



Kindergarten Readiness

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

- A child is ready for kindergarten when the “behavioral age” of the child and the “developmental level/expectations” of the Kindergarten program match.
- Kindergarten Readiness = the ability to cope physically, socially, emotionally, and academically without undue stress in any one area, enabling a child to learn in the school environment

From the Gesell Institute: A weakness in any ONE of the four developmental areas can cause a problem somewhere along the line between Kindergarten and 4th Grade.

- Kindergarten Readiness = the ability to COPE and LEARN at the same time.

Characteristics Often Confused With Readiness

- High intelligence
- Strong verbal skills
- Larger physical size
- Arrival of the 5th birthday

The “Target” Group

- Children born between April and August
- Particularly boys

Considerations for Determining Kindergarten Readiness

CHRONOLOGICAL AGE

- Parents with children having birthdays April through August should consider all determining factors before automatically sending their child to school.
- It used to be that every child who was 5 years of age by the designated cut-off date went to school. That is no longer true. Because of the increasing number of parents who use a variety of factors to determine when to send their child to Kindergarten, a child with a late summer birthday can be well over a year younger than many of the children in their class.

CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL HEALTH, TEMPERAMENT, MATURITY AND GENDER

- Children lagging in maturity or ability are often simply younger than most of the other children in the class. This situation is particularly pertinent for boys who are, on average, about 6-12 months behind girls in readiness/ maturity. (For this reason, girls should always be evaluated in comparison with the other girls in the class, not with the boys.)
- Diseases or extended illnesses, such as asthma, ear infections, diabetes, cancer, etc. Children who spend energy and time battling such challenges may not pass through the developmental stages at the same pace as children without these challenges.
- Physical size: developmentally immature children are sometimes, although not always, physically smaller. Even large children may have a "baby-like" look compared to others of the same chronological age. But do note that not all small children are immature.
- Temperament: some children are intrinsically more emotional, more cautious, or less confident than others.
- Signs of Immaturity:

Short attention span; easily distracted; can't sit still or pay attention, particularly in a group setting.

Lack of control over large motor activities such as hopping, skipping, catching a ball. Children should be able to go up and down stair steps alternating feet by age 4.

Lack of control over fine motor skills such as cutting, holding a crayon or pencil.

Lagging social development: difficulty taking turns, sharing or communicating with peers. A child who consistently chooses younger playmates may be expressing a need for more time to grow up. **Social ability or lack thereof is one of the most important factors in assessing school readiness.**

Difficulty with eye-hand coordination. One test used to detect neurological immaturity is copying shapes, which requires cross-modal integration of fine motor and visual skills.

“Overflow movement”, which shows up when a child moves body parts that aren't involved in a particular activity—i.e. arms flap when he climbs stairs, tongue moves in and out during coloring or cutting, feet “dance” when sitting doing table work, etc. While this is common in preschoolers, it is a sign of neurological immaturity in children approaching 6 years of age.

YOUR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

- Ask questions about their academic, social, and behavioral expectations.
- Be aware that most public schools will, however, accept almost any child of the correct age.
- Be aware that public schools are extremely reluctant for children to repeat Kindergarten, or any school year.

YOUR OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

- No one knows your child better than you.
- Trust your heart; parent's instincts are rarely wrong.

YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER'S OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

- Ask questions about your child's success in the classroom setting.
- Use your teacher's expertise to assist you with this decision.

INAPPROPRIATE REASONS TO HOLD YOUR CHILD BACK

- Desire for your child to excel in sports
- Desire for your child to excel academically
- Desire for your child to be with friends they know
- Your child doesn't yet know "everything" you think they need to know academically, i.e. doesn't recognize every letter of the alphabet.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Whether or not you enroll your child to kindergarten this year, practice activities in the following areas daily:

- Fine motor work (Scissor-work)
- Letter recognition (Both by sight and sound)
- Number sense
- Starfall.com website games

Example games:

Fine motor: Cutting playdough or plastic straws with scissors

Letter recognition: **READ EVERY DAY WITH YOUR CHILD;** Use dry erase markers on a bathroom mirror and write a "letter of the day"; Have a Letter Sound Scavenger Hunt in your home and hide/find items that start with the same letter; Place shaving cream on your counter or in the bathtub and write letters in the shaving cream; Point out simple sight words on car trips around town; Make letters with rulers and curved shapes (i.e., Big line, little line/Big C, little c)

Number sense: Counting games with EVERYTHING in your home or in the car (i.e., "Can you hand me 5 forks/plates/napkins?"; "How many signs can we count as we head to preschool?"); Play hide and seek and practice counting to a certain number (1-20).



Checklist for Kindergarten Readiness

To the Parents:

This is not a test with a pass or fail score. This checklist is designed to give you an idea of some of the expectations for your child as a kindergartener, and to help you determine if your child is able to be successful in many of these areas, and thus, “ready” for school.

Item	Consistently Successful	Consistently Unsuccessful
SOCIAL		
1. Speaks understandably		
2. Talks in complete sentences of 5-6 words		
3. Makes appropriate responses to questions and conversation		
4. Can wait to speak with permission in a group setting		
5. Sits quietly for 5-10 minutes		
6. Listens actively for 5-10 minutes		
7. Listens to stories without interrupting		
8. Is able to get the attention of adults in socially acceptable ways		
9. Is able to get the attention of peers in socially acceptable ways		
10. Uses socially acceptable behavior in a group setting and in public		
11. Is able to lead in a group		
12. Is able to follow in a group		
13. Is able to use adults/teachers as a resource when they need help		
14. Is able to anticipate consequences; understands that actions have outcomes/effects		

15. Shares with others		
16. Can take turns		
17. Can follow rules		
18. Recognizes and respects authority		
19. Can control himself/self-regulate		
20. Respects others and their property		
21. Knows and usually uses good manners		
22. Walks in a line		
23. Helps with clean up chores		
EMOTIONAL		
1. Separates easily from parents		
2. Has self-confidence; "thinking energy" is not used up on "worrying energy"		
3. Accepts new challenges; is willing to try new things		
4. Accepts occasional failure without undue upset		
5. Accepts authority figures other than parents		
6. Is able to cope with a school environment and learn at the same time		
7. Can handle a 3 hour school day/schedule (or longer if your program will be a full day)		
PHYSICAL / MOTOR		
1. Can control her body in space for such tasks as sitting at a table or in circle time		
2. Keeps his hands and feet to himself		
3. Dresses herself (zips, buttons, ties at least the first steps of a bow)		
4. Manages own bathroom needs		
5. Washes face and hands independently		
6. Covers nose when sneezing; uses a tissue independently		
7. Can walk forward and backward heel-to-toe		
8. Can go up and down stairs alternating feet		
9. Can slide, swing and climb on outdoor equipment		
10. Bounces a ball		
11. Throws a ball		
12. Kicks a ball		

13. Catches a ball		
14. Jumps		
15. Hops on one foot; both feet		
16. Skips		
17. Can stack and build representative objects with blocks		
18. Can use a fork and spoon easily		
19. Has the ability to color within defined space		
20. Cuts with a scissors		
21. Can paste things on paper		
22. Draws basic shapes		
23. Can draw a person with age-appropriate detail		
24. Can print first and last name, first letter upper case, the rest in lower case		
ACADEMIC		
1. Listens for directions		
2. Able to follow 3-step directions		
3. Finishes a task in a reasonable amount of time		
4. Can block out distractions and concentrate on the task at hand		
5. Shows understanding of general times of day, i.e. morning, afternoon, night		
6. Understands likenesses and differences		
7. Knows her full name		
8. Knows gender		
9. Knows his address		
10. Knows her phone number		
11. Knows his age and birthday		
12. Can put together age-appropriate puzzles		
13. Recites the alphabet		
14. Counts to 20		
15. Counts with one to one correspondence to 20		
16. Can identify colors		
17. Can identify shapes		
18. Sorts similar objects by color		
19. Sorts similar objects by size		
20. Sorts similar objects by shape		

21. Recognizes rhyming sounds		
22. Identifies alphabet letters		
23. Knows the difference between a letter and word		
24. Can identify beginning sounds		
25. Can differentiate between the front and back of a book		
26. Recognizes some common sight words, like "stop"		
27. Likes to play simple number games		
28. Recognizes groups of one, two, three, four and five objects		
29. Understands spatial concepts: empty/full; above/ below or under; beside/behind; front/back; inside/outside		
30. Is able to look at picture books and tell what is happening in the pictures		
31. Can retell basic facts about a story		
32. Can retell simple personal experiences		
TOTAL PER COLUMN:		
Date Assessed:		