

Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?

*~adapted from Kindergarten Readiness- Shirley Tronnes & Preparing for Kindergarten- Cathie Mutter
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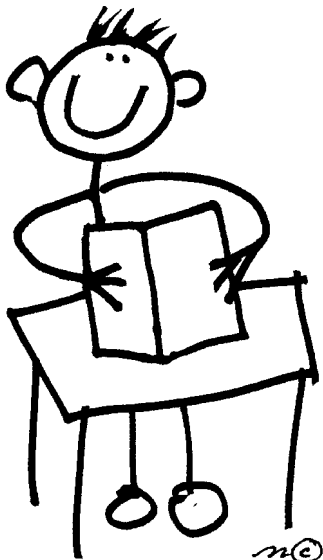
Schools know that children learn at various rates and will show strengths in different areas. The following information should help parents become familiar with the “widely-held expectations” for most 4 and 5 year olds who are ready to start school. The best thing you can do to help your child get ready for Kindergarten is to spend as much time as possible helping them. You are your child’s first and most important teacher!

Children who have mastered most of the following skills before coming to Kindergarten show more self-confidence and are usually ready for the Kindergarten program.

Emotional & Social Development

Most children who are 4-5 years old can:

- separate from familiar people, places and things with little or no distress;
- help with simple chores around home;
- show awareness of personal space;
- assert themselves when something is important to them;
- ‘tune-in’ to the feelings of others;
- solve practical problems (eg. getting a stool to help reach something that is up on a shelf that is too high);
- handle difficulties with others without being physically aggressive (hitting, biting, kicking or pinching);
- make an appropriate choice when given several options;
- help clean-up toys after play is finished.



Intellectual Development

Most children who are 4-5 years old can:

- show interest in exploring the world around them through play or direct investigation;
- count by memory from 1-10;
- tell first and last name when asked;
- point out print in their environment (signs, advertisements, books);
- recognize some letters and numbers;
- follow most direction words (up, down, over, under, beside)
- enjoy listening to stories;
- concentrate on one thing for a longer period of time;
- pretend to read and write;
- recognize their own name in print;
- sing or say simple songs or poems.

Physical Development & Well-Being

Most children who are 4-5 years old can:

- use a variety of tools to draw, colour and cut (scissors, crayons, pencil);
- use the washroom, wash and dry hands without help;
- dress themselves independently, including putting on their shoes (if your child is not able to tie, please do not send shoes with laces to school);
- put things into their backpacks and zip them up without help;
- use a pencil or crayon to print their name (when teaching children to print their names use upper & lower case letters- eg. Sally)

Should I delay my child's entry to Kindergarten?

Most children are ready to start school in the year that they turn 5 years old. Parents of children in British Columbia have an option to delay registration for one year. This may be a difficult decision for a family to make. When considering this option, parents should focus on the child's readiness rather than the child's birthdate.

The following points may help you when making a decision to delay your child's entry to school.

A combination of the following (not a single factor) may affect a child's readiness for school:

- your child will not be five years old until the fall (your child might also show high anxiety or no interest in going to school);
- your child is a boy with a birthdate between September and December (you might notice that he is maturing later than girls of the same age);
- your child was born prematurely and has a late December birthdate;
- your child is not able to do most of the things from the lists on the other side of this page (these are the "widely-held expectations" for a child starting school);
- your child struggles with drawing, cutting and making crafts at home;
- your child has difficulty focusing on books and shows little interest in talking about the stories you're reading at home;
- your child has great difficulty sharing, taking turns or cooperating with others;
- your child is smaller than other children of the same age, tires easily and has difficulty doing things independently;

A child's positive attitude and self-confidence are important to school success. A child who is both young and immature tends to struggle with the Kindergarten program. This may cause a child to be less confident when learning new things and may also lead to difficulties as the child moves through the Primary grades. Delaying Kindergarten entry may assist your child in gaining important readiness skills.

Children with identified "special needs" may not be able to do the same things as other 4 & 5 year olds. Parents of these children will work with School District staff to develop an individual plan to support learning. Contact the principal or a Kindergarten teacher at your neighbourhood school to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's readiness or special needs.



How can I help my child to get ready for Kindergarten?

Parents might try the following activities to build important readiness skills. Observe your child as a learner and remember to have fun!

- 😊 *Make friends with the school—visit the schoolyard for playtime on the weekend or in the summer and attend Kindergarten orientation activities with your child.*
- 😊 *Sing or say the "Alphabet Song" or other rhymes together.*
- 😊 *Play board games like "Snakes & Ladders" or "Go Fish" to practice taking turns and cooperation with others.*
- 😊 *Read stories to your child for 15 minutes everyday. Work with your child on "paying attention" when you are reading or speaking to him/her.*
- 😊 *Teach your child to communicate with words when feeling angry or frustrated. Emphasize that temper tantrums or hitting and other aggressive behaviours are not acceptable.*
- 😊 *Encourage independence--if your child does not already attend daycare or pre-school, sign up for a summer recreation activity so your child can practice being apart from you.*
- 😊 *Make sure your child has a healthy school start with lots of rest and proper nutrition. Start new bedtime routines several weeks before school starts. Consider taking your child to the doctor for a complete physical.*

There's a lot you can do as a family to make the transition to Kindergarten enjoyable for everyone!