In preschool, we all know that we teach children cognitive skills, such as the ABC’s and 123’s. But equally important is teaching children the non-cognitive or soft skills they will need to be successful in life.

Non-cognitive skills (soft skills) such as emotional maturity, empathy, interpersonal skills, verbal and non-verbal communication are taught. We model sharing with others, taking turns, following directions, listening to each other and being part of a community.

Research suggests that the children who had the greatest self-control in the primary years have better outcomes later in life, such as improved physical health and occupational outcomes. While these skills will develop to a certain degree with age, they can also be taught, and preschool is the perfect time to start. Here are some strategies you can try at home to help your child develop some of these non-cognitive or soft skills:

**Beat and Repeat.**
Create a beat by clapping your hands 2 times. Invite your child to copy this beat. Repeat until they get it. Now do the same beat with 3 claps. When your child gets that, do the opposite! When you clap 2 times, your child should clap 3 times. If you clap 3 times, they should clap twice. If this becomes easy for your child, then change the number of claps to 4 and 2.

**Point and Switch.**
Have your child copy your hand motions, first using a pointed finger, then making a closed fist. After going back and forth a few times, ask your child to do the opposite: when you point a finger, they make a fist and when you make a fist, they point. Try this game with other movements too.

**Red Light/Green Light.**
One person is chosen to be the traffic officer. All the players stand on the starting line and the traffic officer has their back to the rest of the players. When the traffic officer says “green light”, players try to run to the finish line. When the traffic officer says “red light”, they turn around and players have to stop in their tracks. If the traffic officer catches a player moving, they are sent back to the starting line. First person to cross the finish line wins and becomes the new traffic officer.
Try these activities at home to help your child develop their skills.

**Gross Motor:** During the winter months you might experience pent up energy with your child. It is important to try and keep active during the winter months to not only release that energy but to also practice building large muscle skills.

Gross motor skills require whole body movement and require the large muscles of the body to perform everyday functions, such as standing and walking, running and jumping, and sitting upright at the table. They also includes eye-hand coordination skills such as ball skills (throwing, catching, kicking) as well as riding a bike or a scooter and swimming. Gross motor skills are important to enable children to perform everyday functions. Here are a few fun activities you can try out at home!

1. **Learning scavenger hunt**
   Write things your child is learning on sticky notes – they may be letters, numbers, shapes, sight words, etc. Put the sticky notes in various places around the room (some hidden and some obvious), and see how many your child can find and identify.

2. **Copy me!**
   This is where you can get in your workout for the day. Simply do a series of exercises or silly actions, and have your child copy you. Jump like a kangaroo. Scratch like a monkey. Run in a place. (Whatever it takes to get that heart rate up!)

3. **Play “find and tag it”**
   This is a versatile game that can be used to review many different skills. Just tell your child to find something and tag it. For example, “Find and tag something blue.” Or “Find and tag something that starts with /s/.”

4. **Move like an animal**
   You’ll need some open space, but this is a great way to get kids using new muscles. Here are some ideas:
   - Move like a bird (run with arms outstretched)
   - Move like a snake (wiggle on tummies on the floor)
   - Move like a bear (walk on all fours)
   - Move like a frog (get down on haunches and hop)
   - Move like a kangaroo (take big leaps with arms in front of chest)
   - Move like an elephant (with heavy stomping)

**Math:**
A simple trip to the grocery store can lead to so many counting opportunities. When you are in the produce section, have your child count the fruits or vegetables that they can see. As your checking out, have your child count each item that goes into the grocery bag. Or when you return home from the grocery store and are putting away all of your items, have your child count each item that goes into the refrigerator. The counting opportunities associated with a trip to the grocery store are limitless and allow your child to count as high as they can.

**Writing:**

**Materials Needed:**
- Scissors
- Glue
- Construction paper-various colors
- Markers, pencils, crayons

**Activity: Snowman Name**
First, have your child cut out small circles from white construction paper. Next, have your child practice writing the letters of their name onto each circle. This might look like your child tracing over letters you made, holding your child’s hand and helping them form the letters or writing the letters for your child depending on your child’s age and development. Before gluing the letters onto a piece of construction paper, mix the letters up and practice putting them in the correct order of how the name is spelled. Quiz your child on identifying the letters in their name. Once the letters are in order, have your child practice gluing skills and paste their name in the correct order to create a snowman. Finish the snowman by adding a face, a hat, scarf and carrot nose!
Is Your Child Getting Enough Sleep?

Children in the United States are more sleep deprived than anywhere else in the world. According to research 70 to 80 percent of school-age children fall short of experts’ recommendations.

Inconsistent bedtimes are equally problematic. Children who had irregular bedtimes as toddlers scored worse on cognitive tests at age 7 than children who kept to a regular schedule most nights, reports a study in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. That’s because unpredictable snoozing times confuse the body’s internal clock, making it tougher to fall asleep and stay that way.

4 Steps to Dreamland

Most young sleepyheads could use a few tricks to get into a better nighttime groove. Try these:

1. **Create a routine**
   A routine helps children wind down, putting them in the mood to snooze. Make sure you save a few minutes to snuggle together over a story (even if your child is reading on his own): “Books at bedtime help kids sleep much better,” says Dr. Avis.

2. **Remove technology temptations**
   The blue light emitted from devices like computers, smartphones, and TVs can disrupt the body’s ability to drift off. (True for children and grown-ups alike.) So turn off electronics at least an hour before it’s time to hit the sack. If your child has a television in their room (and nearly half of school-age children do), set timelines for viewing or remove it.

3. **Skip the sugar**
   Cut out nighttime sweets. If your child craves a snack before bedtime, try a protein-rich food (a small cup of low-sugar yogurt or a cheese stick are both good options). That will help keep them feeling full longer, which in turn will help them fall asleep faster.

4. **Create a cozy environment**
   Dim, cool spaces help a child drift off: “The darkness allows your child to tap into his natural circadian rhythms,” says Dr. Moon. If he/she is afraid of the dark, leave the door slightly open or plug in a night-light.

**Tip:** Avoid using the bedroom as the timeout place. Instead of seeing it as a happy space, your child may associate it with negative feelings, which can interfere with drifting off.

How Many Zs Do Children Need?

Follow these guidelines from the National Sleep Foundation:

- **2- to 3-year-olds**
  12 to 14 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period (including naps)

- **3- to 5-year-olds**
  11 to 13 hours a night

- **5- to 10-year-olds**
  10 to 11 hours a night.

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Adapted from: https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/your-kid-getting-enough-sleep.html

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**Important Dates**

- November 5: NO SCHOOL—ALL STUDENTS
- November 27-29: NO SCHOOL—ALL STUDENTS
- December 23-January 3: NO SCHOOL—ALL STUDENTS

**Enrollment Corner**

It’s never too early to start thinking about Kindergarten. If your child turns 5 on or before September 30, 2020 they are age eligible for kindergarten. You can stop by or call the school office to schedule a tour of the school(s) you are interested in your child attending or you can visit CPS web site at https://www.cps-k12.org/enroll/neighborhood-enrollment for Vision 2020 school options. The Assistant School Community Coordinator assigned to your child’s preschool will be meeting with you in late winter/early spring to complete the Kindergarten Transition Packet to register your child for kindergarten.

**Rising Stars Academy at Vine**
2120 Vine St. 45202
Monday – Friday 8:00 - 2:00
513-363-0240 Option 1

**LEAP Academy**
2001 Baltimore Ave 45225
Monday – Friday 8:00 - 2:00
513-363-0240 Option 2

**Rising Stars Academy at Carthage**
125 W. North Bend Road 45216
Monday – Friday 8:00 – 2:00
513-363-0240 Option 3
4 Ways to Ward Off the Winter Blues

Exercise: Exercise is known to increase your levels of serotonin and endorphins, leading to a happier mood.

Socialize: Building and maintaining social networks is an important way to keep a positive outlook. Spending time with family, friends, and other people is a sure way to lighten your mood.

Keep a regular sleep schedule: Research has shown that lack of sleep may actually lead to anxiety, mood disorders, and depression. To keep a regular sleep-wake cycle, make sure you go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Avoid naps throughout the day as they can throw off your sleep schedule. To help get you energized for the day, try sleeping with the blinds open so you are exposed to sunlight as soon as you wake up. Or, try to get out into the bright light as soon as possible.

Eat well: Constant consumption of carbs-containing comfort foods can cause weight gain. Stick to healthier foods that will keep your energy levels up, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and foods packed with protein. If following these tips does not help lift your mood, make sure you speak with your doctor. You should also see your doctor if you experience feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, if you lose interest in things that you normally find enjoyable, if you have difficulty concentrating, have trouble sleeping, or if you experience any changes in weight.

Make your own Playdough Recipe

Ingredients
- 1 cup of flour (whatever kind you have on hand)
- ¼ cup of salt
- 1 Tbsp cream of tartar (optional)
- ½ cup of warm water
- 5 drops of food coloring

Instructions
Mix together the flour, salt, and cream of tartar. Mix together ½ cup of warm water with a few drops of food coloring. Slowly pour the water into the flour mixture, stirring as you pour. Stir until combined, then knead with your hands until the flour is completely absorbed. If the dough is too sticky, add more flour until it doesn’t stick at all.

Tips
Mixing the food coloring with the water before combining with the dry ingredients allows you to blend them by stirring, without staining your hands.

If you have a favorite fall or winter spice like cinnamon or pumpkin pie, add 1 Tbsp with your dry ingredients to add help the play dough smell so good!

Want to add a special sparkle to your play dough, add 1/2 cup of glitter as you mix it all together.

Adapted from: https://www.medbroadcast.com/channel/mental-health/depression/5-ways-to-ward-off-the-winter-blues