

MAKING SURE YOUR PRESCHOOLER STARTS ON A PATH TOWARDS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

The preschool years are the time when young children develop social, cognitive, and language skills that will prepare them for their educational careers. During these years, children gain an enthusiasm for learning, emotional security, self-confidence, language proficiency, an ability to regulate their own behavior, and the ability to influence the world around them, setting them on a path to high school graduation.



What can I do to help my preschooler start on a path towards graduation?

- **Encourage independence** by expecting more from your child, giving them the opportunity to do things they are capable of on their own. Simple tasks like getting dressed or tidying up after meals help build confidence and responsibility.
 - **Praise their efforts**, even if their bed is not made perfectly or their clothing choices are different from yours.
- **Encourage friendships among peers with and without disabilities** through social, recreational, and sports activities.
- **Develop predictable routines** so that your child knows what to expect each day.
- **Encourage positive behaviors** by praising specific things your child is doing well.
 - **Pay attention to signs that things are not going well** such as misbehavior, avoidance, withdrawal, or sudden changes in behavior with the school to develop a plan to make changes to the learning environment and encourage positive behaviors.
- **Read to and with your child.** Encourage their interest in books.
- **Provide opportunities** to play games, sing songs, and engage in science, math, art, and writing activities.
- **Encourage your child to experiment and discover**, within limits.
- **Establish a communication system with the preschool** so that you know what is happening with your child.
- **Use positive language** when talking about school, teachers, and classmates to help build a supportive and encouraging attitude toward learning and relationships.
- Address concerns directly with the school through open and respectful communication to find effective solutions together. **Talk to your child** (daily) about their experiences at school. Find out what they are doing in school, who their friends are and allow them to share their interests and preferences.
- **Participate and volunteer in school activities.** These are clever ways to show your support for your child's education and stay connected to the school community.
- **Be aware of signs of bullying, learning disabilities, or health concerns** that could be affecting your child's well-being or academic performance. Identifying these concerns early can help you collaborate with the school and healthcare professionals to provide the right support.
- **If your child has an individualized education program (IEP)**, make sure they are included in classes with their typical peers to the greatest extent possible. When appropriate, encourage your child to attend and participate in their IEP meetings. Involving them at their level helps build self-awareness, confidence, and a sense of ownership in their learning and future planning.
- **Check that your child has access to and is using** the necessary accommodations and assistive technology as included in their Section 504 plan or IEP to access the curriculum.
- **Make sure your child takes medications that are prescribed and encourage a healthy lifestyle** that includes a healthy diet, plenty of exercise, and sleep.

PRESCHOOL



Examples of Practical Ways to Support Your Child in Developing Independence

What can you do?	How can you do it?
Offer choices <i>within appropriate limits</i> (add visual).	- Encourage children to practice making choices during everyday activities - Provide 2-3 weather-appropriate clothing options or healthy snacks and let them decide.
Point out the impact of their choices (talk through potential outcomes).	- When children make a choice, whether it leads to a positive or negative outcome, verbally explain the result of that choice. "Today you picked to wear leggings with your dress, now you will be warm to play on the playground."
Help your child understand what they need to keep their body safe (personal boundaries, hygiene, nutrition, rest, and how to speak up if something does not feel right)	- Encourage your child to communicate what feels okay and what does not feel okay <i>and why</i>. - Give your child opportunities to practice setting boundaries by asking for their input during everyday routines like, "Can I have a hug?" or "We have to put this sweater over your head for you to wear it today. Are you ready?"
Allow your child to attend and encourage participation in IEP Team meetings and parent-teacher conferences.	- Before and during IEP meetings or parent-teacher conferences, ask your child questions related to their education. "What do you like about school?" "What helps you learn?" "What is your favorite part of the day?" "What makes you feel proud at school?"

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia 770-451-5484 or 800-229-2038 or www.p2pga.org

Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) <https://gelds.dec.state.ga.us/>

Georgia Department of Education, Division for Exceptional Children: gadoe.org

Special Education Help Desk: 404-656-3963 or SPEDHelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us

Graduation Requirements

<https://apps.gadoe.org/SBOE/SBOE%20Rules/160-4-2-.48.pdf#search=graduation%20rule>

Additional resources: Contact the Special Education Director for your school system.

Credits:

