

Prepping for kindergarten makes an easier transition

Kindergarten used to be a time when kids grabbed a nap in between fingerpainting and playing outside, but today's coursework is much more rigorous and kindergarteners are now introduced to concepts that were once taught in later years of elementary school. Preparing children who have never attended school for their first day could take a little time prior to the start of school.



SIGNING UP FOR SCHOOL

Each school district has its own requirements to begin kindergarten, so parents should familiarize themselves with their school district as soon as possible. One of the primary requirements is age. Children generally have to meet a certain age requirement (usually age 5), meaning their birthdays have to take place prior to or by a cut-off date.

Public schools will also require proof of residence. They often require utility bills with the student's address on them. Private schools typically have more lenient residence requirements.

Most entering students also will need to have received all the necessary vaccinations. If the student has not received all immunizations, he or she will need to do so before enrolling.

GETTING PREPARED

Some children are anxious to be "big kids" and begin school. Others may be nervous about what's in store. The best way to prepare children is to think about enrolling them in some sort of social program. Preschool is the avenue many parents choose, but simply spending time together with other kids in a structured social setting is enough for many kids to get acclimated.

Talking about what to expect at school can also ease jitters. Parents can establish a school-like structure at home to illustrate their points. Have set times for meals and snacks, require small chores be done on time and set additional rules and limits. Bed time and wake times should be the same each day as well. Children who are

unaccustomed to having structure may find the rigors of the classroom scary.

Parents should inquire about touring the school to help calm kids' nerves. This way children will see exactly what environment they will be working in each day.

HONING SKILLS

Children will partake in a variety of activities during kindergarten. They'll begin learning to write and perform other activities that require fine motor skills. Parents can introduce their children to pencils, crayons, markers, and safety scissors so they can learn the proper grip and how to maneuver these tools.

It's also never too early to read with children. Studies indicate that children who frequently read with their parents or others tend to have greater success in school. The National Education Association says that children who were read to frequently are more likely to:

- * count to 20, or higher than those who were not
 - * write their own names
 - * read or pretend to read
- The Educational Testing Services reports that students who do more reading at home are better readers and have higher math scores.

Kindergarten is a child's initial foray into the world of academia. Much has changed in the kindergarten curriculum, and parents can expect their kids to be learning much more in kindergarten than they once did.

How to make healthy school lunches for kids

Confrontations focusing on diet between children and parents have been around seemingly since the beginning of time. Many children start off as cooperative eaters, anxious to try different types of foods. As they get older, the number of foods they're apt to eat diminishes, which can make choosing healthy items for lunches and dinners more difficult. It also can make packing lunches for school more challenging.

Many initiatives have attempted to improve the quality of school lunches provided by school cafeterias. Government regulations to reduce the amount of fat and sodium in these lunches, and to introduce more whole grains, fruits and vegetables, are one such initiative. Parents of students who prefer to bring their own lunches from home may be left wondering how they can create healthy lunches their kids will eat.

Considering school lunches must compete with far less healthy yet widely available alternatives, parents will need to be creative in their creation of homemade lunches. Here are some ideas to get you started.

* Purchase a new lunch container. There are many different new and innovative lunch containers that can make separating school lunches easy. Few kids want to dig into a brown paper

sack and pull out something that has been so squashed it's unrecognizable. Partitioned lunch boxes enable you to pack different items together where they can be stored separately. The divisions also help you remember to include foods from the basic food groups, such as a fruit, vegetable, protein, starch and dairy item.

* Have your child make a list of his or her favorite foods. Once the list has been made, see how you can make the foods healthier. For example, if chicken nuggets make the list, prepare your own nuggets with white meat chunks that are baked, not fried. If there are a number of bread items, see if you can substitute whole grain breads instead of white, bleached varieties.

* Get creative. Children may not be inclined to eat loose pieces



of fruit. But if the fruit is stuck on skewers or served with a low-fat dipping sauce or caramel, it may look more appealing. Look to "mini" foods, which tend to be more fun as well. Little sandwiches and little burgers may present an optical illusion, where kids think they're eating only a small amount, but actually it's a full serving.

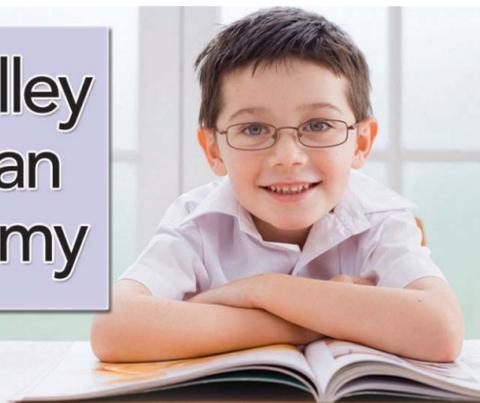
* Hide healthy foods within others. There are entire recipe books that teach you how to mix fruits and vegetables into desserts to increase nutritive value. Everything from spinach to tofu to beets have been included in items like cake, cookies and brownies. So if kids are reticent to dig into their greens, try a clever hiding

method. Kids may be more inclined to eat a turkey and cheese sandwich if it's cut into star shapes or their favorite cartoon characters. Invest in a few cookie cutters so that lunchtime becomes fun time.

* Don't let the time of day dictate what you serve. As long as kids are eating healthy items, it doesn't matter when they eat them. If a child loves bagels, choose whole wheat bagels and add an egg on top for a nutritious lunch. Serve with a gelatin dessert that contains chunks of fruit and low-fat milk, and you're set.

There are many different ways to improve homemade lunches for the better.

Missouri Valley Christian Academy



Still taking enrollment for grades K-7th

- July 31st.....Information Night for Interested Families (4-7pm)
- August 5th.....Welcome Potluck for New Families and Staff
- August 20th.....Back to School Chapel & Open House
- August 22nd.....First Day of School

More more information visit www.mvcamustangs.org or call 665-4470

Brunick Furniture



MATTRESS SALE! LIMITED TIME! CASH AND CARRY

Special Pricing in Every Department Storewide!

Medium Firm

- Twin Size Sets.....**\$168**
- Full Size Sets.....**\$257**

Deluxe Plush

- Twin Size Sets.....**\$248**
- Full Size Sets.....**\$327**
- Queen Size Sets....**\$397**

Deluxe Pillowtop

- 1 Only Full Set.....**\$477**
 - 1 Only Queen Set....**\$577**
- Close-Out!



Brunick Furniture & Flooring



207 W. 3rd St. • Yankton, SD • 665-5625
1100 W. Cherry St. • Vermillion, SD • 624-8688

Monday 9-8
Tuesday-Friday 9-5:30
Saturday 9-5

- Fashions & Footwear
- Sporting Goods
- Dorm Furnishings
- Health & Beauty
- Automotive Services
- Jewelry
- Personalized Clothing

YANKTON MALL

2101 Broadway, 665-5999
M-F 10-9pm, Sat. 10-5:30pm,
Sun. Noon-5pm

Be First in Line for Sports & School Physicals

Be first in line to book your child's sports and school physical and enjoy your summer with peace of mind. Schedule now to work around family vacations, reunions, and work schedules.

Sports physical forms need to be completed by a parent or guardian prior to the appointment.

Call NOW to Book Your Appointment.
605-665-7841

YANKTON MEDICAL CLINIC, PC.
1104 West 8th Street • Yankton, SD 57078
www.yanktonmedicalclinic.com

So Much Care, So Close to Home.