectionate, **thoughtful** behavior.

**Helps for social development**

1. Teach **responsibility**: chores, clean-up.
2. Take turns patiently and cheerfully; learn to **share**.
3. **Relate to adults**: look them in the eye, shake hands, answer clearly.
4. Provide **experiences** away from home.
5. Encourage various types of **play**: individual, quiet, active, “working” w/adults, interactive, imitation…
6. Learn to use **polite** expressions: “please,” “thank-you,” and avoid interrupting.

**Helps for moral development**

1. Teach **respect** for others. Help them practice respect through good **manners.**
2. Require **obedience** to parents and authorities.
3. Help them develop hearts of **truthfulness, gratitude, and kindness**.
4. Teach a few **wise sayings.** *Well begun is half done. Never accuse others to excuse yourself. Deeds are greater than words.*

*What a man sows, that shall he also reap. A place for everything, and everything in its place. Haste makes waste.*

**Helps for spiritual development**

1. Read/teach **Bible stories** to your children.
2. Teach them the **love of God** and Jesus through story, song, example, words, and conduct.
3. Answer their **questions** according to their level of understanding.
4. Share testimonies and **stories** of faith: personal, missionary, biographical, historical.

**Miscellaneous**

1. Teach **safety** skills—electricity, hot stove, matches, traffic, poison…
2. Teach cleanliness and healthy **hygiene**.
3. **Avoid excessive stimulation**—limit exposure to new toys, gadgets, electronic media.
4. Be sure children get **enough sleep**. Establish healthy **bedtime routines**.

***Readiness*** for disciplined, structured learning. (What’s needed besides the pencil box.)

Most of a child’s “readiness” must occur “by the way” in daily activities that primarily occur outside of school-like settings.

If a child enters the classroom without these habits and skills, he will have a difficult time because a school setting by its very nature cannot easily provide them. Book-related learning in school, by its very nature, tends to limit the variety of activities that promote “readiness.” Readiness involves…

**Listening** perceptively, and *thinking about…*

1. directions without interrupting (Give practice in following directions, from simple to more complex).
2. stories & poems for five minutes or more without interruptions (Read aloud to them).

**Hearing** with discrimination…

1. words that rhyme. (Recite nursery rhymes and simple poems.)
2. words that begin with the same sound or different sounds. (Make a game out of finding these words.)
3. the voice of the one who is in charge (the shepherd’s voice). (Teach them to respond to your voice.)

**Seeing** (visual discrimination)…

1. likenesses and differences in pictures and designs. (Put puzzles together.)
2. letters and words that match. (Play with word letter and word blocks)

(Provide hand activities involving beads and puzzles to help develop visual discrimination.)

***Note: Auditory discrimination precedes visual discrimination.***

“*A child can learn to read and write only as well as he can learn to hear and speak.”*

**Understanding** concepts (can develop in the context of daily conversation)…

1. prepositions such as up/down, in/out, over/under. (Have them place objects *beside, under, on* a book.)
2. terms like rough, two, large, many, slimy… (Have them use a specific word to describe something.)
3. category words like fruit, animals, friends, vehicles, season. (Play auditory memory games.)
4. likenesses and differences between objects; ability to group them. (Separate objects by category.)

**Speaking** clearly…

1. producing accurate sounds, with normal grammar. (Model correct speech; have them imitate you.)
2. retelling a story or event or experience accurately. (Listen to them.)

***Note: Oral language helps develop thinking skills. Speech is related to the listening level.***

**Thinking…**

1. giving the main idea of a story. (Tell what the story was about.)
2. giving her own observations or ideas and some important details from a story. (Ask her some questions.)
3. giving reasons for her own opinions. (Ask here to explain why she thinks that way.)
4. articulating her own thoughts. (Show interest and respect for her ideas; help her evaluate them.)

**Adjusting…**

1. to changes in routines and to new situations without becoming fearful. (Train them to accept changes.)
2. to frustrations or opposition or defeat without crying or sulking. (Help them work through difficulties.)
3. to the necessity of asking for (and accepting) help when needed. (Help them see that we all need help.)

**Obeying…**

1. classroom rules as established by the teacher, even if the reasons for them are not understood.
2. safety rules on playground and in school procedures quickly, quietly, and willingly.
3. the word **no.** (“No” means “no” even if the reasons for it are not understood.)

**Playing** with a playful spirit and mind…

1. cooperatively with other children. (Provide opportunity; use teachable moments to train them.)
2. by sharing, taking turns, assuming some group responsibility. (Provide opportunities for this.)
3. by running, jumping, skipping, bouncing ball with reasonable dexterity (gross motor skills).
4. with mastery of directionality and laterality (here/ there; back/front; left/right).

**Working** (alone & with group)…

1. without being distracted—able to shut out *external* and *internal* impulses. (Teach perseverance.)
2. according to directions. (Provide some structured tasks.)
3. by completing tasks with satisfaction in his own work. (Help him achieve some successes.)

**Avoid giving a child “burdens grievous to be borne*.”*** *Lk. 11:46*

**Specific activities for developing Readiness skills:**

(*Parent should notice which activities their child over-indulges in and which he lacks;*

*then take appropriate steps to help the child develop a healthy balance of skills*.)

1. **Read** to them! Read a variety of books. Talk with them about the readings.
2. Engage in occasional **conversation** “along the way.” Talk with them about what you are doing.

Help them to identify sounds, colors, shapes, tools…

1. Teach them to **listen** attentively to stories, conversation, directions…
2. Be alert to their **speech patterns**. Practice games with sounds—match sounds. Think of another word

with a given sound. Notice and find rhyming words. Enjoy nursery rhymes.

1. Have them practice **storytelling**. Recount an experience they had. Re-tell a story.
2. Answer his “**why**” questions according to his age level.
3. Notice **likenesses and differences** between objects, fruits, shapes, sounds, events. Find hidden pictures.
4. Encourage **collections** and sorting things by categories: twigs, stones, feathers, stickers, pictures…
5. Play **memory games**—with matching cards (visual) or “going on a trip” lists (aural/oral).
6. **Sort** things by shape, color, size, etc. Use cut-out shapes, plastic objects, coins, buttons, beads, etc.
7. Make **patterns**—string or line up beads, buttons, popcorn, pasta…
8. **Build** with blocks, plastic bricks, “Lincoln logs,” etc.
9. **Draw**, trace, and color.
10. Teach them to **follow directions**. Play “Simon says…”
11. Teach **time concepts**: morning/afternoon; days of week; seasons of year. Tell time from clock.
12. Teach **prepositions** and direction words: up/down; in/out; before/after; left/right; near/far; over/under.
13. Develop **number sense**:
    1. **Count**. (Step on numbers on floor or on stair steps; manipulate plastic numbers; trace numbers.)
    2. Learn **sequence**: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th …
    3. Learn simple **addition** and **subtraction**: (one more; one less…)
    4. Use play money to count, sort, or play store.
14. Point out some **letters** and words on signs, boxes, book covers…
15. **Memorize** rhymes, songs, scripture.
16. **Sing**; match tones.
17. Exercise large muscle movement (**gross motor skills**), including rhythmic activities &

spatial awareness: Bounce, throw, and catch balls; jump rope; use hoops & frisbees;

hop, skip, jump; swing…

1. Exercise small muscle movement (**fine motor skills**), developing eye-hand coordination:

String beads/buttons, tie knots, trace, cut & glue shapes, manipulate blocks and objects, sew…