

How Will I Know if My Child is Ready for Kindergarten?

There is no single test that guarantees that a child is ready for kindergarten. Think of the list below as a way to identify your child's strengths, rather than using it to decide whether he/she is behind or ahead of other children. Once the school year begins, know that his or her teacher will create a learning environment that gives each individual student an opportunity to thrive and learn new skills throughout the school year.

Good Health and Physical Well-Being

- Runs, jumps, plays outdoors, and does other activities to help develop large muscle skills.
- Works puzzles, scribbles, colors, paints, cuts, pastes, and does other activities to help develop small muscle skills.
- Has bathroom and self-help skills.
- Receives regular medical and dental care, and has had all necessary immunizations.

Social and Emotional Preparation

- Is curious and motivated to learn.
- Spends short periods away from family.
- Enjoys being with other children.
- Can follow simple instructions.
- Helps with family chores.
- Respects adult leadership.
- Is encouraged to think of ideas for solving a problem.
- Is learning to share and to wait their turn.
- Is learning to finish tasks.
- Is learning to use self-control.

General Knowledge

- Plays counting games and enjoys counting.
- Is learning to identify shapes and colors.
- Is encouraged to sort and classify things.
- Is learning name, address, and phone number.
- Can identify 10 alphabet letters, especially those from his/her own name.
- Recognizes symbols and print he/she sees daily, such as signs, logos, and advertising.
- Shows an interest in books and reading.
- Likes to show off his/her "reading" and "writing" attempts.
- Knows the difference between pictures and print in a book.
- Pays attention to the order of events in stories, by asking or thinking about what happens next in a story.
- Connects information and events to life experiences, when he/she hears a story.
- Asks questions and makes comments that show he/she understands the literal meaning of a story being told.
- Is beginning to recognize beginning or rhyming sounds in words, such as words that begin with "B" or words that rhyme with "cat."
- Pays attention to repeating sounds in language, such as those heard in rhymes and songs.
- Uses new vocabulary and develops correct grammar in his/her own speech.
- Understands and follows verbal directions.
- Knows that alphabet letters make words.

- Understands that different writing is used for different reasons, such as "lists are used for groceries."

Reading Readiness and Language

- Read to your child every day.
- Give your child many reading materials to explore and writing materials to use.
- Visit the library often, and participate in story times and other activities there.
- Read aloud signs like "No Parking" and "Exit" and talk about what the signs mean.
- Sing songs and say nursery rhymes together.
- Play with alphabet letters, and help your child to identify letter names and words that begin with the sound the letter makes.
- Use new and different words to describe what you see, hear, and feel.
- Encourage your child to write notes using scribble writing and pretend spelling.
- Turn a shoe box into a mail box and use it to send notes to each other.
- Take turns reading what you have "written."

Math Readiness

- Use a calendar to plan special events. Count the days until an event happens.
- Play simple math games with dice, cards, and dominoes.
- Practice saying your phone number and address together.
- Count forward and backward with your child. For example, "Three, two, one, let's go!"
- Find things to count with your child, such as...
 - How many bites does it takes to eat a banana?
 - How many things at home are shaped like a circle? a square? a triangle?
 - How many shoes or books are in your home?
- Add to the fun, by stapling paper together and making a "How Many?" book to keep track of what you have counted.

Health Education

- Make hand washing and tooth brushing a regular part of your family's routine.

Physical Fitness

- Practice fastening clothes and shoes with snaps, buttons, zippers, and laces.
- Visit parks, playgrounds, and swimming pools.
- Play games that encourage your child to move different body parts on command.

Music

- Sing songs together. Try humming or clapping to the music as well.
- Make up songs with your child. Take turns singing verses.
- Encourage your child to listen to children's songs.

Visual Arts

- Experiment with Play Dough, crayons, paints, paper and scissors to develop small muscles in the fingers and eye-hand coordination.
- Pick a place to display "masterpiece" creations at home.
- Ask your child to tell you all about his or her artistic creations.
- Find ways to learn about basic colors.