



Will Your Child be Ready for Kindergarten?

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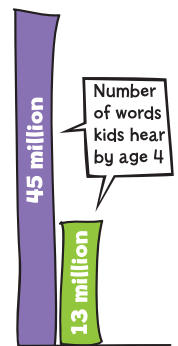
With today's stepped up educational demands, 5-year olds are being asked to do more than just play. But some children arrive on the first day of kindergarten three times more prepared to learn than their classmates. Children's author and literacy consultant Matthew Gollub offers tips to ensure that your child is ready and to lay the foundation for success in school.

Share 1,000 stories before kindergarten.

"To some parents," says Gollub, a thousand stories sounds daunting. But when you think of 365 days in a year and multiply that number by five, you get 1,825 days to read before kindergarten. Word books, rhyming books, even books on tape all count. Even hearing the same book more than once counts toward a child's one thousand stories. Once children hear one thousand stories, they have the knowledge, vocabulary, and attention span to follow all that their teacher is saying."

Talk, share, and talk some more!

"By the time kids are four, some will have heard three times more words than others," Gollub explains. Consider 45 million vs. 13 million total words that a child hears spoken to them by a grown-up. The kids who hear 45 million have a huge advantage. In effect, they arrive at kindergarten three times more linguistically sophisticated than their classmates at the lower end of this range.



Lovingly explain from an early age why too much electronic media is not good.

"This one," says Gollub, "takes self-control because when grown-ups in the home consume tons of screen time, it's only natural for kids to do the same. The best bet is to give kids fun alternatives like board games, arts and crafts, and outdoor games. And put books, not screens, in your child's room!"



To help parents better grasp the benefits of reading to kids, Gollub cites another eye opening statistic: most conversation between adults and children consists of just 1,000 different vocabulary words. But in school, children will encounter 19,000 vocabulary words in printed text through the end of 4th grade! "Television and movies," says Gollub, "won't make up the difference. Those are visual media which use short sentences and simple words. In movies, you often hear sentences like, 'Whoa! Wait up! I never said that. Yes, you did!'"

"In a picture book, you'll find sentences like, 'Mother Duck looked right, then left, before bravely marching her brood of ducklings across the bustling sidewalk.' That," concludes Gollub, "is the level of language that kids need to succeed in school."



Matthew Gollub is the well-known author of such books as The Jazz Fly series and Gobble, Quack, Moon (books with audio CD). His award-winning picture book for parents is called Give the Gift! 10 Fulfilling Ways to Raise a Lifetime Reader. For more information and free literacy resources, visit www.matthewgollub.com.

