

Helping Your Child Build School Success Skills

Young children are explorers and scientists as they try to figure out how the world works. Adults can help them by encouraging them as they attempt to put things together or take them apart, as they ask questions about how something works or why something happens.

The New Mexico Early Learning Outcomes include several school-success building skills. Our goal for each child is that he or she:

- Try new things or activities
- Learn to do things on his or her own
- Pretend in many ways
- Develop a longer attention span

In addition, developing responsibilities for the greater community are important school skills. The New Mexico PreK goals in this area for each child are that he or she:

- Express cultural influences from home, neighborhood and community
- Learn to care for belongings
- Play with other children
- And learn to resolve conflicts



The following activities can help support your child's development of the skills that will help toward school success:

Play, Pretend and Get Along

Young children love to play, by themselves, with their sisters and brothers, with adults and with other children in the neighborhood.

Set up play times for your child. You can join in or watch the children as they play.

Dress up clothes (shoes, hats, scarves and jewelry) encourage pretending. Children love to imitate adults by pretending to cook, go shopping or care for babies and animals. You can talk with them about what they are doing and join in the pretend by drinking from a cup of pretend "tea" or eating a pretend "burrito." Your participation will help the children to stay engaged and become more creative in their pretend.

Conflicts and disagreements may come up as children try to decide how they want their pretend play to develop. You may have to help them talk through their disagreements and take turns accepting others' ideas. This will help them learn to get along with other children at school as well.

And, pretending with objects that are not real (such as using a shoe to be a telephone) is good preparation for reading, writing and mathematics. Those academic subjects require the use of abstract thinking. And, that's just what a child is doing when he or she pretends!