



How to Prepare my Child for Kindergarten



How can I help my child be ready for school?

Beginning to prepare your child for school in advance can be the key in making their transition from home or daycare to school more successful and rewarding for all members of the family. There are many changes for children when they start school, so getting ready early will help them be ready when the time comes. Everyday routines that we do with our children give them a sense of security and a feeling of safety.

Therefore, preparing them for the new routines in school will help them continue to feel that sense of security. Throughout this newsletter you will find ways that you can assist your child in developing the necessary skills and routines that will be an everyday part of kindergarten. We would like to see every child and parent look forward to that first day and know they are coming prepared and ready to learn and grow.



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Special points of interest:

- Ways to make starting school more successful for your child and your family
- Helpful hints throughout the article to assist you in getting your child prepared
- Things to help both parents and children in this new transition
- SCHOOL CAN BE FUN!

Self-Help Readiness Checklist

Skills JK children should master prior to starting school:

- Able to dress and undress with minimal help
- Able to put on and take off boots/shoes
- Able to do up buttons and zippers
- Able to wash hands independently
- Able to open and close food containers independently
- Able to open and close backpack and lunch bag
- Toilet independently without reminders

- Able to clean up toys and projects with minimal prompting and assistance
- Able to understand and participate in quiet time activities
- Able to entertain themselves for at least 10-15 minutes

Things you can do to assist:

- * Allow your child to have one or more responsibilities (set table, clean up toys)
- * Have your child dress and undress themselves
- * Give them additional time when leaving home to practice getting their own outdoor things on/off
- * Start shortening then eliminating nap times prior to school

- * Assist them in wiping themselves after toileting and encourage independence
- * Go for a picnic lunch with their backpack and lunch bag
- * Practice opening and closing containers that will be sent in their lunch
- * Practice cleaning up their own toys at home
- * Practice quiet time activities (puzzles, books)

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Social/ Emotional Readiness

Skills that JK children should master prior to the starting school:

- Able to wait patiently for 3-4 minutes for help
- Can verbalize their wants and needs
- Is able to share, compromise, turn-take and problem solve with other children
- Able to follow and accept guidelines and rules
- Respect the feelings of others
- Understands the concept of cause & effect in various situations

- Have language skills to verbalize their needs
- Able to use words rather than actions
- Can label how they are feeling with words (That makes me angry!)
- Able to think through problems and come up with potential solutions independently with little or no help from an adult
- Able to cope with changes to routines effectively?
- Talks in sentences

Things parents can do to assist:

- * Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children
- * Role play different scenarios
- * Describe ways to help them problem solve
- * Let them know that all feelings are okay

Physical/ Fine Motor Development Readiness

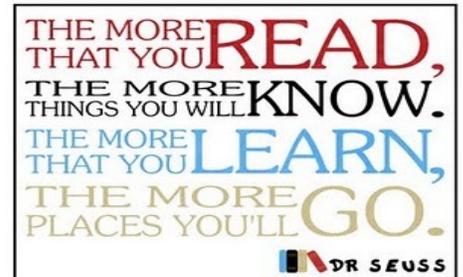
Skills JK children should master prior to starting school:

- Able to sit for extended periods of time
- Do they enjoy outdoor play? (Running, jumping, hopping)
- Able to hold a pencil properly doing a pincer grasp with index finger and thumb
- Able to cut with scissors

Things parents can do assist children to learn these skills:

- Get outside to the park (Balls, ropes)
- Provide opportunities to cut, draw and color
- Practice lining up with various games (trains)
- Provide activities that require sitting for extended periods (coloring, painting)

- Provide opportunities to use lacing cards
- Play music, dance



Cognitive Readiness

Skills JK children should master prior to starting school:

- Shows interest in songs and books
- Able to follow 2-3 step directions
- Recognize some letters, numbers & shapes
- Recognize their own name and starting to write their first name

- Able to focus on a task
- Uses problem solving to come up with solutions
- Starting to count 1-10

Things parents can do to assist:

- * Post their name around the house
- * Give opportunities to glue, color, draw

- * Play games that encourage following directions (Simon says)
- * Use fridge magnets (Letters, shapes, numbers)
- * Practice counting objects
- * Practice printing their name on artwork





Will they be bussed to school; things to consider?

- Practice lining up games
- Bring your children to watch the bus pick up and drop off before they start school
- Go for a practice ride if possible
- Meet the bus driver prior to the first day
- Introduce your child to other children at the bus stop or that go on their bus



Additional Tips to help prepare your child

- Make reading fun, encourage an interest in books
- Visit library, read stories over and over
- Ask questions when reading
- Point out words, letters and signs when out and about
- Play fun counting games
- Let child help around the house, give them some responsibility (set the table)
- Start routines early to get into a schedule (Before school starts put them to bed at school bedtime and wake up at time they would be woken for school)
- Practice a few weeks prior making a school breakfast in the am
- Go visit the school playground before school starts
- Wash up before and after eating if not doing so already
- Practice together making a healthy lunch
- Go to your school for a visit

Helpful Hints for Parents

Ask most parents about their child’s first day of school and watch as their eyes mist over and their voices change. Even the most laid-back among us seem to recall details of the day – and all its mixed emotions – with astonishing clarity.

Either way, the first day of kindergarten is a major milestone for kids and parents. This day is the launch of your child’s formal learning career, it’s also the beginning of new independence and of family life organized around school hours.

Regardless of the curriculum’s demands, becoming familiar with your child’s school

life is the best way to nurture her learning experience. Parents report feeling more secure when they’re an active part of the equation, whether in the classroom or in the school community in general. Besides, getting busy will do wonders for that lump in your throat.

Saying goodbye at the beginning of the day can be tough, but educators say most children settle quickly once mom or dad leaves. Here are some ways to ease the transition:

- Say when you’ll be back and that you’ll

be looking forward to hearing about her first day.

- Ease someone else in. Suggest that he sit beside a special friend or near the teacher.
- Stay for a few minutes (if necessary and with the teacher’s agreement). Begin a dialogue about the transition (“Soon you’ll be staying all by yourself”).



Beginning Literacy at Home

Here are some things you as a parent can do at home to help promote the beginning of literacy:

1. Provide opportunities for children to observe reading and writing each day. (Magazines, newspaper)
2. Give opportunities to observe parents writing (lists, cheques, notes)
3. Provide opportunities for a variety of books (picture books, rhymes, fairy tales, CD's)
4. Read to children everyday (Ask questions about the book) Use comments to help them react to the story. (That was funny!)
5. Encourage children to join in...fill in the blank.
7. Sing songs and say rhymes to help develop rhythm and rhyming
8. Comment or draw attention to words.
9. Point out letters and words in child's environment. (name in room, label toys, road signs, mail etc...)
10. Develop a basic knowledge of alphabet letters and their sounds.
11. Have writing and drawing materials available.
12. Encourage writing skills early...show interest when they are drawing or coloring.



Beginning Math Development at Home

Here are some strategies parents can use to help promote the development of numeracy at home:

1. Use conversation to talk about numbers (How many cookies do you have, How many forks do we need to set the table?)
2. Seek out opportunities to help children connect numbers to quantity. (Use dice, dominoes, cards)
3. Show children how numbers represent a sequence of steps (Going up stairs, moving along a board game)
4. Seek out opportunities to help with classification of objects (sorting, matching, classifying, size)
5. Talk about quantities and comparative words (more, less, higher, lower)
6. Sing songs and say familiar rhymes to help develop counting (5 little monkeys, This old man)
7. Read to your child everyday
8. Play games that use words that describe quantity (Bowls & cups in tub, cooking, lining up objects biggest to smallest)

*** If children start school with good math readiness there is a strong chance they will enjoy math from the start. We want our children to develop a love of math and a sense of confidence in their ability to do math. Therefore, it is vital we provide opportunities early to help children develop these skills.



Best getting-ready for school books

In the weeks before school begins, try these getting-ready-for-school tales:

[*Spot Goes to School*](#) by Eric Hill

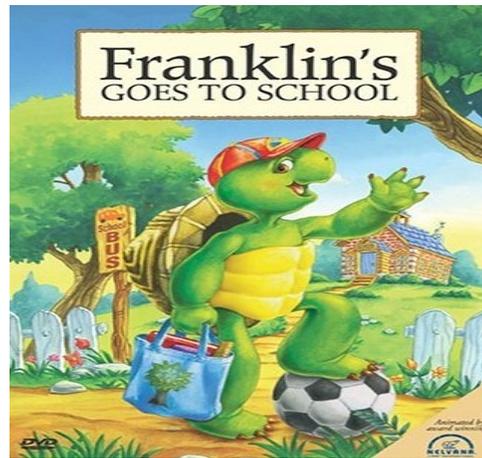
[*Will I Have a Friend?*](#) by Miriam Cohen

[*The Kissing Hand*](#) by Audrey Penn

[*Chrysanthemum*](#) by Kevin Henkes

[*Leo the Late Bloomer*](#) by Robert Kraus

[*Franklin Goes to School*](#) by Paulette Bourgeois



Always remember your child will develop at their own rate. Encourage their development with activities that are fun and interesting and will encourage excitement for learning as well as build their confidence to try new things.

