SCHOOL READINESS: IT’S FUN AND EASY!

Make school readiness a natural part of your everyday routines. There’s a big plus! Children love this special time and attention.

Snack time – look on food boxes or cans, saying letter names and sounds.

Driving – sing ABC songs and read signs, pointing out various letters.

Preparing meals – put magnetic letters on the refrigerator for play. Spell names. Choose a letter and find objects that begin with same sound (g = boy, glove, banana.)

Shopping – talk about the beginning letters of clothes, food, etc.

Bed time – read a storybook, looking at the pictures and talking about the characters.

Doing chores – put signs on a few objects at home, such as “chair,” and make a game of saying letters aloud.

Play time – point to an object and ask children to say words that rhyme, including silly words: ball, tall, dall, jall, nall.

Eating – review the day’s activities in order; talk about the beginning, middle and end.

Indoor play – cut out magazine pictures with children, encouraging them to make up stories about the pictures or describe objects in them.

Library visits – make weekly trips to the library part of your family’s fun time together. Books about going to school help build children’s confidence about kindergarten. A librarian can help you find them.

Here are a few favorite titles:

- Froggy Goes to School by Jonathan London
- My Kindergarten by Rosemary Wells
- Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come! by Nancy Carlson
- The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn
- Welcome to Kindergarten by Anne Rockwell

READ WITH YOUR CHILD

It’s the Most Important 20 Minutes of Your Day

Studies show children must hear and share in hundreds of stories before they are ready to learn to read in school. It is also important for them to talk and talk and talk about what they see every day and say the sounds of letters they are learning. For more tips visit www.ReadingFoundation.org.

RESEARCH ABOUT SCHOOL READINESS

Every year, 40 percent of kindergarteners are one-to-three years behind on the first day of school. Kindergarten teachers do their best, yet it is often impossible for unprepared students to catch up while their classmates leap ahead in reading and learning.

Students who are not prepared for school usually struggle for years to catch up, and most never do. Around 50 percent eventually drop out.

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.” - The Report of the Commission on Reading

FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

When schools engage families in learning at home children do better in school, stay in school longer, like school more, and feel better about themselves.

How young boys and girls spend their time at home predicts success in school, not their family’s income or background. Effective parents talk and read with their children. They spend time daily sharing learning activities, and they limit television and computer games.

High performing schools, research shows, share information and activities with parents before kindergarten on ways to get their children ready for reading.

Five-year-olds who know 10 or more lower case alphabet letters are the ones most likely to learn to read words by first grade. That means practicing both upper and lower case letters at home is a good pre-reading activity.

A new kindergartner’s ability to say letter sounds that begin words and to say rhyming words is important. These skills – called phonemic awareness – better predict success in learning to read than does a child’s I.Q.

Children who have memorized eight nursery rhymes before starting kindergarten are usually among the best readers by age 8.

Get Ready to Read! is a free tool to see if children are on track for learning to read. Check it out at www.readingrockets.org/article/32376.

As parents and caregivers, you want your children to be happy and successful in school. This brochure shares simple, research-proven ways to prepare children for kindergarten and beyond!

LOOK INSIDE:

- See the Kindergarten Ready Skills®
- Enjoy the fun activities
- Check your child’s skills

OFF TO SCHOOL PREPARED AND EAGER

FAMILIES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES NURTURING EARLY LEARNING AND SCHOOL READINESS

www.readyforkindergarten.org

Written by Nancy N. Kerr
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Starting school is an exciting time for children and families! Often parents wonder what a typical 5-year-old should know and be able to do. The Kindergarten Ready Skills® below highlight age-appropriate skills that predict future success in school.

Children who are taught these skills by their families get off to a great start at school. They start ahead and stay ahead, year after year. Sadly 40 percent of children enter kindergarten one, two, even three years behind. These students usually stay behind through high school. Eventually, about 50 percent drop out. There is something you can do about it.

**LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**
- Enjoys being read to and can retell a story
- Recognizes and names 12-15 letters and sounds
- Repeats beginning and ending sounds in words
- Speaks in complete sentences
- Prints his or her first name

**MATH AND REASONING**
- Counts in order from 1 to 20
- Recognizes numbers and quantities to 10
- Names and sorts items by color, shape and size
- Understands concepts such as greater than, less than and equal to

**SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL**
- Settles into new groups and situations
- Concentrates on a task for 5 minutes
- Follows simple directions
- Shows kindness and concern for others

**VOCABULARY MATTERS, TOO**
Typically, five-year-olds understand about 5,000 words. Yet some children know only 1,000 words when they start school. Vocabulary is an essential pre-reading skill because it links directly with comprehension. Reading many stories and talking about them helps young children build strong vocabularies.

The READY! for Kindergarten® program provides parents of children ages birth to 5 tools and training to make learning at home fun and effective. The foundation of the READY! program is 26 Age-Level Targets®, or measurable skills, that a typical 5-year-old must have by the time he or she starts kindergarten. Find a program and learn more at www.readyforkindergarten.org.

Children with these skills are ready for a happy and successful school year. Read together 20 minutes a day and spend 10 minutes playing with a purpose to build these skills.

Teachers ask new kindergarten students questions like the ones below. Children who are ready for a successful school year can answer most questions. This is a portion of a full assessment.

**Knowing Upper Case Letter Names (26 points)**
Point to one letter and ask what it is. If the child does not say its name, just go on to the next letter. It helps to cover the other letters with your hand or a piece of paper. Flashcards also work well.

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**Knowing Lower Case Letter Names (26 points)**
Smile, point to a letter, and ask what it is. If your child does not say its name, go on to the next letter.

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**Recognizing Letter Sounds (26 points)**
Point to a letter and ask your child to say the sound it represents. Vowel sounds may be either long or short. Example: b as in ball, a as in cat

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**Recognizing Rhymes (5 points)**
Explain to your child that two words rhyme when the end of the words sound the same. Give an example: cat/hat. Next, give an example that does not rhyme: bed/rug. Ask if each pair of words rhyme.

| lip / slip | tell / sell | boy / duck | sick / bat | can / van |

**Making Rhymes (5 points)**
Give an example of words that rhyme, such as pan/man. Ask child to think of another word that rhymes with pan. Next, ask for a rhyming word to go with each of the words below. Nonsense words are fine.

| run | sing | fill | let | mop |

**Saying the First Sound of a Word (4 points)**
Clearly say the name of the first picture in row one (bed). Then slowly say the names of the other pictures in that row. Ask child to point to the picture that starts with the same beginning sound as the first picture (bird). Repeat for each row.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  

**Saying the First Letter of a Word (5 points)**
Name the object in the picture and ask the child to tell you the first letter of the word.

**Printing First Name (3 points)**
On a piece of paper, ask child to print his or her first name. Give full points if child writes name in all upper case letters. Practice using upper case for the first letter only, lower case for the rest.