



June 2019

Kindergarten is a major turning point in the lives of children and parents alike. It is important to remember that the early school experience has lasting effects on children in regard to their attitude about school, their self-esteem and their achievements.

Dear Soon to be Kindergarten Parents:

Transitioning into kindergarten can be a challenging time for children. Children benefit greatly from home support as they enter this new phase of their education. The time and energy you spend helping your child's first impression to be a positive one is time and energy well spent. Most kids take to kindergarten like fish to water, but the more you can mentally, physically and emotionally prepare your child for the transition, the easier it will be.

Some suggestions for you:

- ✓ Remember that you are setting the tone for how your child views this experience. Discuss how excited you were when you attended your first day of school. If older siblings have had positive experiences involve them in the discussion.
- ✓ Read stories about kindergarten and school. *Look Out Kindergarten. Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson. *The Night Before Kindergarten* by Natasha Wing and Julie Durrell, and *Mrs. Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate and Ashley Wolff are great "getting ready" books.
- ✓ During the month preceding your child's entry into kindergarten, begin routines that will work during the school year. Paying attention to bedtimes and diet prior to school starting will make a big difference for your child.
- ✓ If your child has not had experience being around other children, set up play dates with neighbors, family, and/or friends. A big

part of the kindergarten experience requires that children know how to relate to others.

- ✓ Make sure that you're emotionally prepared; it won't be easy to walk away if your child is crying but staying will only make the situation more difficult. Simply say goodbye and remind your child that you'll see him or her soon.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the Kindergarten Sight Words. Kindergarten Sight Words are the words that kindergartners will see the most. In order to become a great reader, it is critical that children master their sight words. It is important to learn the sight words and to continue to practice them. Once your child has mastered them, it is time to move onto the next list. There are 52 sight words that are typically taught in kindergarten.



Some suggestions for your child:

- ✓ **Know his/her full name.** They are expected to recite their full names and know how to write their first name.
- ✓ **Practice fine-motor skills.** A typical day in Kindergarten involves cutting, coloring, pasting, tracing, holding a pencil or crayon, etc. Beginning writing depends on these types of activities at home so your child is not frustrated or lagging behind at school.
- ✓ **Function independently.** While at school your child will be expected to manage bathroom needs independently, fasten and unfasten simple buttons, put on and take off their coats, etc. Encourage this at home so that they feel confident doing these things for themselves. Tying shoelaces is NOT expected – this is developmental, and many children do not learn this until 1st grade or so. If your child does not know how to tie their own shoes it

would be wise to use shoes or sneakers with Velcro straps. If becomes tedious and tiring for a teacher to tie children's shoelaces all day long.

- ✓ **Use good social skills.** Much of Kindergarten involves working and getting along with others. Your child should be able to feel comfortable doing this. Help your child refine essential social skills such as turn-taking, sharing, compromising and problem-solving.
- ✓ **Recognize basic letters and numbers.** Though they are not expected to know all the letters of the alphabet going into Kindergarten, they should know the letters in their name and as many of the other letters as possible. Children are expected to be able to count from **at least** 1-10 and be able to recognize these numbers as well as know some basic shapes and colors.
- ✓ **Sit and listen to a story without interrupting.** In Kindergarten children must be able to concentrate on what the teacher is saying, listen and follow simple directions, etc. The best way to prepare children for this is to sit and read with them and encourage them to focus on the story. This fosters simple commands – practice at home. Give your child simple 2 or 3 step directions such as – pick up the toy from the floor, put it into the toy box and close the lid. This will prepare them for when their teacher asks them to complete work at school.

Transition Activities

May, June, July, August

The best person to ensure that your children arrive at school ready to succeed is you! Becoming involved in your children's educational process early in life will assist them in making a smooth transition into kindergarten.

The following information is designed to help you prepare your children for their school experience.



The Kindergarten Experience

Preschool and kindergarten classes have much in common. The kindergarten experience will build upon what your children have learned in preschool.

Both preschool and kindergarten children learn best by:

- Actively exploring their environment through “hands-on” experiences
- Using concrete materials and participating in activities that are relevant to their own experiences and culture; and
- Building upon their natural curiosity and desire to make sense of the world around them

Both preschool and kindergarten children are learning how to:

- Use their bodies and express themselves through physical activities
- Solve problems and experiment with change
- Develop an understanding and acceptance of themselves as individuals
- Gain more self-control and build cooperative relations with others
- Communicate their thoughts and feelings as effectively and creatively as possible

Some differences between kindergarten and preschool are:

- Settings are different (more stimulating and academic)
- Group size may be larger
- Schedules may be more rigid
- Home assignments are given (these vary from school to school)





Are Your Children Ready For School?

Readiness Checklist

Personal Needs

Without help, can they...

- Put on and take off coat?
- Tie their own shoes?
- Recognize their own possessions?
- Eat unassisted?
- Blow their nose and cover a sneeze?
- Use the toilet?
- Wash their hands?
- Snap, button, zip, and buckle?
- Sit at a table to eat?
- Use silverware?
- Put away toys when asked?

Social Skills

Can they...

- Listen to an adult and follow simple instructions?
- Cooperate with other children?
- Play with other children without hitting or biting?
- Sit for short periods of time?
- Follow rules?
- Follow simple two-step directions?



Intellectual Skills

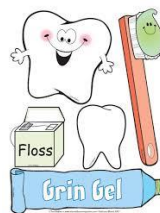
Do your children...

- _____ Sit and listen to a story?
- _____ Hold a book upright and turn pages from right to left?
- _____ Know their first and last name?
- _____ Know their parents' names?
- _____ Know their telephone number?
- _____ Know their birthday?
- _____ Tell and retell familiar stories?
- _____ Know colors, shapes and sizes?
- _____ Willingly complete a task?
- _____ Know a nursery rhyme?
- _____ Recognize at least ten letters of the alphabet?

Health Needs

Have they...

- _____ Had all required immunizations?
- _____ Had a recent health check-up?
- _____ Received medical care when they were sick?
- _____ Received dental check-ups?
- _____ Eat at regular times daily?
- _____ Learned to run, skip, jump, climb?





School Readiness Activities

Children learn many new skills during the kindergarten experience. Below is a list of activities that you and your children can work on together to better prepare them for school.

- Saying body parts
- Saying (*not singing*) the ABC's
- Knowing the names of parents and other family members
- Holding scissors appropriately
- Knowing how to button, snap, and zip zippers
- Knowing birth date and age
- Recognizing and writing first name (remembering to use capital letter for the first letter in a name) P-e-t-e-r, not P-E-T-E-R
- Recognizing basic shapes (circle, square, triangle, and rectangle)
- Counting 0-10
- Saying address and phone number
- Talking about school as a positive experience



21 Ways to Prepare Your Children for Kindergarten

- Provide opportunities for rigorous physical activity every day.
- Establish a bedtime for 8 or more hours of sleep each night.
- Make certain your children have all required immunizations and a current health check-up.
- Help your children become independent in dressing, eating, and personal hygiene.
- Interact frequently with your children by talking, listening, and questioning.
- Take your children to a variety of places such as the library, park, post office, museums and grocery store.
- Provide toys, games and household objects that encourage dramatic play, manipulation and exploration.
- Provide opportunities to play with other children.
- Teach your children socially acceptable ways to disagree.
- Encourage social values such as helpfulness, cooperation, sharing and concern for others.
- Demonstrate common expressions of courtesy and praise your children for using them.
- Establish reasonable limits for behavior and hold your children to them.
- Work often with your children on different skills to encourage small muscle development, eye-hand coordination and creative expression.

- Talk with your children about your family, your culture, and your values.
- Encourage work values such as effort, persistence and initiative.
- Read to your children every day. Talk about the story and pictures.
- Expose your children to quality literature. Provide books, magazines and other printed materials for your children to handle.
- Provide opportunities to play games that recognize and identify numbers.
- Provide your children with pens, pencils, markers and paper. Encourage writing and scribbling.
- Be consistent!



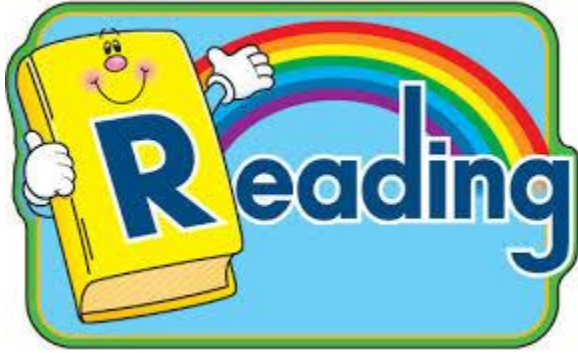
Social Development

Supporting children's developing self-concept and sense of positive self-esteem is an important task for parents and teachers of young children. Children can become discouraged quickly if they experience repeated disapproval, failure, or frustration.

Preschoolers are capable of engaging in cooperative play with other children and forming real friendships. In order to develop these social emotional skills, children need coaching and guidance in order to maintain appropriate behaviors with others.

Important social skills include:

- Using words instead of being physical when angry
- Following simple directions
- Speaking clearly so an adult can understand
- Playing with other children
- Going to the bathroom without help
- Asking questions about things around them
- Enjoying having books read aloud to them
- Telling a story about a past event
- Talking using complete sentences
- Expressing feelings and needs
- Dressing and eating with minor supervision



Reading Readiness

Prior to kinergarten, children typically learn the concepts of reading through gaames and activities. Many of these skills are learned through modeling.

By age five most children know:

Book Basics

- Front of book
- Back of book
- Reading the left-hand page before the right-hand page
- Holding a book and turning the pages
- Title
- Author

Procedures

- Where to start reading on the page
- Reading left to right
- Return sweep
- Page sequence

What They See

- Where to start reading on the page
- Reading left to right
- Return sweep
- Page sequence



Kindergarten Sight Words

There are 52 sight words that are typically taught in kindergarten.

They are:

all, am, are, at, ate, be, black, brown, but, came, did, do, eat, four, get, good, have, he, into, like, must, new, no, now on, our, out, please, pretty, ran, ride, saw, say, she, so, soon, that, there, they, this, too, under, want, was, well, went, what, white, who, will, with, yes.

These are the 52 most commonly seen words in kindergarten level books. When a child is able to master those words, it not only makes it easier for them to read the words, it also improves their fluency or how quickly and smoothly they can read a passage.



Math Readiness

Math concepts can be a part of your children’s daily experiences. Children are always categorizing, comparing, ordering, numbering, and counting.

Children in kindergarten will learn to:

- Observe page numbers
- Compare sizes: *big, little, middle-sized*
- Observe position in space: *up/down, over/under, in/out, beside/between*
- Use number words in order: *first, second, third*

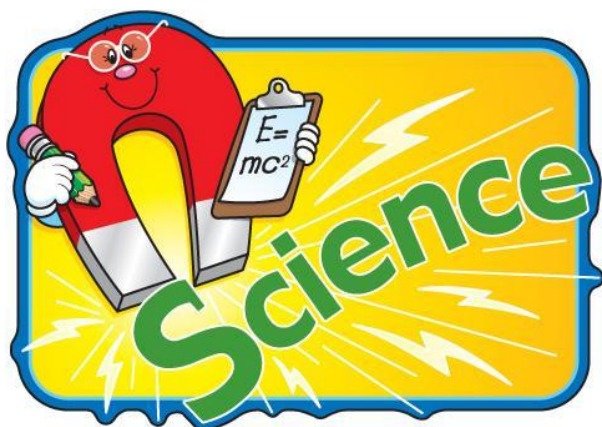
Ask questions that focus on print concepts that include counting:

- How many letters in a word
- How many words in a line
- How many words in a sentence
- How many times a word is written on a page

The development of number concepts – classifying, ordering, counting and time and space relationships – is directly related to children’s ability to perform mathematical tasks throughout their school years and the rest of their life. It is important to help your child feel confident in dealing with number tasks.

Here are some ways you can facilitate math readiness:

- Let your children set the table: *How many forks do you need? How many plates are on the table?*
- Provide opportunities to put away groceries
- Provide opportunities to compare objects: *color of socks, size of food containers*
- Set up a routine or sequence for personal care
- Provide objects or toys for play



Science Readiness

As children mature, they naturally become more curious about their environment and begin to interact with their surroundings. This is the best time to introduce them to science. Rich sensory experiences (seeing, tasting, touching, hearing, and smelling) can help children become even more observing and curious about the world around them.

Experience and research show that young children are excited about science when they are given the chance “to do” science. Hands-on science experiences, along with conversations about what is occurring, are the most useful for developing children’s science process skills.

Exploring the characteristics of objects and living things can help children learn how to classify or group things based on their characteristics. These experiences go beyond improving science skills to improving reading skills, language skills, creativity and attitudes toward science. Many skills that help your children succeed in science also help in everyday life.

You should encourage your children to ask questions. If you cannot answer all the questions, that’s all right. No one has *all* the answers! Children don’t need or expect lengthy, detailed answers to all their questions.

Science skills include:

- Observing what is happening
- Predicting what might happen
- Testing predictions under controlled conditions
- Trying to make sense of observations



Science in the Home and Community

There are many activities you can do with your children to help them develop skills related to science.

Some suggestions are:

- Introduce your children to stimulating environments. Oceans, parks, airports, kitchens, and backyards offer chances for observing and discussing science.
- Become involved in your children's science interest. Identify aspects of science that your child enjoys. If dinosaurs intrigue him or her, read dinosaur books, visit museums, and watch a video about dinosaurs.
- Seize the teachable moments. If your child shows an interest in flowers, talk about it. You can follow-up by planting flowers and watching them grow.
- Provide hands-on experiences. Give children the chance "to do" science. Activities should challenge, but not overly frustrate.
- Share your science interests. Do activities together..
- Bridge from the media, using what your children see on television to open up science opportunities.
- Set aside time for discussion.



Summer Reading List

Reading aloud together is a wonderful way to create a love of reading in your children and it will help them become better readers.

Try these reading tips:

- Encourage your child to read to others.
- After reading a story together, discuss with your child what happened at the beginning, middle and end of the story.
- Ask your child open-ended questions about the story, such as “What do you think would happen if...”
- Identify the author and illustrator of the story.

Below is a list of books you and your child may enjoy.

Rhyme, Rhythm and Song

- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle
- *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood
- *Five Little Monkey’s Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Christelow
- *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury
- *It’s Raining, It’s Pouring* by Kim Eagle

Counting

- *One Duck Stuck* by Phyllis Root
- *While You Were Sleeping* by John Butler
- *Barn Cat* by Carol Saul
- *Spots Counting Creatures* by Carolyn Lesser

Alphabet

- *Chicka Chicka Boom* by Bill Martin Jr.
- *ABC* by Flora McDonnell
- *Miss Spider's ABC* by David Kirk
- *The Handbook Alphabet* by Laura Rankin

Separation, Fears and Death

- *Mamma and Daddy Bear's Divorce* by Cornelia Spelman
- *Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon
- *When Mama Comes Home Tonight* by Eileen Spinella
- *A Dog Like Jack* by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan
- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

Science

- *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry
- *Sweet Dreams* by Kimoko Kajikawa
- *Have You Seen Bugs?* By Joanne Oppenheim
- *Fish Wish* by Bob Barner

Animal Stories

- *Wiggle Waggle* by Johnathan London
- *Who Hops?* By Katie Davis
- *If You Give A Pig a Pancake* by Laura Numeroff
- *Snuggle Wuggle* by Johnathan London



Early August – write a note

“Sharing key information can help educators make a connection with your child”

What can you tell your child’s teachers that will help them do their job better? You might be surprised. However, keep in mind no one knows more about your child than you do. You know the culture (practices, habits, traditions, beliefs, languages, etc.) from which your child comes. Their likes, dislikes, what they value, etc. It’s just as important for parents to tell teachers about what they are observing at home that may affect school performance as it is for teachers to report how children are doing in the classroom.

See an example of a parent letter to the teacher on the following page:

Dear Teacher,

As I sit here looking over classroom supply lists and counting down the last days of summer vacation, I am thinking about you. After all, my “baby” will be entering your classroom in a few short weeks. She will be moving on to the “big school” (as she calls it), and she is so excited. I, on the other hand, am a little sad and nervous.

Starting Kindergarten is a major milestone. While I am sad to see my baby girl growing up so fast, I am proud and excited for her as she enters this new part of her world. She will get out to participate in things like art class and music. She will meet new friends in our own neighborhood, which may lead to more play dates. She will build self-confidence and get to feel so proud as she learns new things that you will teach her. These things are priceless.

But, I must admit that I am also nervous. I feel like I am letting my own heart walk out of my chest and into the “big school” alone and unprotected. I feel like my child might have to leave her culture at the classroom door. The world that she has known all of her life. What a vulnerable feeling that is! It hurts just thinking about this now. I know you will be there for her, and I thank you for that. Since I cannot be, I want you to be aware of a few things.

Please know that when she says, “please help *you*,” she means “please help me.” We are working on that. Please don’t be alarmed if she refers to her dad and I by our first names. We are her real parents; this is just something she does. Please take her to the bathroom if she doesn’t go for a while. I would hate for her to have an accident because she was too shy to ask. Please know that although she might not be as loud as the other kids, she is taking everything in around her. Please don’t let her slip through the cracks. Please make sure she has someone to sit with at lunch. I don’t want her to feel alone. Please remember that although she is one of many for you, she is my “baby,” my only daughter.

Teacher, I know your job is difficult. You have awesome responsibilities; it is one of the most important jobs out there. I will be entrusting you with my “heart” for six and a half hours a day come September. Thank you in advance for treating her with care.

Sincerely,

Mom of your Future Student

Thanks to you and your summer engagement we can start now preparing for an incredible _____ - _____ academic year. We at _____ City Schools are excited about servicing you and your student learner/s!