

PRE-SCHOOL POSITIVES

With so much research out now, the debate of whether or not pre-school is beneficial to a child is losing steam. There is no doubt that a child completely benefits from the unique love and care of his or her own mother, but when it comes time to give a child additional social and learning opportunities, pre-school experience has proven to be a definite plus! There are a few who consider any type of learning experience outside of the home, prior to Kindergarten, as taboo. But the latest research has proven over and over again that preschool is a true necessity.

Children are constantly seeking out new stimulating people, objects, and information. It is up to parents to ensure that their children have the experiences of exploring new learning environments. Most scientists have determined what children learn between infancy and Kindergarten (5 years of age), is the foundation for the rest of their emotional and intellectual development. Many children today are attending preschool programs on a full time basis due to their parent's demanding work schedules. However, if a parent is able to keep a child home the majority of the time it is not necessary to enroll them on a full time basis for them to get the same opportunities in a part time preschool program. What's important is that all children are given the opportunity for social and intellectual development and enhancement by others outside of the home. In December 2000, my article, "Choosing the Best Child Care," lists the many options of child care that are available today. For instance some programs offer a two, three, or four day program, and even half days. As for what's best for you, that depends on your and your child's individual needs, taking into consideration their age, developmental level, your scheduling needs, and your financial situation.

According to Anna Quindlen's report in February's Newsweek, "Building Blocks for Every Kid," there is strong evidence for the benefits of preschool programs that provide developmentally appropriate play and stimulation for toddlers and infants. There were several studies conducted of adults who attended the High / Scope Perry Preschool Project in Michigan. It was determined that the children benefited from their pre-school experience because they felt more confident and independent, had a higher self esteem and were therefore less likely to get in trouble with the law. Keep in mind that with any environment you offer your child, it should be safe, loving, nurturing, and educationally stimulating. With state assistant programs and a movement across the nation of the awareness of the significance and imperatives of a pre-school experience, all children should have the opportunity for a strong pre-academic foundation to be laid.

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