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TEACHER & CAREGIVER Discussions with Children

Before Viewing

Set the stage and start children thinking about kindergarten before you show the video. Ask questions like the following to start a conversation:

- How do you think kindergarten will be different from our school?
- What things do you think might be the same as in our classroom?
- What do you wish you knew right now about kindergarten?

Explain that you're going to show a video about what kindergarten is like and what children do there. Are there particular things you want children to notice? Give them cues so they will watch carefully.

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After Viewing:

Use these questions to begin a discussion. Notice children's concerns. Acknowledge their feelings. Be encouraging and positive.

- I saw some things in this video that we do here in our class. What did you see?
- What did you see you would like to do in kindergarten?
- What do you hope you will learn in kindergarten?
- How do you think you will get to your new school?
- Do you think you could be friends with children like the ones you saw in the video?
- What do you think helped the children in the video make friends with each other?
- What would you like your new teacher to know about you?

If possible, follow your discussion with a simple activity tied to the video. Some suggestions are listed in Transition Activities.

Transition Activities for Teachers:

Children need your help as they leave this familiar place and transition to a new school or classroom. To help them get ready, be sure to plan a series of discussions and activities toward the end of your school year

- Show *Kindergarten Here I Come!*
- Read books about starting school, growing up, and making changes.
- Have children draw or paint pictures about starting school.
- Do a puppet show about meeting new friends or meeting a new teacher.
- Talk with families about any particular concerns their child may have, so you can offer information and encouragement.

Parent-Child Discussions

Children have all kinds of feelings about this big step they are taking. They may be excited, proud that they're getting bigger, and a little concerned at the same time.

Kindergarten Here I Come! is a great conversation starter when parents and children watch together.

Set the Stage

Watch the video and use the following questions to encourage your child to talk about kindergarten. Casual conversations about starting school will help you understand what additional information or reassurance your child needs.

- What did you see in the video that looked most fun to you?
- What do you hope you will learn in kindergarten?
- How do you think you will get to your new school?
- How can you find the bathroom at school?
- I wonder what helped the children in the video make friends with each other?

Offer Helpful Information

Remember, some children have concerns about starting kindergarten. Hearing your comments about the video can help start important conversations. For example, you might say:

- In the video, I saw everyone helping each other and figuring things out together.
- I saw some children just starting to learn letters and numbers. Teachers help everyone learn and practice.
- I notice sometimes they have snack time in kindergarten.
- When the day was done, I saw children going home. I bet they had a lot of great things to tell their parents.

Review Tips for Families on page 8 and try some of the Transition Activities on page 3. Offer encouragement and celebrate your child becoming a kindergartener!

Meetings with Parents

Kindergarten Here I Come! will help parents understand more about kindergarten and feel more confident about answering their children's questions.

Tell families you will show a short video about kindergarten. Explain that the video presents a child's-eye-view of kindergarten and answers a series of children's questions (listed on page 7).

Before Viewing Activity

Briefly discuss what a big transition starting school is for children and families. Emphasize that children usually have very little experience with such big transitions. As adults, we have considerable experience, but even for us, change may be a challenge.

Ask parents:

What concerns do you have when you're entering an unfamiliar situation or meeting a new group of people for the first time? What do you want to know ahead of time?

Write their answers on the board.

After Viewing

Have parents review the list they generated before watching the video. Now ask them to recall questions about kindergarten from the video and list them on the board.

Questions from the video

- How will I get to kindergarten?
- What will my teacher be like?
- What other adults will be there?
- What do you do in kindergarten?
- What can I learn?
- Will I find a friend?

Ask:

- How are these two lists the same or different?
- What do you think children need to help them prepare for new situations?
- What do you think your child is most excited about? What concerns might your child have?

Page 8:

Tips for Families:

- Talk about kindergarten. Be positive and enthusiastic.
- Encourage questions, and answer honestly. Show confidence that kindergarten will be a good, safe place.
- Make sure your child understands the teacher will always be there to help.
- Plan and get ready for school together. Count down the days until school starts.
- Sign and organize documents you need to bring to school
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest before the first day of school.
- Provide a healthy breakfast
- Be patient and offer continual reassurance