

Introduction

The Preschool Calendar offers teachers instructional units organised by the month, covering both learning and developmental areas. The practical activities and timeless teaching suggestions can be used as a complete early childhood curriculum or they may be used to enrich or supplement a pre-existing curriculum program. The content has been tried, tested, validated as age-appropriate and has been well-received by early childhood educators. *The Preschool Calendar* is one that all early childhood programs will want in their libraries and teaching resource centres.

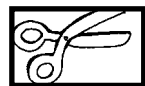
The Preschool Calendar can provide teachers with creative ideas all year long. For each of the school months you will find:



Wall displays



Stories



Fine motor/Art activities



Gross motor/Movement activities



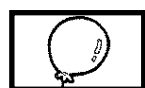
Language activities



Finger plays/Poetry



Music activities



Learning games /Experiential activities



Reproducible activity pages

All the material that you will need for developing a creative, educational, stimulating and 'fun' early childhood program can be found in *The Preschool Calendar*.

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February

Starting school

During the month of February many children are beginning their first 'school' experience. Some children adjust quickly and are immediately able to join in, but for other children, those first few days can be 'a little scary'. Many of the activities this month are meant to help ease the child's adjustment to their new setting.

Here are some helpful suggestions that will ease the child's transition:

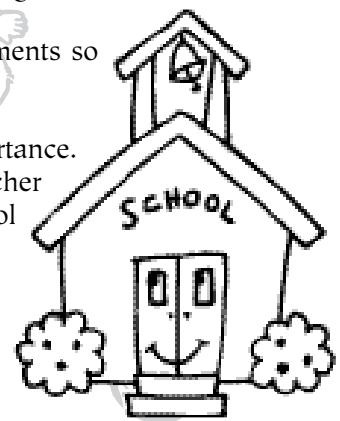
1. At the time of enrolment, ask the parents to fill out an information sheet, including questions about a child's favourite toys and activities. It will help if you know something about the child's interests ahead of time.
2. Call parents the day before a child is to begin school. Ask if there is anything special you could do to make the child's first day more comfortable. This will make the parents feel more comfortable, too.
3. Allow children to bring a 'special blanket'. As children become more secure in their new situation, the need for the blanket will decrease. I believe this is especially important for very young children.
4. Let Mum or Dad visit. Children often reflect the attitudes of their parents. If the child can see that Mum or Dad thinks it's a nice place, the child is more apt to think so, too.
5. Encourage parents not to look anxious when they leave the child. Goodbyes should be kept cheerful, even if the child is in tears.

The early years teacher not only has to help the child adjust, but also needs to help the parents make some adjustments. For parents, leaving a child under the care of someone else for the first time can be an upsetting experience. I am a teacher and I am also a parent. After all my years in the classroom, I could not believe how anxious I felt about leaving my little girl at what I knew to be a warm, responsible and well-run facility. I worried if she was going to be happy; would she nap well; would she eat? Both of us did adjust, but I think it took me longer than it did my daughter.

Here are some suggestions that I have found helpful to do as a teacher and things that I have appreciated as the parent of a preschooler.

1. Daily notes – nap or rest time is a good time to write these notes. Daily notes will probably save you time in the long run, because you will not need to answer so many questions at the end of the day.
2. Post activities or lesson plans outside your classroom door. This will encourage parents to discuss daily activities with their child.
3. If possible, provide copies of finger plays, songs or topics which are being taught.
4. Let parents know you are available to talk with them. Encourage appointments so parents do not disrupt your class.

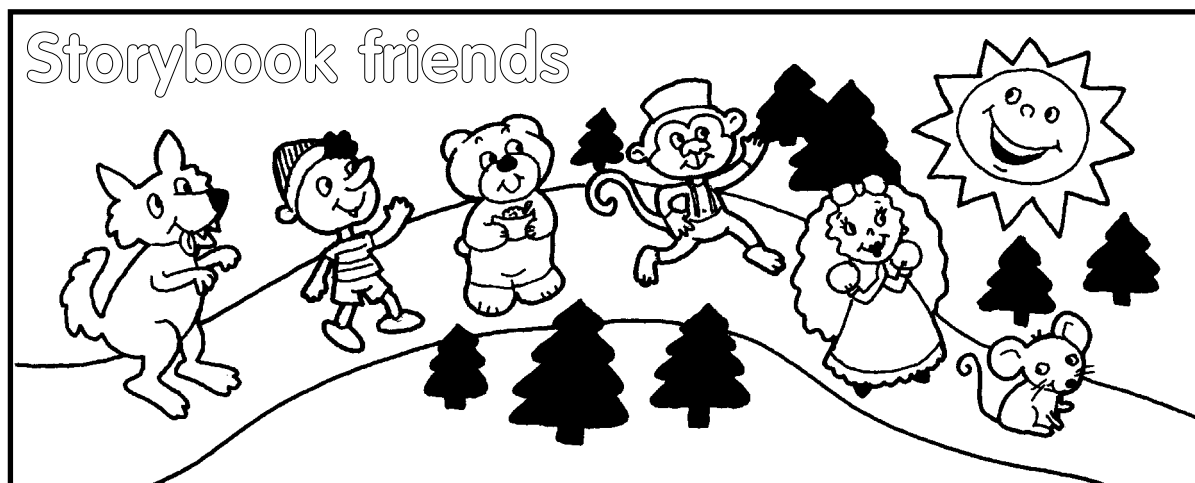
Helping children make the transition from home is of the utmost importance. I believe that the first teacher a child has is probably the most important teacher they will ever have. That first teacher can set a child's attitude for all their school years. YOU are very important!





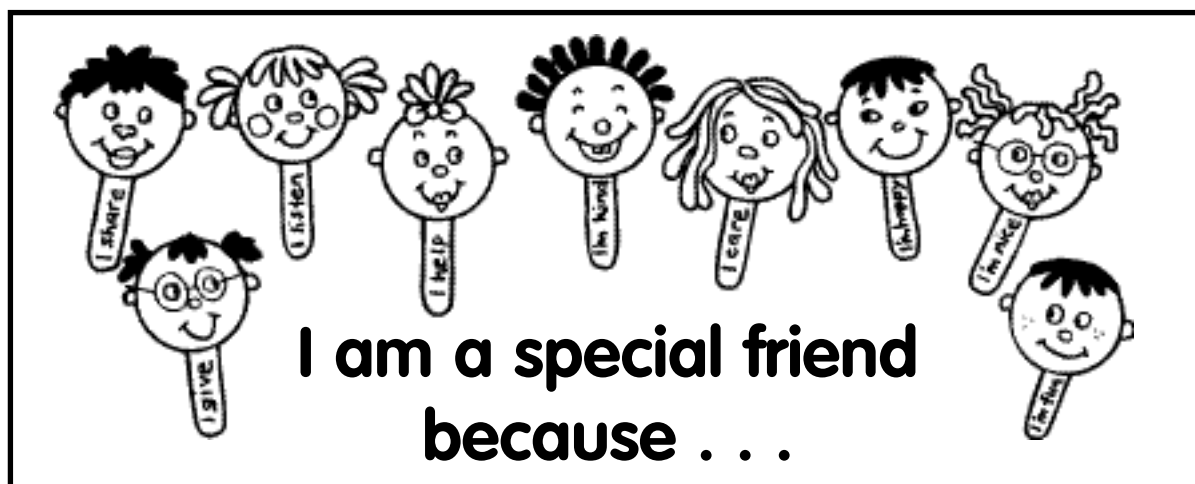
Wall displays

Storybook friends



This wall display is started in February and added to all year long. Each time you read a story to your class, draw a picture of one or more of the main characters. Keep adding the characters to your display. Children love seeing pictures of the characters that they have learned about in stories. This is also a fun technique for increasing memory skills. Periodically ask the children who all the characters are and see who can retell all or part of the story. Display the characters walking along a path or scattered in a forest scene.

I am a special friend because ...



The teacher prepares a circle shape for the head, cut out of construction paper and attaches it to an icy pole stick, for the body. The children decorate the faces to look like themselves by adding wool for hair and colouring in the features of the faces. The teacher writes a short phrase on the icy pole stick that completes the sentence, 'I am a special friend because ...'



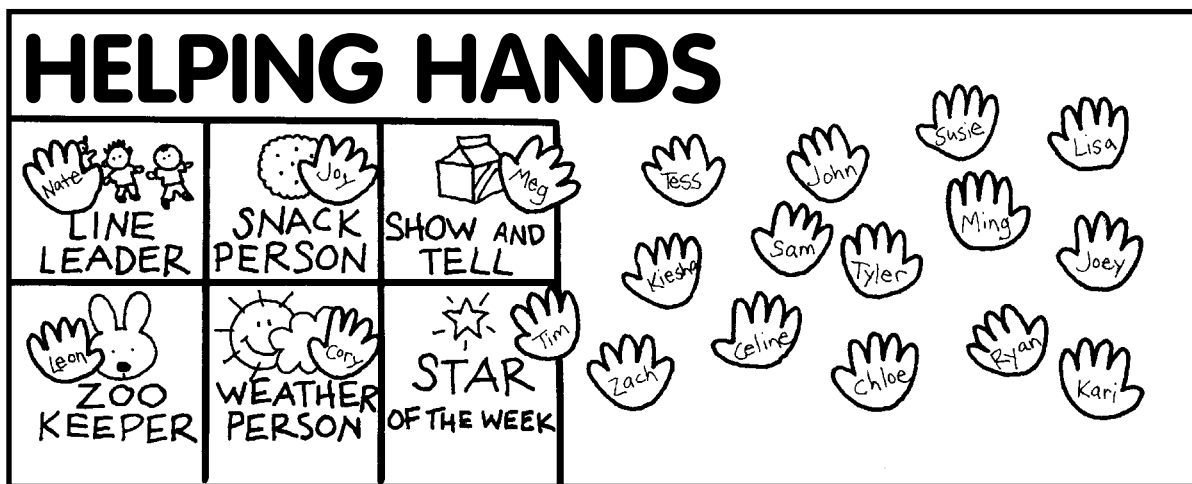
Wall displays

Welcome to school



On the first day of school, use a digital camera and take a picture of each child. Mount the pictures on construction paper with each child's name. Fold the corners of the construction paper to make a three-dimensional picture frame. Display the pictures around a drawing of an old-fashioned school house.

Helping hands



Most early years classrooms have daily or weekly helpers. Make a chart that lists the different responsibilities with which the children in your room assist you. Draw a picture depicting what the job is or use photographs of the children doing the jobs. Have each of the children trace their hand on heavy construction paper and cut it out. Write the child's name on the paper hand. The hands can be placed on the chart.