

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Is My Child Ready for Kindergarten?

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Enrolling a child in kindergarten is traumatic enough without stressing about his or her readiness. Young five-year-olds can be worlds apart in their developmental skills, compared to peers who are only a few months older. When evaluating your child's readiness for kindergarten, take into consideration your child's level of:

- **Receptive and Expressive Language skills** – understanding language and using language to communicate.
- **Social and Emotional Development** – learning to get along with others and accepting authority.
- **Cognitive Skills** – exercising mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning.
- **Fine and Gross Motor Development** – controlling the hands and fingers for writing, coloring, and cutting as well as stabilizing the body when running, jumping, and playing.

*Involvement in your child's development is crucial in preparing him or her for school.* Children around the same age develop and master some skills more quickly than others. The most important thing to know is what your child can do now. Parents must take time to help their children develop certain skills, as we are born knowing absolutely nothing!



The following developmental skills are only a few indicators of a child's readiness for kindergarten. Think about the questions listed below as they apply to your child to help you evaluate and determine how well your child is developing the skills necessary to be successful in kindergarten.

### Receptive and Expressive Language Can your child...

- Say his/her name and address?
- Speak in sentences of five words or longer?
- Tell stories at length, both made-up and true, from beginning to end?
- Use the future tense in conversation?
- Understand simple directions in sequence and follow a conversation?
- Listen attentively or focus attention on a task for at least 15 minutes?



### Social and Emotional Development Can your child...

- Pretend, sing age-appropriate songs, dance, and play well with others?
- Tell the difference between reality and make-believe?
- Participate in new experiences without fear?
- Agree to rules for games and comply with expectations for behavior?
- Play alone and be content?
- Share possessions with friends and compromise in a disagreement?



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## Cognitive Development Can your child...

- Understand the concept of time (in an hour, tomorrow, yesterday, next week, last summer, etc.)?
- Understand the tasks performed at home by family members (daily chores, cooking, shopping)?
- Recognize his/her name on paper?
- Identify at least six body parts correctly?
- Name at least four colors correctly?
- Sort objects by size, shape, or color?
- Count ten or more objects?



or school-based program in your community, such as School Readiness or Head Start. These types of programs help children develop readiness skills and educate parents on how to extend learning at home.

## Here are some suggestions for helping prepare your child for kindergarten.

**Make “going to kindergarten” plans with your child.** Create a school box with items like paper, pencils, crayons, books, watercolor paints, glue, scissors, a ball, a lunch bag, or index cards with the names of family members and friends written on them. Use the items to play school together.



**Help your child understand how the world works** – why we wear seat belts, how to catch a bus, making a grocery list and finding the items in a grocery store, shopping for clothing or shoes, etc.



**Read to your child.** Point out words and the letters that spell out the words. Read labels, newspapers and picture captions. Help the child understand that words tell stories and give us information.



**Have regular play dates with friends.** Provide opportunities for your child to develop his or her strength, endurance and motor skills while at the same time developing social skills by learning to get along with others.



**Create and follow routines in your home** so your child understands structure and can predict what will happen next (preparing for bed, meals, church, or trips). Teach how to set the table using plates and silverware. Count the items while putting them in the proper place. Ask them to think about the items the family will want to have available at the table for the meal (ketchup, salsa, spatula, etc.).



**Take your child places and attend community events** – block parties, museums, orchards, swimming pools and lakes, etc. These events provide rich sources of vocabulary words, problem-solving, and lots of new information.



## Fine and Gross Motor Development Can your child...

- Look at and copy simple shapes onto paper (circle, triangle, square) with a pencil or marker?
- Do somersaults?
- Hop (on one foot then the other) and skip?
- Draw a person with a body rather than just a stick figure?
- Print some letters of the alphabet, such as the ones in his/her name?
- Swing and climb without struggling or needing assistance?
- Use a fork and spoon appropriately (and sometimes a knife)?
- Put on clothing alone and toilet independently?



If you feel like your child is not at least showing signs of developing these skills, contact the early childhood teachers or guidance personnel at your child’s school for suggestions. If possible, enroll your child in an early childhood program, high quality child care, nursery school,

Resources:

Minnesota Early Learning Foundation. *Will your child be ready?* Retrieved July, 2010. <http://www.isyourchildready.com/en/>

Minnesota Department of Education. *Minnesota Parents Know Age 3-5. Parenting A-Z.* Retrieved July 2012. [http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/age3\\_5/topicsAZ/PKDEV\\_000427](http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/age3_5/topicsAZ/PKDEV_000427)

BabyCenter, LLC. *Kindergarten readiness: Is your child ready for school?* Retrieved July, 2010. [http://www.babycenter.com/0\\_kindergarten-readiness-is-your-child-ready-for-school\\_67232.bc](http://www.babycenter.com/0_kindergarten-readiness-is-your-child-ready-for-school_67232.bc)

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