What Should Children Learn in Preschool

Our opinions about how and what children should learn are shaped by our own experiences. Think back to your own childhood. What experiences did you have at home and school? How did your parents and teachers interact with you and other children? How has this influenced how you think children and adults should interact?

Think about the following scenarios. What would you say in each situation?

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| Terrence’s mother stops to talk during pick-up time. She mentions that she is worried about Terrence starting kindergarten in the fall. She shows you the worksheets Terrence’s cousin is doing in his preschool program. She notes how impressive it is that he has copied and created a page full of the letter “R.” She assures you that she is happy with your classroom, but she isn’t sure what Terrence is learning. She is worried that Terrence isn’t going to be ready for school in the fall. | “Thank you so much for sharing your concerns. I completely understand how stressful getting ready for kindergarten can be. For children going to kindergarten, worksheets may be used as a child choice basis. It sounds like you are worried about Terrence learning to read. Here is information about how he is learning about letters in a few of our different interest areas of our room:

Blocks: By reading the magazines and books we have in the block area so he can think of what he would like to build.

Dramatic play: By pretending to be at a restaurant looking at the menu or taking someone’s order.

Arts: By drawing and writing on different types of paper using markers or paint.

Sand and water: By putting our plastic letters in the water and by making letter prints in the sand.” |

| Before Kimberlynn starts in your program, her father schedules an appointment to come meet with you. After a few minutes of pleasant conversation, he mentions that he wants to talk about how you address issues with sharing toys in the classroom. He tells you that he believes children should not be asked to share toys. He knows Kimberlynn is very attached to her toys and to toys she plays with during play groups. He has seen teachers force children to give up toys, and he is not comfortable with that. | What would you say to dad about sharing?

“I understand where you are coming from. It’s important for children to learn to respect other’s belongings. It’s also important for children to learn to work and play with others. We try to respect both of those goals”.

What might you suggest for toys from home?

“If Kimberlynn brings a special object from home, we will always teach the children to respect that”.

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