Imagine that you’re starting a new job tomorrow. You don’t know your boss or co-workers very well. You aren’t sure what your duties will be. Wouldn’t you be a bit nervous—as well as excited? That’s probably how your child feels about starting the school year with a new teacher and classmates.

## Tips to Get Your Child Off to a Great Start!

### Healthy Routines

School days require a lot of energy. Your child may need an earlier bedtime to ensure a good night’s rest. The majority of young children need at least 8-10 hours of uninterrupted sleep. Sleep allows the body to re-energize itself. A healthy breakfast also helps start the day off right. Keep in mind that food typically stays with young children for only 2 hours. After that time, they need to replenish their supply of energy. Proteins tend to remain in the body longer than carbohydrates and provide longer-lasting sources of energy. Consider serving eggs, cheese, or peanut butter along with cereal, waffles, or toast in the morning.

### Simple Clothing

It’s a good idea to send your child to school in comfortable clothes. Pants with elastic waistbands are easy to manage in the bathrooms. Young children often wait until the very last minute “to go” and belts or buckles can get in the way. Be sure your child wears clothes designed for play. If your child has to be concerned about getting the sweater dirty, she may choose not to participate in some of the messier activities the teachers have planned. Labeling everything will help the teachers keep track of your child’s belongings. Items without names have less of a chance of finding their rightful owners.

A complete change of clothes is also a necessity. Even children who are toilet-trained often have the need to change their clothing. Milk spills, paint splatters, and water drips. Your child will feel more comfortable changing into her own clothing. Include a pair of shoes or slippers in your child’s change-of-clothes bag. Wet feet are uncomfortable.

### Saying Good-Bye

Some children experience a “honeymoon” period. For the first few days, they are excited and do not seem to care if you go or stay. When the novelty wears off, then they exhibit more traditional separation behaviors. For others, separation in the morning is more difficult right from the start. In either case, reassure your child that you will be back later in the day. Maintain a rigid time schedule during this adjustment period—drop off at 8:00 am and pick up at 4:00 pm. This will give your child a sense of security. Rely on the early morning teachers to assist you. When you are ready to go, let them know and they will help you say good-bye. Call us when you get to your office. Almost all children forget they are upset once you are out of sight!
Making Sense Out of Your Child’s Childhood

During September, the staff and children experience many changes. Our goals for this time of year are not cognitive, but social and emotional. It is of the utmost importance that everyone, especially our children and their families, feels secure at our Children’s Harbor early care and education centers. We want to be sure that everyone is comfortable in their new surroundings—the first time in a “school” setting, the first time in a new classroom, the first time away from home—and so we concentrate on orienting the children to our materials, rules, and learning environment. It is extremely important to know where to hang your coat and where to find the bathroom!

Our primary goal for each child is that she goes home each day feeling “just a little bit better” about herself than when she entered the center that morning. If we ALL do our job (parents, friends, family members and teachers), think how much better the child will feel at the end of the day? at the end of the week? at the end of the month?

We also devote a large amount of time to language and the skills your child will need to successfully communicate both orally and in written form. Daily, we plan activities that focus on the strengthening of these emerging literacy skills. Parents, by reading to their children at least 20 minutes each night, do more to help their child than can be done all day in a school setting. We count on you to be our partners in our efforts to help your child become a successful learner.

In keeping with our developmental philosophy, we want the children to understand that they are part of a team and they can feel confident about bonding to the children and adults in that group. Once they have established this sense of identity, and have a solid, positive self-concept, they are ready to tackle cognitive skills.

Cognitive goals will be established for each child as an outgrowth of individual assessments and observations. Sometimes we find it necessary to change a child’s group or class in order to offer the most appropriate learning environment. In any event, parents will be informed of all concerns we have regarding their child. Our concerns are not limited to cognitive development, but include the social, emotional, physical and language domains as well. We want to be sure that we help all children grow to their full potential in all of these areas.

Parent conferences are scheduled three times a year—in the fall, midyear, and spring. The conferences are set up by appointment and we discuss your child’s individual progress. This is also the time when we can answer any of the many questions you may have.

The first conference is the time for us to explain our program, answer questions, and discuss our goals. Future conferences are scheduled to allow enough time to pass so that the teacher will have been able to evaluate and observe each child extensively.

Individual concerns are welcomed throughout the year. In order to offer the very best in an educational and developmental early childhood program, we need your input and also your cooperation.

Please talk to your child’s teachers and find out ways in which you can help. We are both focusing on the same goal—the best for and by each child.

Ages and Stages

A developmental approach to early childhood education acknowledges that as a child grows, behavioral changes accompany physical changes. This approach also recognizes the individual growth patterns of each child.

As a result of research, “norms” have been established for this developmental growth pattern. These “norms” give us a measuring device to use as a guideline for understanding behavior. It is reassuring to find most behavior exhibited by children is typical and normal for the age. When a child’s behavior extends beyond the norm, we are alerted. We may note an increased frequency or intensity of an otherwise “normal” behavior, as well as behavior not typically associated with the specific age group. These signals indicate a need for more detailed evaluation. Since children develop at such different rates, the majority of the worries are often found to be unnecessary. It is important for us to keep in mind that these ages and stages are only guidelines. We must constantly remind ourselves that children are unique in their growth patterns.

We have provided more information about several typical characteristics of each age group in the hope that some of the anxieties that accompany child rearing will be alleviated. It is very comforting to hear, “Your child does that too?!?!?”
Your Under One Year Old

Infants in the first year learn an incredible amount of material. Their learning happens quite naturally and spontaneously. The infant is discovering that he has hands and is beginning to learn that he can do things with them. She is learning to coordinate her movements and struggling to gain control of her body. Eventually, attempts to roll over and sit up will become successful. Babies have a natural agenda that instructs them how to move best to prepare for their next developmental step. In order to have lots of time to exercise freely, it is important to limit the amount of time your baby spends in baby carriers, baby chairs, and baby jumpers. Laying on a mat provides the space for your baby to naturally exercise his legs, back, neck, stomach, and arms.

Your baby is also busy learning that the world is a safe, responsive, nurturing place. He develops an essential sense of trust when he cries and is responded to quickly.

He can smile and make someone smile back. Your baby’s communication system is built upon the amount of time you spend establishing eye contact and modeling conversation. Long before she can talk, you and your baby will have developed an elaborate verbal and nonverbal communication system with each other.

Babies enjoy many games at this age. Just repeating his sounds and waiting for his response is enjoyable. “Peek-a-boo” is an old favorite. Babies also love to hear you sing, even if you can’t carry a tune. The singsong melodies and changes in pitch are captivating to this age group. Sing songs you remember from your childhood. Sing about what you are doing—“I am changing your red shirt. It is covered with green peas.” You are still your child’s most favorite toy. He loves to watch your facial expressions and hands and listen to your voice. Right after birth, he can distinguish his mother’s voice and will turn his head towards her when she speaks to him.

It is important to remember that you can talk to even your youngest baby. Describe to her what you are doing when she reaches for her toe or cries to be fed. Tell him what you are doing when you walk away to get his diaper or close the window. All of this rich talking, listening, and interacting not only teaches your baby about language, it also helps to build your emotional relationship with each other.

Your baby is busy getting to know her world. She is learning how to identify people, places, and things in her environment by the way they look, sound, feel, smell, and taste.

Your One Year Old

Your typical one year old is a treasure and a joy. He tends to be an extremely lovable little person—friendly, sociable, and amenable. Most one year olds seem to adapt rather easily to whatever it is the adult has in mind.

She loves to have you play with her, and she usually does her best to please you. He will cuddle and kiss and tends to like other people. On request, she will proudly show you her eyes, nose, mouth, fingers, and toes. He is so excited about what he knows and what he can do!

BUT! they do not necessarily become easier to live with. As the months between their first and second birthdays pass by, the negative parts of personality begin to show. They say “no” before “yes”, throw things before they become interested in picking them up; run away from you before you are able to ask them to come here. In fact, much of your child’s effort seems to be devoted to building up her own independent way of doing things . . . and most of the time that way is the exact opposite of what you have in mind!

Passing the twelve-month mark and graduating from infancy does not imply that your child will start to settle down. On the contrary, she seems eager to exercise her new skills and powers. He becomes demanding and has his own timetable. While being dressed, your compliant baby now struggles and may need to be held bodily. She wants to hold and carry something in each hand, or may want to be carried herself.

Your Two Year Old

Adults notice a wave of increasing egocentricity, “demandingness”, and opposition. Daily routines become battle grounds. This wave crests around eighteen months and is followed by a somewhat calmer six month period.

Overall, you will find your one year old’s increasing abilities a source of pleasure and pride, even though the negative side of his personality will be challenging. This is a time when you will need all the ingenuity and resilience you can muster!

“The Terrible Twos” is a phrase that is used quite often to describe the two year old. This phrase is not entirely true . . . it is not until 2 1/2 that many children become rather “terrible”. It is the “no, no, no” and “I can do it myself” that gives this age period such a bad name.

If your child continues to be gentle and easygoing right on through the 2 1/2 period and does not reach the “terrible 2 1/2” period until she is almost three, don’t be alarmed. And if he is calm by nature and “not very terrible” at any time during this second year, don’t worry about that either!

For many parents, two is the best age of all. Emotionally, two year olds are comfortable and content much of the time. Warmth and affection is expressed by their voice and their cozy, snuggling ways. The child speaks of himself by his given name, usually coupled with a demand such as “Seth wants to go outside”. A repeated phrase is, “It’s mine. It’s mine”. And this is quite fair, since a child must first learn “mine” before she can appreciate “thine”.

Continued on page 4
Your Two Year Old (continued)

The two year old is a delightful companion. He likes to go on little errands, like bringing Mom or Dad requested items. This child loves to go for walks but also enjoys coming home again. Routine is a MUST for the two year old. They like having the same thing happen day after day. “Again” is an often repeated demand. Even when eating, they like repetition. Once they have settled on a favorite food, it will seem as if they are only eating that food. We wonder, “How does a child survive on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches alone?”

The two year old will attempt to do many things by herself. It is important to remember that they have not yet mastered many of the small muscle skills required to do the task. Expect frustration and considerable mess.

“No” is another much used word in the vocabulary of the two year old. You may decrease its use by not asking questions that require a negative response. For example, say, “It’s time to go to bed now” instead of “Do you want to go to bed now?”

Techniques that parents can use to help two year olds through their sometimes difficult days are:

- Take advantage of the child’s need for routines in her life. A good bedtime ritual may solve the often difficult problem of getting the child to bed without too much of a fuss.
- Do not hurry the child when doing routines. It is wise to set up routines that are practical to follow day after day. You will feel as if you are doing the same thing over and over... playing the same game over and over ... reading the same story over and over ... and you are!!! Remember, twos like sameness. It makes them feel comfortable and secure in their changing world.
- Accept the security measures that your child has set up such as the favorite toy, blanket, or thumb. They will let go of these security measures when they are ready. If taken away too soon, they will only be substituted by another item . . . and the new choice may be worse!
- Do not make idle threats. Do not trap yourself by using such statements as: “If you do not pick up your toys right now, I will leave you home when I go to the store.” If you do not have someone you can leave your child with, and you are not willing to stay at home, your child will quickly realize he has “the control”. Say instead, “We will go to the store as soon as you pick up your toys.” When you offer to help them pick up their toys, most two year olds rarely refuse to cooperate. Distraction is another trick that works well when the child’s request cannot be granted immediately.

Your Three Year Old

Three year olds have a well-developed self-concept and are very interested in other children. They often refer to themselves as “I”, no longer as “me” and become aware of the way things are related to one another in terms of number and amount.

Three year olds know and can tell whether they are a boy or a girl. They can answer such questions as “What sleeps?”, “What flies?”, “What must you do when you are hungry?”. They also have enough concept of space combined with an understanding of place words so that they can respond to directions.

The typical three year old shows great interest in “preschool” activities. He builds with blocks and makes simple clay models. She is “product-oriented”. He enjoys looking through picture books and is eager to talk about the pictures. Often they will “read” their favorite story to you. This ability comes from the days of repetition... when you read the same story night after night and felt as if your child knew it “by heart”. They did. The child at this age can follow a moving target with her eyes without losing her attention.

Their paintings are confined to the paper now and do not “usually” spread to the table or the nearby walls or floor.

At three, children are rather strong and secure and accomplished in their motor movement. Three and a half year olds, however, tend to appear insecure and uncoordinated. This is known as a “stretching in new abilities” and the child is caught in the middle.

The typical three year old wants to please and do things right. Parents aware of this desire to please can quite successfully use positive reinforcement, encouragement, and praise as behavior management techniques with this age group.

Your Four Year Old

Four year olds are joyous, exuberant, energetic, ridiculous, and ready for anything. They adore new things and experiences. Their love and hate emotions are equal in strength and these feelings should be respected, within reason.

Four year olds are speedy characters. They do things quickly and are only interested in moving on to the next activity. They try things once and move on. They are good at listening and understanding spatial limitations, when they want to.

Bathroom talk and fascination with the process of elimination are typical of this age. They have a great interest in bathrooms, especially those in other people’s houses. They frequently have to use the bathroom during mealtime and at bedtime.

At four, children start to develop a sense of humor and enjoy silly talk like “duddy lucky” and “Goosey Loosey”. They are intrigued with language and the way words sound. Often, they make up nonsense words. They lie more frequently and they are so imaginative that they exaggerate almost constantly. It is important that you remember that lying is not the moral issue for children that it is for adults. Oftentimes, lying is the child’s way of wishing things were a certain way.

Fours find power in themselves, although they need and respect boundaries and limits established by you. This need for structure can help parents with management techniques. Definite rules and limits work effectively with four year olds.
Your Five Year Old

Fives are “eager beavers”. They want to do right and please everyone—parents, teachers, and friends. This desire to please everyone can cause conflicts as children have to decide who they will please first. They are more willing to share but they have a hard time distinguishing between what is theirs and what they “wish” was theirs. This may lead to what adults term “stealing” although a child does not understand it that way. Like lying with the four year olds, stealing is not the moral issue for five year olds, as it is for adults.

Fives are independent. They thrive on responsibility. Given a job, they will complete it to the end. Often they will delegate their responsibility to others. They enjoy being “the boss”.

Fives love to practice writing and often will copy words and letters from newspapers, signs, books, and posters. At five, however, their visual perception is still being refined and they will often write words, letters, and numbers backwards or upside down. This is a characteristic of being five and not necessarily a sign of a learning disability.

Your Preteen

No matter how important we want to be to our child, the peer group becomes the major influence during the preteen years. Gaining social acceptance becomes the major objective for the fourth through sixth grader. By using made-up languages, secret codes, and special rituals, children strengthen the bonds of friendship. Although all children select close friends of the same gender, they become increasingly more interested in the opposite sex.

Physically, you will notice an increase in your child’s body strength and improvements in his coordination, hand dexterity, and reaction time. This increase in physical abilities coincides with an expanded interest in competitive sports.

Children begin to question authority more often. They identify, and criticize, their parents’ weaknesses. Although they may believe that they need minimal supervision, they are frequently scared and lonely when left alone. Despite verbal protests, your child will be secretly pleased that you take charge and decide to hire a baby-sitter when you go out even for just a few hours. Dealing with your child’s mood swings, defiance, and criticisms is not an easy task. If you impose your will, (either verbally or physically), your child will only become angry and frustrated. She may seek power in other places and become aggressive towards other children. Yelling and spanking results in the same negative behavior. Your child’s behavior will only change for the short term, and he will use yelling and hitting to solve his problems with other children. Offering suggestions to help your child solve her problems or change her behavior is only temporarily effective. The problem is that YOU will be doing the thinking for your child! In the face of your suggestions, your child has no opportunity to come up with ideas of his own and he may become passive. Children are more likely to act on their own solutions if they are given the skills and freedom to do so. When you realize that offering suggestions isn’t working, you may resort to offering explanations. Again, you are taking the active role and your child is remaining passive.

Fifties are complex and intriguing individuals. This is the age when the child leans towards maturity, adventure, and more independence. It can be frustrating for the parents because it is also a year when the child needs all the help he can get. This opposition classically characterizes the six year old. It is a state of indecisiveness and often times the child finds herself unable to choose. One specific example is the relationship the six year old has with his mother. The child both adores and blames her for everything and anything. These contradictions provide a very challenging year for parents.

As the child reaches seven, the stubbornness of the six year old decreases. Enthusiasm and intellectual exploration replace this “trying” trait. New accomplishments, ideas, and discoveries are treated with excessive joy. Seven year olds are not all bliss, however. They can be silent, withdrawn, and love to complain.

Each age and stage is accompanied by its own pains and pleasures. Not only does the child grow, but so does the parent.

Your Six and Seven Year Old

Six year olds are complex and intriguing individuals. This is the age when the child leans towards maturity, adventure, and more independence. It can be frustrating for the parents because it is also a year when the child needs all the help he can get. This opposition classically characterizes the six year old. It is a state of indecisiveness and often times the child finds herself unable to choose. One specific example is the relationship the six year old has with his mother. The child both adores and blames her for everything and anything. These contradictions provide a very challenging year for parents.

As the child reaches seven, the stubbornness of the six year old decreases. Enthusiasm and intellectual exploration replace this “trying” trait. New accomplishments, ideas, and discoveries are treated with excessive joy. Seven year olds are not all bliss, however. They can be silent, withdrawn, and love to complain.

If we change the way we talk to children, it will change the way they talk to us, other adults, and other children.
Why Read to My Child?
Reading is enjoyable and encourages children to learn throughout their lives. Think about it . . . How many children say no when an adult offers to read to them?

- Reading provides precious time together and promotes closeness (sitting together).
- Reading enhances intellectual skills like sequencing, classifying, and predicting outcomes.
- Reading feeds the imagination.
- Reading develops listening skills and builds language skills.
- Reading builds a positive association with the printed word, which encourages children to want to learn to read.
- Reading is a way to access information and learn facts.
- Reading fosters respect and appreciation for books.

The Book Drive
Your child’s bookshelves are probably overflowing with books they have collected over the years. You probably do not have anymore space for one more book.

THE BOOK DRIVE is our year-round program designed to recycle and reuse the wonderful children’s books we have in our personal libraries.

Clean out those shelves and bring any new or gently used children’s books to us. We will find them a new home!

Help support our continued efforts to “have more books to read to more children.”

Expectations of Families
Children’s families are the most important influences in their lives. In order to provide the best experience for your child, teachers and parents must work together.

To be successful, we suggest you try some of our recommendations.
- Ask as many questions as you want. Remember, there are no silly questions, only silly answers.
- Read everything we send and email home and post on our bulletin boards. Keep the monthly calendar and current newsletter handy.
- Believe in our open door policy.
- Support our program with your talents.
- Suggest and offer ideas you know will help your child succeed.
- Share family events and changes that may affect your child's behavior in school.
- Avoid bringing your child to school at lunch or rest time. Your child will have missed a large portion of the social and activity part of the day.

THINGS TO COLLECT
For Our Upcoming Recrafting Projects at Children’s Harbor

Office Supplies: 
- index cards
- poster board
- card stock
- envelopes

Household Items:
- plastic bag ties
- twist ties
- lids
- plastic spools (from adding machines or tape dispensers)

Page 6
NOW ENROLLING

Children’s Harbor
Pre-K Challenge Program

Preparing children for the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional challenges awaiting them in school.

Our Program

In a facility designed for children, nurturing and attentive teachers plan and implement exciting activities. Each day, preschoolers select materials that encourage them to explore, create, cooperate, and gain independence.

Children create masterpieces, meet and mingle with new friends, cook and taste food from different cultures, dance to the classics, discover the stars, pretend to be doctors, firefighters, police officers, bankers, and chairs of the board! They practice new words of a foreign language, stretch their muscles in gymnastics, and harvest the vegetables from the gardens they have planted.

Our Curriculum

Child-Oriented Activities
- Gardening
- Reasoning Skills for Problem Solving
- Verbal and Written Expression
- Money Sense
- Music
- Art
- Gymnastics
- Field Trips
- Cooking
- Sign Language
- Spanish
- Drama
- Language Arts / Reading Readiness
- Math / Numbers
- Astronomy
- Botany / Zoology
- Geometry
- Social and Emotional Development
- Woodworking
- Computers

Activities may vary by location.
Invest in What Matters!
It takes many committed and dedicated individuals, companies, organizations and services to make a difference. United Way's annual campaign serves as the critical link between charitable donations and community organizations located in the 6 cities.

Monies are raised primarily from workplace employee campaigns, but also from corporate gifts, self-employed individuals, retirees, the Combined Federal Campaign, the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign, and the United Way and Combined Charities Campaign. An overall campaign pledge total is finalized in January when all the results are known.

In the end, campaign contributions are distributed to local agencies following an in-depth review of programs and finances so that they may implement programs dealing with health and human service programs.

Thanks to the many thousands of local citizens and businesses who have given their time, talent and financial support over the years. Your United Way contributions have consistently played a unique and necessary role in building a stronger community by providing needed services to individuals and families in South Hampton Roads.

If you are already a supporter, please consider increasing your gift so that the growing needs in our community will continue to be met. If you are a new supporter, please consider a gift that will be certain to make a difference in many lives.

SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
How to Apply in Virginia
SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) can help you buy nutritious food for good health. SNAP benefits come on an electronic card, like a credit card or debit card, that you can use at most grocery stores. To get SNAP benefits, your income and other resources have to be under certain limits.

- You can find out if you might be eligible and apply online at: www.vafood.org.
- You can also visit your local department of social services to get an application. For a complete listing of local departments, go to: www.dss.state.va.us. Click on Local Offices. The phone number for your local office is also in the phone book.
- For additional information about the program and how to apply, call this toll-free number: 1-800-552-3431.