

Kindergarten Readiness



Kindergarten readiness is more than knowing how to count, being able to write your name or regurgitating facts. Kindergarten readiness is not a linear process, yet, school entrance is often communicated in a linear fashion: “Your child must be able to....” Entrance is currently measured by what is observable, such as a child’s ability to count, wash their hands, write their names, and so on. In addition, arbitrary dates determine readiness, disregarding development.

Kindergarten readiness is a much more holistic measure. Research shows that a child’s chronological age isn’t the best way to decide whether he or she has what it takes to be a successful kindergartener. Instead, a child’s readiness needs to be observed on several fronts, including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Early childhood years are messy. During these first five years, children are discovering self “... who am I and how do I fit in the world?” The job of preschool age children is to constantly test the boundaries of the world in which they live. They search for adult partnerships to guide them through these messy years. What is kindergarten readiness? It is a child who is emotionally safe and as, a result, can take on the necessary social encounters that face them as they prepare to take academic risk.

Key Indicators of Kindergarten Readiness

Children must have executive functioning skills help us manage our attentions, our emotions and our behaviors in order to reach our goals. Executive functions involve weaving together our emotional, social and intellectual capacities. They pull together our feeling and thinking so that we can reflect, analyze, plan and evaluate situations in our lives. Some key indicators for Kindergarten readiness are:

- Having Self-Control and delay of gratification
- Ability to develop relationships
- Language Development and the ability to communicate
- Listening and following directions
- Ability to get along with peers and adults – empathy and understanding others perspective
- Can they solve problems and critical thinking
- Being able to be self-directed and engage learning opportunities

These are the executive functioning skills that are the foundation for kindergarten readiness.

From a Family's Perspective

There so much anxiety parents feel about the kindergarten decision...Where do send my child? How provide my child the BEST kindergarten start? **The BIG questions parent s need to ask.**

- Can your child listen to instructions and then follow them?
- Does your child get along well with other kids?
- Can your child work together with others as part of a group?
- Does your child show an interest in books and is self-directed?
- Is your child curious about and receptive to learning new things?
- Can your child recite the alphabet and count?
- Can your child hold a pencil and cut with scissors?
- Is your child developing self-help skills

If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, and “sometimes” to the rest, then your child is probably ready for kindergarten. If not is the school ready for your child?



Are Schools Ready?

What does it take for schools to be ready for children?

Schools must be prepared to accept children for who they are and develop partnerships with the child and families. Schools must have the knowledge of child development and how children grow and learn. Kindergarten programs must consider the following steps to be ready for children:

- Help children and families make a smooth transition from the “messiness” of early childhood
- Provide continuity between early care and education and kindergarten
- Demonstrate a commitment to the success of EVERY child
- Help children make sense of their complex world of school
- Commit to understanding individual children’s learning style
- Ready to serve the children in the community’s needs