

# PORTLAND

*lifestyle & family*

EDUCATION / PARENTING / JUNE 1, 2016

## Ask Ariel: Preschool Resistance is Futile



Dear Ariel,

My 5-year old son hates getting ready for preschool. He goofs around all morning, playing with Legos and quietly refusing to get dressed, eat breakfast or walk over to his wonderful preschool program. According to his teachers, once I manage to get him to school, he does very well and seems to enjoy himself. Do you have any suggestions of how to make the mornings less of a fight?

—Battle-Weary Mom

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Dear MBWM,

The dreaded Morning Battle, oh how I hate it, too. It is so hard for our little ones to understand that us grown-ups have to leave the house and get to work. The clash between the necessities for both playtime and leaving the house on time can drive even the most even-keeled parent over the edge. I have personally solved this battle by getting up earlier for work and getting my son up earlier, too. He has some unstructured morning free time and ideally I have long enough to drink my cup of coffee while it is still hot. It doesn't always work out that way, but padding our morning ritual time with an extra 30 minutes has reduced our battles to just a few skirmishes every couple of months.

One aspect of your question really stood out to me: the fact that your son would rather play with Legos than do anything else. As a public school educator, I have been personally disheartened to see how the pressures of standardized testing and current conventional wisdom have led to less time for free play. All-consuming Lego inventions are exactly what your 5-year-old should be "working" on. He should have ample time to play and create and just be a 5-year-old. The academic pressure is filtering down to younger and younger ages, and some preschool programs feel the need to prepare their students for kindergarten with such rigor that the fun of childhood can get lost. I hope your son's preschool has lots of time for play and if not, you may consider speaking with your child's teacher about ways to get more free playtime into his day.



Ariel Frager

Ariel Frager is a school counselor and has a private therapy practice that specializes in treating children, adolescents and families. She lives in Portland with her husband, son, dog and kitty cat.



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