Dear Parent,

Welcome to the adventure of learning in our public schools. Getting your child ready for that first day of school can be a stressful and exciting experience. This brochure is designed to help you and your child have a positive “first day” experience. Read the tips and then play the game on the back of the brochure with your child.

If you have any questions, call your child’s school or the central office. Working as a team, we hope to give your child the very best possible education experience.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Tennessee Education Association

Getting Ready

• To register your child, you will need a certified copy of the birth certificate (not the one you received in the hospital) immunization record and medical examination forms.

• To obtain a certified copy of the birth certificate, contact the Vital Records Department of the state where your child was born. Include the following: father’s and mother’s maiden name, child’s birth-given name, county of birth and date of birth. In Tennessee, the address is Vital Records, Floor Four, Andrew Jackson Tower, 710 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243. The charge is $15 for long and short forms. The direct numbers are: 615.741.1762 or Web site at www.tn.gov/health/health/section/vital-records.

• Have your physician or local health clinic complete the proper medical forms. Your child’s temperatures must be up-to-date. For Tennessee’s requirements, contact your local health department.

• Your attitude about school will influence your child’s frame of mind. If you are positive, your child probably will be too. Be realistic when you talk about school. Don’t pretend that it’s all fun and games. Share how you felt about your first day of school.

• Encourage your child to discuss his feelings about school. Do not pass off any doubts or fears he expresses. Try to answer all questions in a reassuring way. Don’t give your child the impression that he has a choice about going to school. Be calm, firm and positive if he balks.

• Talk with your child about the role of teachers. Let her know that teachers are real people who want to help students. Encourage your child to ask for assistance. Stress that teachers and parents are a team. Remember, next to you, a teacher will be the most important person in your child’s new life.

• Begin a routine before school starts. Establish a good sleeping pattern; ten to twelve hours is recommended for this age. Have your child perform certain tasks at home at certain times each day to help him adjust to a schedule.

• Help your child get accustomed to sitting still by having her listen to a record, draw or work puzzles.

• Don’t allow eating between meals. A child snacking may get hungry before lunchtime or before school is out.

• Since starting school represents such a big change, keep other changes to a minimum. A familiar routine at home will mean a lot to your child.

• Encourage your child to use different media at home: paper, pencils, crayons, scissors, modeling clay, paste, etc.

• Your child may be one of 22 students in a Tennessee kindergarten class. It is important that he be as self-reliant as possible, especially with personal needs.

• Make sure your child can manage her clothing, such as being able to tie her shoes, to put on and take off underwear, and to snap or zip pants.

• Your child needs to be at ease using a public restroom.

• Your child needs to master personal hygiene skills including washing his hands, covering his mouth when he coughs and using a tissue when she blows her nose.

• Be sure your child has memorized the following: her first and last name, her parents’ names, her address, her telephone number (including area code), her birthday (including the year) and her bus number.

• Talk with your child about the importance of caring for textbooks and school property.

• Work out a plan for your child in case school dismisses early due to weather or if your child gets sick. Discuss this plan with your child.

• Practice the best route to the school or bus stop. If possible, visit it with your child.

• Talk about and practice the basics of safety.

• Never talk to strangers, go directly home from school.

• Wait on the curb for the traffic light to change.

• Cross streets only at the crosswalk. Look left, right and then left again. Don’t walk, run, don’t.

• Watch for cars pulling in or out of driveways.

• Walk on the sidewalk whenever possible. Walk facing traffic where there are no sidewalks.

• Wait quietly for the school bus. Stay off the street and keep close to the bus stop while waiting.

• Always stay behind the bus when it is moving. Sit facing the front with both feet on the floor. Keep head and arms inside. Stop, look and then cross the street after the driver has signaled that it is safe.

• If your child will be home alone after school, be sure he knows how to answer the phone and how to react if someone knocks at the door. Have easy rules for visitors.

When School Starts

• Start the day with a healthy breakfast. Get up in plenty of time for school. (Organizing school supplies and clothing the night before will help.) Remember, a cheerful “Have a good day” is more encouraging than a gruff “Be good.”

• Be in school clothing neatly and comfortably and be comfortable and practical. Remember, fully dresses are not made for the play ground. Break in new shoes before school starts. Choose appropriate outside wear to provide for possible changes in the weather. Label personal items.

• Walk your child to class on the first day. On the second, stop on the curb and let him walk in alone.

• If your child is especially apprehensive, put a family photo in her lunchbox or notebook.

• When sending money to school, put it in an envelope and write your child’s name and what the money is for on the outside. Avoid the school check on the post- office — not too early before there is adequate supervision and, especially, not too late.

• If there will be a change in your child’s method of arrival or departure, send a note to the teacher.

• If you need to contact a teacher, call the school. You may be asked to leave a number since teachers often cannot leave their classrooms.

• Learn the names of all teachers who will be working with your child. Send appropriate writing, clothing, money, supplies, etc. Know the school calendar.

• Proudly display your child’s classwork at home. Listen with interest when your child talks about school. Be generous with sincere praise, enthusiasm and sympathy.

• If your child is having a problem at school, contact the teacher as soon as possible. Exercise judgment in discussing the problem with your child.

• Notify the teacher of any special fears your child may have any special medical conditions (allergies, bee sting sensitivity, disabilities, etc.) and any special family circumstances (such as when one parent is not to have custody).

• Keep your child at home if he shows definite signs of illness (fever, rash, severe cough or runny nose). When he returns, send a note explaining the absence. If your child develops a communicable
You didn’t talk to strangers
Forward 2 spaces

You covered your mouth when coughing
Forward 2 spaces

Parent remembered to label lunchbox
Forward 2 spaces

BONUS
Forward 3 spaces

Go to School

1) Cut out cards and tokens along broken line.
2) Stack cards in two decks by color.
3) Parents, draw from blue cards.
4) Students, draw from white cards.
5) For each correct answer, move number of spaces indicated on card.
6) Continue drawing cards until a player makes it to school.

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TEA Web site:  www.teateachers.org
NEA Web site:  www.nea.org

TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

You didn’t talk to strangers
Forward 2 spaces

Oops, no breakfast
Back 1 space

You covered your mouth when coughing
Forward 2 spaces

Parent remembered to label lunchbox
Forward 2 spaces

BONUS
Forward 3 spaces

disease such as chicken pox, alert the school. You will be contacted
if your child becomes ill at school. Explain to your child that he
should tell the teacher if he feels sick.
• In case of weather emergencies, listen to media reports for school
  closing information. It is important, especially if you are a working
  parent, to have a plan to pick up your child in case of weather
  emergencies.
• After school starts, take an active part. Join your school’s parent-
  teacher group. Attend scheduled programs. Keep communications
  open between the home and the school. Monitor the local school
  board, superintendent and fiscal body. Talk with your state
  legislators about improving education.

Ready, Set, Go... to School
A step-by-step guide to prepare your family
for that big event, the first day of school