

READY FOR SCHOOL



You'll know your child is ready for kindergarten when (s)he...

Physical Development and Safety

- ▲ Names his/her body parts.
- ▲ Holds scissors correctly and cuts on a straight line and a curved line.
- ▲ Kicks a ball, hops on 1 foot, and climbs a ladder.
- ▲ Holds a pencil or crayon in a [three finger grasp](#) and uses it to write or draw.
- ▲ Eats, washes hands, blows nose, uses the toilet, fastens pants, and zips a jacket independently.
- ▲ Follows basic safety rules and understands the consequences of not following rules.
- ▲ Knows his/her first and last name and the name of his/her parent or guardian.

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Tries new things, shares, and takes turns.
- ♥ Asks for help to get needs met.
- ♥ Follows schedules and routines and adjusts to changes.
- ♥ Engages in an independent activity (that does not involve screen time) for at least 5 - 10 mins.
- ♥ Separates from a parent or guardian without substantial anxiety.
- ♥ Reasonably manages his/her emotions when his/her behavior is corrected.

Language and Communication Skills

- ★ Engages in conversations with adults and children.
- ★ Listens to others and takes turns speaking.
- ★ Speaks clearly to be understood and uses 5 to 6 word sentences.
- ★ Follows two and three step verbal directions.
- ★ Recalls personal experiences and describes them to others.
- ★ Children learning English as a second language use a combination of their native language, English, and nonverbal communication to play and work with others.

Early Literacy

- ★ Recognizes their written name.
- ★ Says and hears rhymes (e.g. hat and cat).
- ★ Enjoys books and stories, and can hold a book and turn pages correctly.
- ★ Answers simple questions about the people, places, or events in a book.
- ★ Names several uppercase and lowercase letters.

Mathematical Thinking

- ◆ Uses comparative words (more/less, bigger/smaller, etc.).
- ◆ Sorts items by attributes (e.g. color).
- ◆ Recognizes and creates simple patterns.
- ◆ Recognizes numerals 0 to 10.
- ◆ Counts objects by touching one object at a time, and understands the last number stated is the total count.
- ◆ Recognizes and creates groups of 2, 3, 4, or 5 objects.

Scientific Thinking

- ★ Makes observations and asks questions about the world and how it works.
- ★ Identifies a simple problem and tries to find solutions.
- ★ Shows curiosity and tests ideas using trial and error.
- ★ Records observations by drawing and describing something (s)he has noticed about the world.
- ★ Describes cause and effect, parts of a whole, and/or change over time based on things (s)he sees in the world.

Children learn at different rates and some may need additional support. If you are concerned your child is not demonstrating these skills, please reach out to your local school district and/or health care provider for screening referral and support. Non-native English speakers should develop skills in their native language first.

Using play, reading, and every day conversation, you and your child can do these activities together to prepare for school:

- **Read to your child every day.** ✨
- Visit your local library or book store to participate in story time or pick books to read together. ✨
- Help your child recognize his/her name in print. ✨
- Encourage your child to draw, build, and play with play dough. Have your child describe or tell you a story about her/his drawing or creation. ✨▲★
- Play games that require listening, following directions, and taking turns (Simon Says, Follow the Leader, Candy Land, Memory, etc.). ✨♥
- Implement schedules and routines with your child. Help your child learn to transition easily between activities (cues like a bell or music help). ✨♥
- Speak clearly to your child (without “baby talk”). Talk with him/her about what you are doing or what (s)he sees, hears, etc. ✨♥
- Sing songs or recite nursery rhymes with your child. ✨
- Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings by modeling and discussing your feelings. ✨♥
- Provide opportunities for your child to play and explore with other children in new settings. ▲♥
- Encourage outdoor play and exploration; allow your child to jump, climb, and dig. ▲★
- Discuss and practice personal safety rules with children (holding hands in crowds, wearing a bike helmet, etc.). ▲♥
- Encourage your child to dress himself / herself. ▲
- Show / point to written numbers (in books, games, and daily life) and have your child identify the name. ◆
- Play games that involve numbers, patterns, and counting (Candy Land, Chutes and Ladders, etc.). ✨♥◆
- Count toys while playing. ◆
- Provide a variety of objects or toys for your child to collect, group, and compare (by color, size, shape, type, etc.). ◆
- Give your child two objects, such as a pencil and spatula and ask questions about them (Examples: Which is longer/shorter? Which is heavier/lighter?). ◆★
- To help your child learn to make and test predictions, when reading a book, ask your child, “What might happen next?”. ✨★
- When outside, ask your child questions, like: What do you see / hear? What do you think made that happen? How has that ___ changed? ★
- Encourage your child to draw something they have seen. Help them label specific parts of the item. ★
- Facilitate simple experiments with your child, predict what will happen, and discuss the results (Example: drop oil and food coloring into water). ★
- Read books focused on a variety of topics, including feelings, numbers, science, and learning through trial and error (Happy Hippo Angry Duck, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, The Most Magnificent Thing, etc.). ✨♥◆★

▲ PHYSICAL DEV & SAFETY

♥ SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEV

☀ LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION & LITERACY

◆ MATHEMATICAL THINKING

★ SCIENTIFIC THINKING



Additional Resources for Parents and Caregivers

- [Idaho Early Learning eGuidelines](#)
- [Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#)
- [CDC Milestones Tracker App](#)
- [READY! for Kindergarten Program](#)