

Parenting Together

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Helping Your Child Prepare for School

For most children, kindergarten is the start of formal education. Even for children who have been in a preschool or child care setting, the transition is big. And this year it may be especially challenging with many schools starting online. You might wonder - is your child ready? Kindergarten readiness, or school readiness, is a term used by schools, policymakers, and child development researchers. Definitions of readiness vary, and what readiness means may differ from schools to school.



What is School Readiness

School readiness isn't easy to define. Typical development can vary significantly among children around the ages of 4 and 5. And a child's development in one skill doesn't necessarily translate into development in others. However, there are milestones in childhood development that can help ease the transition to kindergarten.

Children are likely to have some readiness in:

- Demonstrating a curiosity or interest in learning new things
- Being able to explore new things through their senses
- Taking turns and cooperating with siblings or peers
- Being interested in speaking with and listening to peers and adults

- Beginning to follow instructions
- Communicating how they're feeling
- Empathizing with other children
- Controlling impulses
- Paying attention
- Showing growth in independence
- Limiting disruptive behaviors

These skills develop over time, depending on the individual child's abilities and experiences. As a result, school readiness might best be understood not as a single goal, but as a process - providing early childhood experiences and an environment that prepares them to learn.

The Role of Parents/Caregivers

The parent's role in preparing a child for school is to create a healthy, safe, supportive, and engaging environment throughout early childhood. This includes several strategies.

Promoting good health

Good physical health is important for learning and participating in school. Make sure your child eats a healthy diet, gets plenty of physical activity, follows a regular sleep schedule, and gets his or her recommended vaccinations.



The Book Nook

We Don't Eat Our Classmates!
by Ryan T. Higgins

*Look out kindergarten, here I come! /
Prepárate, kindergarten! Allá voy!*
by Nancy Carlson

Rosie Goes to Preschool
by Karen Katz



Oregon State
University

Keeping wellness visits

Wellness visits allow your child's doctor to examine your child and monitor his or her growth, overall health and vision and hearing. The doctor will also check on your child's motor, speech and social development. If there are concerns about developmental delays, the doctor can refer you to state or local programs for early intervention.

Reading aloud together

Reading to preschool children can help your child develop literacy skills.

Benefits of reading aloud that promote school readiness include:

- Understanding that printed words have meaning
- Recognizing similar sounds, such as rhymes
- Learning letter and sound associations
- Increasing overall vocabulary
- Understanding that stories have a beginning, middle, and end
- Developing social and emotional skills
- Learning numbers, shapes and colors

Encouraging play

Providing your child an opportunity to play and playing with your child is important for healthy child development. Benefits of play that promote school readiness include:

- Improving physical health
- Developing creativity and imagination
- Practicing social and emotional skills
- Developing friendships
- Learning to share and solve problems with other children
- Learning to overcome challenges and build resilient
- Exploring worries or fears in imaginative play

Finding learning opportunities

Formal and informal opportunities for early childhood learning experiences in your community can promote your child's school readiness. Many organizations are offering free programs online at this time. Connect with your local parenting Hub for information about: online story times, parenting classes, and more!



Preparing for the first day

To help your child prepare for the transition to kindergarten, start developing a daily routine a few weeks before school starts. Have your child wake up, eat and go to bed at the same times each day. Talk about your child's new school and listen to any concerns your child shares. Whether your child starts school in-person or online, getting into a routine will be helpful and your role as your child's first teacher will continue to be essential.

For more ideas, check out this article: www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/kindergarten-readiness/art-20048432

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References

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- 9 Ways to Get Your Child Ready for Kindergarten
<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/moving-up/how-to-get-ready-for-kindergarten>
- Get Ready for School!
<https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/parents/LearnPttrs/ready.html>

