

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a big step, and an exciting rite of passage, for young children and their parents. You love your child and want him/her to get off to a good start in school.

Transition to kindergarten is a journey, but there's a lot you can do to prime your child for the trip. Kindergarten readiness involves four areas of development: intellectual, physical, social-emotional, and self-care.

The following checklist can be used to see how well your child is learning the skills needed for success in kindergarten. Most children entering kindergarten can perform the tasks listed at least some of the time. Your child's development may be a little faster or slower in certain areas. Have patience, trust your judgment, and don't be overly critical. A few suggestions are offered with each skill to help you foster these skills with your child.

Raising an eager learner can be achieved easily through play, spending time with your child, and day-to-day activities.



School Ready Skills

Skills

Understands he/she is going to a new classroom called kindergarten.

Comes to school well rested, clean, well fed, and healthy.

Persists at several tasks throughout the day that are not screen based (TVs, computers, hand-held games, etc.).

Uses imagination to play and create.

Puts toys away after play.

Follows routines and simple directions.

Suggestions

★ Visit school, classroom, playground, and lunchroom.

★ Read books about kindergarten.

★ Establish a consistent bedtime (most kindergartners need 10-12 hours of sleep every night), model healthy eating habits, provide nutritious snacks, and keep sick children home until healthy.

★ Create opportunities for child to engage in activities such as Legos, blocks, drawing, coloring, pretend play, outdoor play, and book reading.

★ Play with your child.

★ Pretend through creating roles.

★ Assist children in putting toys away.

★ Have clearly defined space for toys.

★ Establish routines in the home.

Literacy Skills - Reading and Writing

★ Give one-step direction;
grow into two-
step directions.

Reading Skills

Holds a book upright and read books often.

Identifies letters of the alphabet.

Recognizes letter sounds.

Suggestions

- ★ Read books often with your child so he/she learns how to hold and use a book.
- ★ Allow your child to pretend to "read" to you.
- ★ Talk about the book content before, during and after reading it.

- ★ Have your child point out and say the letters in his or her name.
- ★ Put magnetic letters of the alphabet on the refrigerator for your child to use.
- ★ Help your child to point out letters on cereal boxes, street signs, and stores.

- ★ Introduce your child to the sounds of letters by helping your child say the sounds of the letters of his/her name.

Writing Skills

Recognizes, copies, and prints his/her first name.

Suggestions

- ★ Print your child's name whenever possible such as on her or his drawings.

- ★ Provide pencils, pens, markers, crayons, and paper for your child to scribble, draw or write his/her name or other words.

Holds a pencil and writes with it.

★ Let your child see you writing for various reasons, such as making a shopping list or writing a birthday card.

Literacy Skills - Speaking and Listening

Speaking Skills

Uses and understands many words.

★ Use new words daily as you play together and go about everyday activities. For example, "I am going to a *mechanic* to have my car fixed."

Says and notices words that rhyme.

★ Say and sing nursery rhymes, songs, and poetry.

Makes up and shares personal stories about his or her personal interests.

★ Listen with interest to your child's stories, make comments, and ask questions.

Listening Skills

Understands and participates in conversation.

★ Set a good example by listening to his/her stories.

★ Encourage your child to tell you about what he/she is doing during the day.

Follows routines and directions.

★ Plays games such as "Simon Says" and "Freeze" (when the music stops).

Math Skills

Skills

Recognizes and counts up to 10 items.

Recognizes the number symbols 1 - 10.

Describes and talks about objects that have different sizes, colors, shapes, and patterns.

Suggestions

★ Turn meal time into fun by having your child count objects as he/she helps set the table.

★ Count objects whenever you are driving or walking to school or on errands.

★ Play "I Spy" with numbers as you travel and with numbers in books.

★ Count, measure, and estimate while making dinner.

★ Put number magnets on the refrigerator for your child to use.

★ Use a favorite story / picture book - describe objects according to color, shape, and size.

★ Play games with dancing and moving to a pattern.

Social and Emotional Skills

Skills

Plays cooperatively with others.

Labels and expresses feelings and emotions.

Understands his/her own feelings and the feelings of others.

Tries new activities willingly.

Suggestions

★ Give your child chances to play with others; notice how he or she gets along.

★ Encourage your child to talk about feelings.
★ Share books that explore emotions.

★ Share stories about feelings.
★ Share your own feelings with your child. ("I'm feeling angry, happy, frustrated").

★ Encourage your child to try different activities and games.
★ Arrange outings to the library, zoo, park, or museum. Talk about what you see.

Life Skills

Skills

- Dresses self:
 - Puts on outerwear
 - Puts on and fastens shoes
 - Undresses and dresses self in restroom



- Backpack skills:
 - Loads and unloads
 - Zips and unzips
 - Puts on and takes off



- Personal hygiene skills:
 - Blows nose
 - Covers cough with arm
 - Uses the toilet independently
 - Wipes self independently after toileting

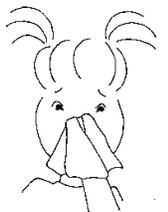
- Feeds self

Suggestions

★ Allow time for a lot of practice. Be patient. Keep practicing until successful.

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★ Model and teach proper technique.
★ Encourage and require full independence.



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★ Practice using a lunch box and opening wrapped items.

Motor Skills

Small (Fine) Motor Skills

- Holds and writes with a pencil
- Holds and writes with a crayon
- Holds and writes with markers

- Cuts with scissors



- Uses liquid glue (Elmer's)



Suggestions

★ Model and provide opportunities for your child to scribble, write and draw.

★ Model and provide opportunities for your child to cut paper. (Try magazines and coupons also.)

★ Practice opening and closing glue bottles. Provide opportunities to glue materials together. (Say, "One drop will do.")

Large (Gross) Motor Skills

- Movement Skills:
 - Hop
 - Leap
 - Dance
 - Climb
 - Run
 - Balance

- Throws, catches, and bounces a ball.

- Walks with alternating feet on lines, beams, and steps.

Suggestions

★ Visit parks, playgrounds, and backyards. Model and encourage interaction with equipment.

★ Dance to music



★ Provide balls of different sizes to explore with; be an active participant.

★ Draw a chalk line on the driveway.

★ Place a line of tape on the carpet.

★ Follow the cracks on a sidewalk.

Parents are Important!

Make sure that your child keeps a daily routine that begins with a healthy breakfast and ends with a consistent bedtime, allowing for 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night. Encourage your child to play with other children, learn new words, work with puzzles, and sing songs! This will create a loving and nurturing relationship and help get them ready for the Kindergarten experience.

Communication is Important!

Make sure you meet with the Kindergarten teacher, school principal and bus driver to talk about the needs of your child. Remember to read newsletters and other notes sent home from school. A good idea is to set a time with your child to empty their backpack and talk about the day. Be sure to attend parent teacher conferences, visit the school periodically, and volunteer in the classroom. These are all great ways to keep communications open with teachers and school staff.

Join the community of parents and teachers that share an interest in your child's education.

Nearly every school has a parent-teacher organization. These groups usually have meetings that allow you to meet other parents, school staff, and community partners while giving you necessary information about the school and community events. It is a fun way to stay connected while supporting your child's education.



Additional Resources:

Helpful websites about kindergarten readiness:

- <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Brochures/download/KindergartenEnglish.pdf>
- <http://school.familyeducation.com/kindergarten/school-readiness/38491.html#ixzz1exsba65L>
- <http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/ready-for-kindergarten>
- <http://www.education.com/topic/kindergarten-readiness/>

100 Best Books to Read to Kindergartners

<http://gvpl.ca/interests/parents-educators/gvpl-s-100-picture-books/>