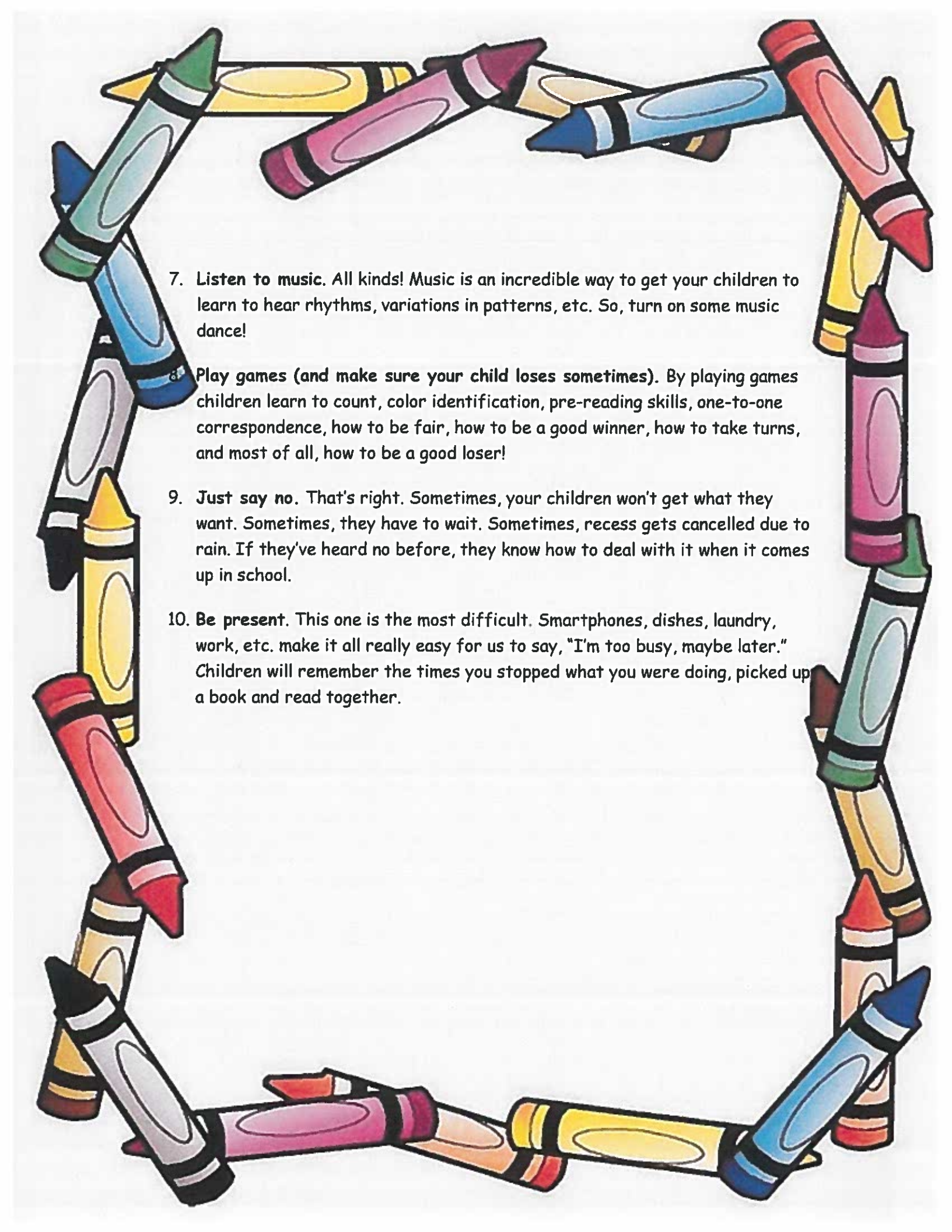




10 Real-Life Ways to Get Your Child "Kindergarten Ready"

By Beth Tanner M.Ed

1. **Read to your children.** A teacher can truly tell in an instant which students are read to regularly at home. Those that are read to are able to sit patiently while others are talking, have more to contribute to discussions, are more interested in reading, have letter-sound knowledge, etc. All of these items were found on other "lists" but can be taken care of with the simple task of reading to your children.
 2. **Talk TO your children.** These children are able to ask for help when needed, answer questions, engage in meaningful conversations with peers, express frustration appropriately, and so much more. Talk about where you are driving, your plans for the day, what you loved when you were a child, and whatever else comes up in your daily lives.
 3. **Go Grocery Shopping.** Parents always want to know what they can do to help their child in literacy and math. Take your child grocery shopping. Make lists, count items, show your child the biggest, etc. These are real life, necessary skills. So much can be learned! (Older children can learn such skills as unit pricing, division, budgeting, volume, etc.)
 4. **Play outside.** Outside play has so many positive implications. It helps children learn how to use their bodies, improves memory, teaches them about calculated risk-taking, and improves mood and well-being.
- Be boring.** Let your child get bored. Don't rescue your children by constantly suggesting a slew of exciting activities. Boredom sparks creativity.
6. **Let your child experience failure, hurt feelings, and scrapes and bruises.** From these difficult times children learn empathy, how to work hard at something, and that the world will keep on turning. Don't immediately rescue your child when someone cuts in line for the slide at the park. Give your children tools to solve these problems on their own.

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7. **Listen to music.** All kinds! Music is an incredible way to get your children to learn to hear rhythms, variations in patterns, etc. So, turn on some music dance!
 8. **Play games (and make sure your child loses sometimes).** By playing games children learn to count, color identification, pre-reading skills, one-to-one correspondence, how to be fair, how to be a good winner, how to take turns, and most of all, how to be a good loser!
 9. **Just say no.** That's right. Sometimes, your children won't get what they want. Sometimes, they have to wait. Sometimes, recess gets cancelled due to rain. If they've heard no before, they know how to deal with it when it comes up in school.
 10. **Be present.** This one is the most difficult. Smartphones, dishes, laundry, work, etc. make it all really easy for us to say, "I'm too busy, maybe later." Children will remember the times you stopped what you were doing, picked up a book and read together.