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. To obtain a certified copy of the birth certificate, contact the Vital Records Department of the state where your child was born. Include: father's name, mother's name, child's birth name, county of birth and date of birth. Allow at least three weeks for delivery. You may obtain your child’s birth certificate online in Tennessee. The address is Vital Records, 421 5th Avenue North, First Floor, Central Services Building, Nashville, TN 37247-0450.
The charge is $7 (short form) and $12 (long form). Phone requests will be processed faster and may be charged to a credit card (only) for an additional $9. The direct numbers are: 615.741.0787, fax 615.745.2599. Web site at www.vitalchek.com. Additional fees may apply when ordering by fax or on the Internet.

Have your physician or local health clinic complete the proper medical forms. Your child’s immunizations 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 days of school.

• Encourage your child to discuss his feelings about school. Do not pass off any doubts or fears as exercises. 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 parents and teachers are a team. Remember, next to you, a teacher will be the most important person in your child’s 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 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 so 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 outside clothes, and to snap or zip pants.

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

• Your child needs to be able to manage a cafeteria tray, to open milk cartons and to eat a sack lunch.

• Your child needs to master personal hygiene skills including washing his hands, covering his mouth when he coughs and using a napkin.

• 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 and practice using it.

• Practice the best route to the bus stop or school if possible. Visit the school. Check on orientation programs.

• Talk about and practice the basics of safety.

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

• On the curb, wait for the traffic light to change.

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

• Watch for cars pulling in or out of driveways.

• Walk on the sidewalk whenever possible. Walk facing traffic when crossing the street.

• Wait quietly for the school bus. Stay off the street and keep for the bus to stop while the bus is moving. Sit facing the front with both feet on the floor. Keep head and arms inside.

• Be on time and be ready when the bus arrives. Wear winter clothes while the bus is moving. Sitting in the back is not the same as sitting at the front.

• 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 easily understood rules for a latch key child.

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

• Arrive at school at the proper time — not too early before there is 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's class schedule and personal items.

School Time 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 sure clothing and shoes are clean and comfortable and practical. Remember, frilly dresses are not made for the play ground. Bring new shoes before school starts. Choose appropriate outside clothing to provide for possible changes in the weather. Label personal items.

• Walk your child to class on the first day. On the second, drop off. On the next, say good-bye.

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

• If you are sending money to school, put it in an envelope and write your child’s name and what the money is for on the outside.

• 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.

• Don’t show off your child’s new clothes.

• When your child comes home, go directly home from school.

• If there is a change in your child's method of arrival or departure, update your child and practice using it.

• If you are sending money to school, put it in an envelope and write your child’s name and what the money is for on the outside.

• 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’s school on emotional availability, clothing, money, supplies, etc. Know the school calendar.

• Proudly display your child’s class schedule at home. List any important appointments and ask questions. Be generous with sincere praise, encouragement and enthusiasm.

• If you find your child 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 unusual 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’s child 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.

You covered your mouth when coughing.

Oops, no breakfast.

You didn’t label lunchbox.

Forward 2 spaces.

Ready, Set, Go to School!

A step-by-step guide to prepare your family for the first day of 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) Parents and students choose from number of spaces indicated on card and player moves it to school card and player continues to play.