

Safe kids Healthy kids Happy kids

Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?

Long before the first day of Kindergarten, parents ask what they can do to get their child ready to start school. Experts have year-by-year charts of skills kids need to learn. These include word, math, emotional and social skills.

Every child is unique and develops and masters skills at his own speed. He is good at some and weak at others. Some kids are ready for school at 5, and others are not ready at age 6. Age alone does not predict a child's readiness to start school.

The U.S. Department of Education provides this skill guide. A child who is ready for Kindergarten should be able to:

- Tell a teacher what he wants and needs.
- Want to learn. She should be curious and excited about new activities.
- Share with others. He should be willing to take turns.
- Pay attention to the teacher. He should be able to sit still for 15 minutes at a time.
- Behave well in a classroom.
- Get along with other kids.
- Follow directions. He should be able to follow 1 – 3 step instructions. For example, "Get out your crayons and a piece of paper. Draw a picture of your school."

Other school readiness skills include the ability to:

- Listen. Students must be able to focus on what the teacher says.

- Deal with frustration.
- Respect the teacher. Students need to follow classroom rules.
- Use self-help skills: Go to the restroom. Button shirts and pants. Put on a coat. Zip up zippers.
- Color, cut with scissors and hold a pencil.
- Pick out letters, shapes and numbers, and count to 10.
- Say his first and last name and address.
- Leave his parents without being upset.

Good physical health is also a key to school success. Parents can help their child get plenty of rest and eat healthy food. They can take them to the doctor and dentist regularly.

Learning does not just happen. A parent's words, actions, and emotions teach every day. Log onto www.parenthelpline.org. Find age-by-age parent-child activities that prepare a child for school. Use the chart. Check off skills as your child masters them.



Read the Nov. Dec. 2010 issue of the PHL newsletter for *Ways to Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten*.

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1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

