

Understanding Prekindergarten Readiness

There are many things to be aware of as you help your child prepare to successfully transition to Prekindergarten and integrate into the routines and expectations of a classroom learning environment. Compiled below is a list of some of the general expectations your child should be able to meet before entering Prekindergarten.

Your child should be able to:	How you can help:
Listen and follow simple instructions, including two and three part directions	• Give your child daily tasks around the house, being sure to practice two-part instructions such as, "Pick up your toys and put them in your toy chest."
Regulate their own feelings and behaviors: • Name types of emotions and describe how they feel • Approach adults for assistance • Communicate appropriately with other children • Participate cooperatively and constructively in group situations	• Identify and talk to your child about their emotions. For example, if your child is feeling upset you can say, "I can see you feel mad right now and I would like to help. What is causing you to feel mad?" • When your child needs assistance, model how he or she can verbally ask for your help. • Encourage your child to speak in complete sentences of five to six words. • Help your child constructively participate in group situations by implementing routine activities or a schedule at home. • Discuss what to expect in new and different situations with your child and how they react appropriately.
Demonstrate knowledge of self: • Recognize printed name and identify some letters in name • Describe self by physical characteristics • Describe family members and begin to understand their relationship to them	• Print your child's name and practice saying the names of the letters with them. • Play games with your child, such as Simon Says, that require your child to name body parts and describe physical characteristics.
Demonstrate personal care skills: • Dress and feed themselves • Independently manage <i>all</i> toileting needs	• Allow your child to practice dressing themselves each morning, until they can do so independently. Zipping, buttoning and taking on and off gloves and shoes may be difficult at first. Keep practicing with your child by using verbal cues and demonstrating how to successfully master each step.
Demonstrates emerging understanding of letters, numbers, shapes and colors: • Recite the alphabet verbally • Identify some letters, especially those in their own name • Identify some numbers and can state how old they are • Recognize and name colors • Name some basic two-dimensional shapes (ex. circle, heart, triangle)	• Sing the alphabet song with your child each day • Count aloud with your children frequently and incorporate counting in routine activities, such as, "Let's count how many waffles you have on your plate for breakfast today." • Identify colors and shapes as you play, touching and identifying each aloud. Playing games such as going on a "Color Hunt" or "Shape Hunt" for a specific color or shape around the house are fun ways to practice these skills.

Understand verbal language and use language to express themselves: Your child's speech is based on your child's developmental readiness to comprehend and express language. Receptive Language - Your child should be able to hear and understand most of what is said. For example, when verbally asking your child a question, they should be able to produce an on-topic response, even if it is incorrect. Expressive Language - The majority of your child's speech should be understandable to most listeners. - Your child should be able to say most sounds, with the exception of age-appropriate developing sounds such as: l, s, r, v, z, ch, sh, and/or th.	- Verbally communicating with your child consistently throughout the day, being sure to identify the names of objects and people in their environment. - Correct your child's use of pronouns when speaking if needed (ie: he, she hers, his). - Encourage your child to practice saying their speech sounds correctly by verbally modeling and correcting when needed.
Demonstrate fine-motor coordination: - Hold a crayon or pencil correctly using the pincer grasp (grasping between pointer finger and thumb, resting against the third finger for strength). - Demonstrate emergent writing and coloring skills (intentionally forms basic shapes while drawing and can color with intention) - Hold scissors properly and attempt to cut paper safely	- Demonstrate the proper pincer grasp to your child <i>before</i> handing them a crayon or pencil. Help adjust your child's grasp when needed. - Using broken, or small pieces, of crayons while writing/coloring is a good way to develop a proper writing grip. With less crayon to hold, your child will be required to grasp the crayon the correct way, pinching the crayon between their second finger and their thumb, and resting it against their third for strength. - Tape your child's paper to a vertical surface (the wall, an easel, etc.) so that your child can better see their fingers while they hold their crayon/pencil during writing. - Fine-motor strength plays a large part in your child's development of fine-motor coordination. Simple activities such as encouraging your child to play with play dough, crumple paper into balls and fill/squeeze sponges can all help! - Demonstrate how to safely hold child-friendly scissors. Set safety expectations, such as always pointing the scissors away from themselves and only cutting with an adult while they are learning. Supervise each time your child practices, demonstrate how to cut and give verbal reminders to help them cut correctly.