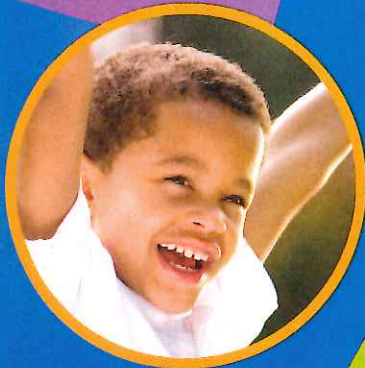


# Getting Your Child Ready For **KINDERGARTEN**



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Dear Parents,

Kindergarten is a time of growth and learning, and preparation for this important year all starts with you. With every story you read, skill you teach, or hug you give, know that you are the most valuable teacher your child will ever have.

This book walks you through the skills that are developed in kindergarten—and it shows how you can help your child get ready for this exciting year.

Enjoy this special time!

# Getting Your Child READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

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# INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten is the beginning of a child's formal education, and it's important that your child have a positive kindergarten experience.

This book goes over the skills teachers would like a child starting kindergarten to have. It will also give you a number of simple, easy things that you can do to help your child get ready for kindergarten.

Knowing letters and numbers are important skills, but, as you will see, there are many other skills that also contribute to a successful kindergarten year.

As you help your preschooler get ready for kindergarten, try to make learning fun. Encourage curiosity and imagination—and answer those endless questions.



**C**hildren develop at different rates, and there is a huge range of what “normal” looks like at this age. Schools recognize that children entering kindergarten have different skill levels, and teachers are prepared and ready to work with children who have a wide variety of skills and learning styles.

# Beginning KINDERGARTEN SKILLS

While beginning kindergarteners have different levels of readiness, children entering kindergarten are generally expected to be able to do most of the things listed below.

## General Knowledge

- Say their name and address
- Identify some numbers and letters in the alphabet
- Retell a familiar event or story
- Identify basic shapes, such as star, circle, and square
- Recite some simple rhymes
- Match objects (socks, shoes, mittens)
- Notice what is the same about objects and what's different
- Count to 10

## Motor Skills

- Throw and catch a large ball
- Walk backwards, hop, skip, and jump
- Write their first name and draw basic shapes
- Cut on a line with scissors

## Social Skills

- Speak in full sentences
- Share with others
- Follow simple instructions
- Make choices
- Take turns
- Show concern for others
- Listen attentively to a story



Take time to help your child develop these important skills!

# Kindergarten READINESS

The following pages will provide you with numerous ideas that will help you get your child ready for kindergarten.

## Readiness Skills Reading and Writing

### Letters and Beginning Sounds

Look for opportunities to show your child that letters and words are all around us.

- At breakfast, ask your child to find specific letters on a cereal box.
- Spell simple words with refrigerator magnets.
- Pick a letter, talk about the sound that letter makes, and see how many things you can find around the house that begin with that letter's sound.
- When you are riding in the car or taking a walk, play a rhyming word game. *"I see a cat. Can you think of a word that rhymes with cat?"*
- Sing the alphabet song.
- Read an ABC picture book and practice the sound each letter makes.





## Reading

One of the greatest gifts parents can give their child is a love of reading. Read to your child every day.

- As you read, move your finger under the words to help your child learn that words go from left to right.
- Regularly visit the library and check out books to read. (Dr. Seuss books are great for this age.)
- Read the same favorite books over and over.
- Ask questions while reading, *"What do you think will happen next?" "What would you do?"*

## Vocabulary Explosion

Preschoolers learn vocabulary at the rate of five to six words per day. Words such as "Stegosaurus" are not only fun for children to say, they also help children learn to distinguish sounds.

Visit the library, get books on a subject your child is interested in, and help your child learn new vocabulary.

## Writing

Kindergarteners spend a good deal of time in school learning to write.

- Help your child practice writing letters and numbers.
- Have paper, pencils, and crayons readily available for writing and drawing.
- Teach your child how to write his/her name with the first letter capitalized, and the rest in lowercase.

# Readiness Skills

## Numbers, Shapes and Colors

### Numbers

Help develop your child's math skills by looking for opportunities to count and talk about numbers.

- Count items aloud throughout the day. For example, count how many socks you take out of the dryer, or how many eggs are in the egg carton.
- As you drive around town, point out the numbers you see on buildings, billboards, and street signs.
- Ask your child to bring you a specific number of objects, such as four spoons from the silverware drawer.
- Play card games such as "Go Fish."
- Introduce the concept of time. *"We're going to start making dinner at 5:00, and then we'll eat at 6:00."*

### Shapes and Colors

Knowing shapes and colors will help your child understand that objects can be placed into categories.

- Play a game in which your child tries to find objects of a particular color or shape around the house.
- Take a walk and ask your child to point out the similarities and differences in objects. *"Look at these two flowers. What's different about them?"*
- Ask questions, such as, *"Would you like to wear your blue hat or your red one?"*
- Sort Legos or blocks by shape or color.





# Readiness Skills

## Motor Skills

### Fine Motor Skills

Children need fine motor skills to color, paint, write, cut, paste, and draw—activities that kindergarteners do every day.

- To encourage drawing and writing, have paper, crayons, markers, and colored pencils always available.
- Provide playdough or clay to develop hand muscles.
- Get a pair of child-safe scissors and let your child cut up colored paper and magazines.
- Help your child string beads, build with blocks, and put a puzzle together.
- Practice zipping and unzipping a jacket, buttoning and unbuttoning a sweater or shirt, and fastening snaps.



### Large Motor Skills

Children need large motor skills for playing games, sports, and other physical activities.

- Play catch in the backyard.
- Jump rope. Practice running, skipping, and hopping.
- Kick a soccer ball back and forth. Bounce a basketball.

### Your Future Superstar

Some kids seem to be super athletes, even at a young age. Give your child opportunities to develop his/her skills—but keep in mind that trying to do something before a child is ready can lead to frustration.

# Readiness Skills

## Social Interactions

### Speaking and Listening Skills

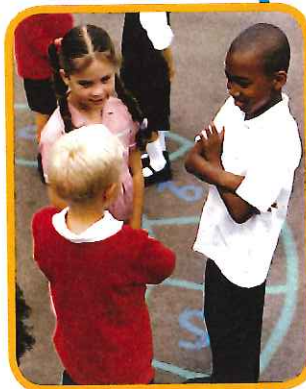
Good communication skills will help lead to success in kindergarten and beyond.

- Encourage your child to share his/her thoughts and ideas with you. Ask questions that require more than yes or no answers.
- Visit new places and talk about what you are seeing and doing. Make every outing an opportunity for learning new vocabulary.
- Ask your child to tell you about what he/she did that day.
- Read stories to your child, and as you read, ask questions to help sharpen his/her listening skills.
- Give your child two- or three-step directions to follow, and ask him/her to repeat them back to you. For example, *"Wash your face, brush your teeth, and choose a book for us to read."*

### Social Skills

Kindergarten opens up a whole new world of social interactions.

- Provide opportunities for your little one to play with other children.
- Encourage your child to use words to let others know what he/she wants.
- Play games. Games help children learn how to take turns—and how to win and lose.



## Readiness Skills

# Personal Responsibility

Developing personal responsibility is an important step in getting ready for kindergarten.

It might be quicker for you to zip up your child's jacket, but taking a few extra minutes to teach self-help skills will lead to kindergarten success—and build self-confidence.

### Things to Practice

Teachers would like children entering kindergarten to be able to do the following:

- Get their jacket on and off without help.
- Use the restroom and wash their hands.
- Cover their mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Drink from a cup and open a juice box.
- Operate zippers, snaps, and buttons.
- Properly use eating utensils.
- Clean up after themselves.



### Shopping Guide

You can help your child develop personal responsibility by shopping wisely for school clothes and supplies.

- Since tying shoes is a skill that often doesn't come until first grade, consider buying shoes with Velcro fasteners.
- Make sure zippers, buttons, and fasteners are easy to manage, and that boots slide on easily over shoes.
- If you purchase a backpack, make sure that it's not too large, and that it can be put on without help.



# Getting Ready for THE FIRST DAY

**You've done all that you can to help your child get ready for kindergarten—congratulations!**

**The following tips and advice will help ensure that your child's first day of kindergarten goes smoothly.**

- Take advantage of opportunities for your child to become familiar with the school, meet his/her teacher, and visit the classroom.
- Explain what your child can expect to happen. Answer questions about kindergarten simply and honestly.
- Make sure your child understands how he/she will get to school, and what will happen when school is over. If riding a bus, make sure your kindergartener knows his/her bus number.

*On that first day, be sure to take a picture of your child to remember this special day!*

**C**hildren take cues from their parents. As you get ready for the first day, be calm, and let your child know that you are confident he/she will have a wonderful day.



## READY, SET, GO CHECKLIST



### I am ready to go to kindergarten!

(A checklist from your child's point of view.)

- ☐ I visited my new school and I know where my classroom is.
- ☐ I know how I'm going to get to school and what will happen when school is over.
- ☐ I know my parents' names.
- ☐ I know my address.
- ☐ I can use the restroom and wash my hands by myself.
- ☐ I can get my jacket on and off without any help.

### Advice from a Kindergarten Teacher

*"Read to your child every day. As you read, talk about the pictures and the characters, and every few pages, ask questions about what you've read."*

*"Look for ways to turn everyday activities into learning experiences. For example, use grocery store outings as a way to practice letter and number recognition."*

*"Most importantly, enjoy your child, and make learning fun!"*



# Kindergarten SUCCESS

The following guidelines will help ensure that your child has a great kindergarten year.

## **Work with your school**

- Get to know your child's teacher. Don't hesitate to ask questions or share your concerns.
- Attend all parent programs and conferences.

## **Promote active learning**

- Make reading a daily family activity.
- Look for ways to broaden your child's horizons. Visit a museum or aquarium. Go to a concert, sporting event, or theater production.
- Continue to help your kindergartener learn letters, numbers, colors, and shapes.



## **Build healthy habits**

- Have healthy foods at home, and make sure that your kindergartener gets plenty of sleep and regular exercise.

## **Develop routines**

- Develop good nighttime and morning routines. Have a regular bedtime, and a morning routine that includes a healthy breakfast.
- Keep after-school hours simple. Don't overschedule sports, lessons, or other activities.



### **Encourage socialization**

- Get to know the other kindergarten parents, and set up play dates with your child's classmates.
- To help your child feel at ease in new situations, provide opportunities for him/her to experience different places and people.

### **Promote individual interests**

- While group activities are important, it's also important for children to have some activities that can be done alone, such as painting or collecting baseball cards.



### **Limit screen time**

- Limit TV, video games, and computer time.

### **Be interested and enthusiastic**

- Talk to your child about what happened at school each day, and be interested in what he/she is learning.
- Ask specific questions, such as *"Who did you play with today?"* *"What did you have for a snack?"*
- Show pride in your kindergartener's accomplishments and display samples of his/her artwork and writing.

**This will be a year of big changes. Your kindergartener will learn some of the basic skills needed to read, write, and do math. He/she will also learn how to follow classroom rules, and how to get along with others.**

**As your child grows and develops new skills, he/she will become more independent and self-confident. It will be a year of tremendous growth!**

# Getting Your Child Ready For **KINDERGARTEN**

This tip-filled booklet makes  
the process of getting your  
child ready for kindergarten  
simple, stress free, and fun!



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