

Pre-School Curriculum

Question: *Do you have a pre-school curriculum?*

Answer: Unless your child has some unusual needs that must be handled using specific procedures, in our view, you don't need a pre-school curriculum. From the time that children are mobile and able to understand simple commands through ages six or seven, they need several things that gradually become more complex as they can receive them:

1. Firmness. They must learn that their parents are in control.
2. Restraint. They must learn that they cannot do everything they want.
3. Love. They must learn that even when they are strongly restrained, they are loved.
4. Love for God. Family devotions are vital. Sing, worship, and pray together. Teach him basic Biblical principles and how they apply to his everyday life. Talk throughout the day about how good God is. He needs to know that God is with him all the time, not just when he is in services.
5. Clear speech. They need to be spoken to in clear, specific English using complete sentences. (This doesn't exclude occasional fun speech that is wholesome.)
6. Being read to. The need to learn that written matter is important, exciting, and fun for them. Many specifics that are precursors to reading can be taught in a fun, natural way as you read to the child:
 - a. The connection between sounds and symbols (letters).
 - b. English is read from left to right.
 - c. Letters make syllables; syllables make words; words make sentences; sentences make complete thoughts.
 - d. Sentences have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
 - e. Our voices go up and down as we say sentences. That's important as we speak to one another.These and many other basics are easy for the child to learn as you read to him and show your excitement over the reading. You don't need a prepared curriculum to accomplish this.
7. An introduction to the world of numbers. Simply starting with the child's own body (one nose, two ears, etc.) is effective. As you discuss the environment of the home in clear speech and expect that the child will have jobs to do, you will have many opportunities for counting. The concept of numeration will grow in him.

8. Talk about the world around him. This can be simply the differences among various species of dogs or between different animals. Flowers and trees have different blooms and different shaped leaves. He can learn the idea of left and right so that you can help him to give simple directions.
9. Some resources will be helpful, and many are available. Ruth Beechick has two inexpensive booklets that can give you a basic framework for working with a young child: *Home Start in Reading* and *Strong Start in Language* (available from www.Amazon.com). Don't take the references to grade level too seriously. Your child's interests and abilities are far more important than a school "grade". Other suggestions are *How To Tutor* and *Alpha Phonics* by Samuel Blumenfeld. (available at www.homeschoolingbooks.com).
10. Give your children structure, consistency, and firm direction, but don't pressure them to follow a curriculum in the early years. Building their character is far more important.