

# Learning to Learn



Dear Parents,

Listed below are some behavioral strategies we are doing in speech and language here at High Grove Early Childhood Center to work on improving students learning and success in the classroom. These strategies are called "Learning to Learn" behaviors.

The goal of teaching these behaviors is to encourage our students to follow teacher directed activities, improve students attention to certain learning tasks and improve the student's ability to wait for instruction from the teacher or adult.

There are 5 main "learning to learn" behaviors that we are working on:

- **"Walk/stop"**: this is an important skill that all students need to be taught in order to help with safety. When an adult tells them to walk, they walk. When an adult tells them to stop, they stop.

This is important to work on at home too. Practice walking from the car to the house. Practice walking/stopping on the sidewalk. The goal is to teach your child that he/she needs to be aware of your voice and to encourage safety. Start by holding his/her hand and saying "walk", then walk for a few steps then say "stop" and stopping.

Eventually practice without holding their hand. Also practice in other places such as in parking lots walking into stores, while walking in stores, at the park, etc.

- **"Hands down"**: this is an important skill to teach when you want to show or teach your child something new. He/she needs to learn to not grab items that are presented to him/her without getting permission from the adult first. This is important at school so your child can hear a direction from the adult about the learning activity.

Most kids have already learned this skill but just need a few reminders to keep their hands down. This is great to do at the table at meal time.

Teach your child to wait and keep their hands down, not grab the food, silverware or drink until you give him/her permission.

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- **"Wait"**: this is another skill/word we teach to go along with "hands down" and "stop". You may hear your child use these words when you use them at home.
- **"Sit"**: this skill is to teach your child to sit in a chair and attend to a task rather than walking around the room or playing with a toy which is what he/she would rather do. It lets the student know that it's time to learn and to attend to the adult or teacher.
- **"look at me"**: this skill encourages eye contact during an activity.

I encourage you to use the same 5 directions regularly throughout your child's day so that he/she becomes more aware of his/her environment. I think you will find that your child will attend to your voice and have better eye contact with you when you use these same strategies at home. The thought behind teaching these skills is that the student cannot learn academics if they first don't understand how to wait, sit, and keep their hands down. These skills have been taught and are continually reinforced throughout your child's school day.

Here are a few tips:

\*do not "overtalk" - model the behavior and use only one word "stop", "walk", "wait", "hands down", or "sit".

\*it's best to keep it simple—use only the word you are wanting him/her to do. Do not explain "why", just say the direction and nothing else.

\*It's ok to repeat the direction (one word) if necessary.

I hope you find this information useful. I would be glad to answer any questions.

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**(speech/language pathologist)**