

Barnhart School

Transitional Kindergarten Readiness Guide





Preparing Your Child for a Successful Start in Transitional Kindergarten

Welcome to Transitional Kindergarten (TK)!

TK is designed to support young learners as they build the foundational skills necessary for future academic, social, and emotional success.

While every child develops at their own pace, there are several key areas that can help families determine whether their child is ready to thrive in a TK environment.

At Barnhart School, we value curiosity, creativity, independence, kindness, and a love of learning.

Readiness is not about mastering academic skills; it is about developing the executive functioning, social-emotional, and self-help skills that allow children to engage successfully in a classroom community.

Executive Function Skills

Executive functions are the mental skills that help children manage themselves, their behavior, and their learning.

Attention and Focus

Your child may be ready for TK if they can:

- Participate in a teacher-directed activity for approximately 10–15 minutes
- Listen to stories and discussions in a group setting
- Follow classroom routines with support
- Transition from one activity to another with minimal frustration

Ways to Support at Home

- Read books together daily
- Complete simple puzzles
- Play memory and matching games
- Practice following multi-step directions

Examples:

- "Please put your shoes away and then wash your hands."
- "Pick up your crayons and place them in the basket."

Working Memory

Your child may be able to:

- Remember simple instructions
- Recall classroom routines
- Retell parts of a story
- Follow two-step directions

Ways to Support at Home

- Play recall games
- Ask questions about stories
- Practice remembering shopping items or daily tasks



Self-Control and Emotional Regulation

Your child may be able to:

- Wait briefly for a turn
- Manage disappointment with support
- Use words to express feelings
- Recover from frustration after a reasonable period

Ways to Support at Home

Model calming strategies

- Practice taking turns during games
- Help children identify emotions
- Encourage problem-solving conversations

Flexibility & Adaptability

Your child may be able to:

- Accept changes in routine
- Try new activities
- Work with different classmates
- Move from preferred to non-preferred tasks

Ways to Support at Home

- Introduce new experiences
- Vary daily routines occasionally
- Encourage trying new foods, games, and activities



Social Readiness

Learning is a social experience. Children thrive when they can build positive relationships with peers and adults.

Peer Interaction

Your child may be able to:

- Play alongside and with other children
- Share materials with support
- Take turns during games and activities
- Engage in cooperative play

Ways to Support at Home

- Arrange playdates
- Participate in community classes
- Visit parks and playgrounds regularly
- Practice sharing and turn-taking

Communication Skills

Your child may be able to:

- Express wants and needs verbally
- Ask for help when needed
- Participate in simple conversations
- Listen when others are speaking

Ways to Support at Home

- Encourage daily conversations
- Ask open-ended questions
- Model respectful listening
 - Examples:
 - "What was your favorite part of today?"
 - "How do you think that character felt?"

Building Relationships with Adults

Your child may be able to:

- Separate from caregivers with manageable support
- Follow instructions from trusted adults
- Seek help appropriately
- Participate in group activities led by teachers

Ways to Support at Home

- Practice short separations
- Attend enrichment programs
- Encourage interactions with other trusted adults

Independence Skills

Developing independence helps children feel confident and capable.

Self-Care Skills

Children entering TK should be working towards:

- Independent toileting
- Handwashing with minimal assistance
- Putting on and removing jackets
- Managing backpacks and personal belongings
- Opening lunch containers with limited help

Ways to Support at Home

- Allow extra time for self-care tasks
- Encourage independence before stepping in
- Establish daily routines

Responsibility & Classroom Readiness

Your child may be able to:

- Clean up after activities
- Follow classroom expectations
- Care for personal belongings
- Participate in classroom jobs

Ways to Support at Home

- Assign simple household responsibilities
- Encourage putting toys away
- Create consistent routines

Early Learning Behaviors

Rather than focusing on advanced academics, we encourage families to nurture a love of learning.

Your child may demonstrate:

- Curiosity about the world
- Interest in books and stories
- Enjoyment of exploration and discovery
- Willingness to ask questions
- Persistence when learning something new

Ways to Support at Home

- Read together daily
- Explore nature
- Visit libraries and museums
- Encourage imaginative play
- Celebrate effort rather than perfection



Academic Foundations

Children enter TK with varying academic experiences.
Formal academic mastery is not expected.

Literacy Readiness

Helpful foundational skills include:

- Recognizing their name
 - Holding writing tools comfortably
 - Enjoying books and storytelling
 - Counting objects during play
 - Recognizing some letters and sounds
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- Most importantly, children should demonstrate enthusiasm for learning and exploration.





A Partnership Between Home and School

Successful school experiences begin with a strong partnership between families and educators. Every child develops at their own pace, and readiness looks different for each learner.

Our goal is to create an environment where children feel safe, valued, challenged, and inspired. Together, we can help build the confidence, independence, and joy that form the foundation for lifelong learning.

We look forward to partnering with your family as your child begins their educational journey.