

## KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Some of the skills we encourage parents to assess when considering whether their child is ready for Kindergarten are:

- Toileting: it is important for your child to not only be able to independently use the bathroom, but also be able to recognize when they need to go, and also be able to dress/undress themselves to do so. If your child is unable to do so with kindergarten right around the corner, there is no need to pressure your child into it. Just let the teacher know it is something you are still working on. Many kindergarteners aren't quite there yet!
- Advocacy: we discussed the importance of children being able to advocate for their needs, and as parents, encouraging your children to advocate for themselves to reinforce that this is a positive skill.
- Self-Help Skills: one of the things to consider is that in elementary school, children receive less individualized attention as they have in preschool. This is a great time to practice those same skills children will utilize on a day-to-day basis in kindergarten such as opening container, Velcro their shoes, pull pants up and down, put on jackets).
- Social-Emotional Literacy: this is a crucial skill that we strongly encourage you to help your child develop. Children can be working towards recognizing emotions in themselves and others, self-regulation, and engaging with their peers. Just like learning to walk, social-emotional skills are developed through support and developmental readiness.

The topic of kindergarten can elicit a variety of thoughts and feelings. A few books/resources we recommend to help open up conversation about feelings are:

- A Feelings Chart (attached to this email)- this can be used by simply showing it to a child and asking them how they are feeling today or about a situation
- Books in the "When I Feel" series By: Cornelia Spelman
- The Kissing Hand By: Audrey Denn
- Goodbye Friend, Hello Friend By: Cori Doerrfeld

As the time draws near to make the transition into kindergarten, here are a few tips we recommend considering and/or implementing into your daily rhythm:

- We recommend waiting until *at least* after spring break to discuss kindergarten in detail (this includes reading books about kindergarten). A transition like this can be stressful for children, but discussing this too often or too far in advance may be confusing and stressful for your child.
- Routines: this is a huge transition for children at this age and creating a routine that works for your family will provide your child with the stability and consistency they need to succeed.
- Feelings Books: books are a wonderful resource for children at this age to be able to understand more about their own experiences and feel connection to characters in a story who may be going through things they are going through themselves. Books can help open up deeper conversations for children, too.
- Play/Art: children don't come to adults and say, "I had a hard day, I need to talk", they ask, "Will you play with me?" Utilizing play and art as an expressive modality will allow your child the opportunity to express their stressors, concerns, and feelings. We encourage parents to really engage in this play with their child. Even 10-15 minutes can make a big difference in your child's stress level and your relationship. Listen and observe what your child is saying and how they are playing. Consider intentionally setting up play scenes that include a town, people, cars and

school bus, along with materials for "school" role play. This gives children the materials to express thoughts and feelings about their school experience.

Communication with your child is very important, but may not come easily for them. Your child may not be able to *voluntarily* express in detail all of the events they experienced in their day. Here are examples of some questions you can ask your child to help them expand on the topic of things that have occurred at school:

- Who did you play with today?
- What games did you play at school today?
- What specials did you have at school today?

Remember, every child is different and may be ready for this big transition at a different time than their peers. It is *okay* to give your child the gift of time by delaying the Kindergarten enrollment process if that is what your family, with the support of your child's teacher, decides is best for your child.

We hope that this information helps! Please don't hesitate to reach out should you need additional resources or support.

Best,

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