



Kindergarten Readiness

Is My Child Ready For Kindergarten?

Child development experts continue to disagree about the 'right' age for a child to start school, but there is an emerging belief that numerous other factors, not just chronological age, should be used as criteria for school entry.

As children grow, they develop at different rates so age may not be the best indicator of school readiness. You must consider all aspects of your child's development because if they enter school before they are ready to cope their chances of failure and low self-esteem increase dramatically. They can lose confidence and feel they can't cope.

What Should I Be Looking For In My Child?

While there's no perfect formula that determines when children are truly ready for kindergarten, you can use this list to see how well your child is doing in acquiring the skills found on most kindergarten checklists.

Check the skills your child has mastered. Then recheck them every month to see what additional skills your child can accomplish easily.

Young children change so fast - if they can't do something this week, they may be able to do it a few weeks later.

- Listen to stories without interrupting
- Recognize rhyming sounds
- Pay attention for short periods of time to adult-directed tasks
- Understand actions have both causes and effects
- Show understanding of general times of day
- Cut with scissors
- Trace basic shapes
- Begin to share with others
- Start to follow rules
- Be able to recognize authority
- Manage bathroom needs
- Button shirts, pants, coats, and zip up zippers
- Begin to control oneself
- Separate from parents without being upset



- Speak understandably
- Talk in complete sentences of five to six words
- Look at pictures and then tell stories
- Identify rhyming words
- Identify the beginning sound of some words
- Identify alphabet letters
- Recognize some common sight words like "stop"
- Sort similar objects by color, size, and shape
- Recognize groups of one, two, three, four, and five objects
- Count to ten
- Throw, catch & bounce a ball



Is My Child Mature Enough To Start Kindergarten?

Preschool and school are very different. Preschool has a higher staff-child ratio and is usually a cozy and caring atmosphere. School has larger buildings, a more regimented routine, larger and older children, with more noise and congestion. To a child these differences are important and can question their sense of security.

An important element in deciding School Readiness is asking yourself whether your child is emotionally mature enough to start school. You should also consider the length of their attention span. Ask yourself these questions:

Is your child eager to participate, wanting to learn?

Are they interested, motivated and confident?

Are they willing to attempt new experiences?

Can your child co-operate with other children?

Are they able to handle the rough emotional trials – cliques & name calling – that is usually part of school life?

How do they handle these situations? Do they react by either falling apart or becoming a bully?

Can they negotiate with friends?

Is your child able to respond to all adults? A lot of schools rely on volunteers to help in the classroom. It is essential that your child has learnt to listen and respond to adults who are not their parents.

Can your child handle large group situations?

Can your child sit still for 10 minutes?

Can they do it in a group of 15–30 other children?

Can they go to the toilet independently?

Can they handle their lunch and look after their own belongings?

Children will develop academically at different stages but if there are too many children in the classroom who can't sit quietly, aren't keen to learn, respect their fellow classmates, their teachers and other adults in the classroom then much learning will simply never happen.

Is Your Child Concerned About Leaving Pre-School To Start Big School?

You can downplay their apprehension about leaving their preschool & starting kindergarten by some positive reinforcement and having them focus on some of their personal strengths.

- Pick out some of the skills on the list above and reassure them that they would be a good student because they already know (for example):
 - their ABCs
 - how to count
 - how to write and spell their name
- Point out they have friends in preschool so making new friends would be easy in big school.
- Reminding them that they may be a great tree climber or good at catching a ball, etc, will also help.
- Take photographs of your child's new school and glue them into their get ready for school notebook. That way, when they are showing Grandma or other family members all of their work they will also be able to proudly show off their new school.

If your child has acquired most of the skills on the above list and will be at least five years old at the start of the summer before he or she starts kindergarten, he or she is probably ready for kindergarten.

Remember that what teachers want to see on the first day of school are children who are healthy, mature, capable and eager to learn.



Preparation is the key...