

Getting Ready For School Is Fun And Easy

Make school readiness a part of your family's everyday routines. There's a big plus! Children love this special attention.

Common activities that are great for learning ...

Snack time – look on food boxes or cans, saying letters together

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

Preparing meals – put magnetic letters on the refrigerator for play

Shopping – talk about beginning letters of clothes, food or toys

Nap time – read a loved story with feeling and let children “read” the story, too

Doing chores – put signs on a few objects at home, such as “bed” 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 – say nonsense rhymes, such as *Hey Diddle, Diddle*

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

Lesson time – spell personal names with letter cards. Let children match each capital letter with its lowercase form, or put the letters in order. Draw a letter and find objects that begin with the same sound (ball, boy, bike)

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.

What Research Says About School Readiness

Education studies confirm that when schools engage families to support learning *at home* children do better in school, stay in school longer, like school more and feel better about themselves. These positives help children reach goals throughout life.

The way young boys and girls spend their time at home predicts success in school, not the family's income or background. Effective parents talk and read to children and spend time daily with them sharing learning activities. They limit television or computer time to one hour a day. Together, families discover learning is a joy.



Assessing Readiness To Read

The sample Kindergarten Literacy Assessment in this brochure is based on research. This research shows that five-year-olds who know ten or more lower-case alphabet letters are the ones who are 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 kindergartener's ability to say letter sounds that begin words and to say rhyming words is important, too. These skills – called phonological awareness – better predict success in learning to read than does a child's I.Q.

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

Get Ready to Read! is a free and easy-to-use tool to see if children are on track for learning to read. Check out its 20 questions at www.ReadingRockets.org/GetReady (provided by the U.S. Dept. of Education.)

OFF TO SCHOOL

A time to explore,

A time to learn



Why Focus On School Readiness?

Today, only 50% of kindergarteners nationwide are *fully ready*. This means many children are one to two years behind their classmates the first day of school. Such a large difference is extremely hard to overcome. Even though kindergarten teachers do their best, it is often impossible for unprepared students to close the readiness gap in one year while half the class continues to leap ahead in reading and learning.

Students who are not prepared for school struggle for years to catch up, and many never do. *Ready! for Kindergarten* teams up with parents to help children be ready for a happy and successful school year. Research shows that five-year-olds who are ready for school start ahead and stay ahead, year after year.

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is **reading aloud to children**. This is especially so during the preschool years.” *The Report of the Commission on Reading*

As parents, you want your children to have a happy and successful school experience. So do The Reading Foundation and your school district.

Starting school is an exciting time for children. One way to predict how ready a new student will be for kindergarten is to use the ideas and questionnaire in this brochure.



A partnership between families and educators to help young boys and girls be prepared, and eager, to start school.

School Readiness - Does It Matter?

Often parents wonder what a typical five-year-old knows, or should know, the first day of school. There are readiness skills called *Kindergarten Targets*. They are not requirements but learning goals. Not every child will hit every goal – a child may be high on some skills and low on others.

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.

Kindergarten Targets for Children

Letters and Sounds

- enjoy being read to and can retell a story
- recognize and name 10-15 alphabet letters and their sounds
- repeat beginning and ending sounds in words
- speak in complete sentences
- print his or her first name

Math Concepts

- count in order from 1 to 20
- recognize numbers and quantities to 10
- name and sort items by color, shape and size
- understand concepts such as more, less, same, above, below, big and small

Social and Emotional

- settle into new groups or situations
- can concentrate on a task for 5 minutes
- follow simple directions
- show kindness and concern for others



If you have young children at home (newborn to five), we encourage you to read together 20 minutes a day and spend five minutes playing with the Target skills. *READY! for Kindergarten* classes offer parents tools and training to make learning at home fun and effective. Visit our website at readyforkindergarten.org or call us at (509) 222-5035 for information or class registration.

Sample Kindergarten Literacy Assessment*

Teachers ask new kindergarten students questions like the ones below.

There are 100 in all. Children who answer 30 questions correctly are ready for a successful school year. Many children know 50 or more.

To help a child be ready for school, first ask these questions and then practice letter skills together a few minutes each day.

Knowing Upper Case Letters (26 questions)

Point to one letter and ask what it is. If the child does not say it, 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.

D F C B A P S Q T
Z R E J G M U X H
W I K N V O Y L

Knowing Lower Case Letters (26 questions)

Point to a letter and ask what it is. If the child does not say it, go on to the next letter.

d f c b a p s q t
z r e j g m u x h
w i k n v o y l

Recognizing Letter Sounds (26 questions)

Ask the child to say the letters below as they sound at the beginning of words.

Example: bin ball

d f c b a p s q t
z r e j g m u x h
w i k n v o y l

Recognizing Rhymes (5 questions)

Explain to the child that two words rhyme when the end of the words sound the same. Give an example: cat/hat. Give an example that does not rhyme: bed/rug. Ask if the grouped words rhyme.

lip / sip tell / sell boy / duck sick / desk can / van

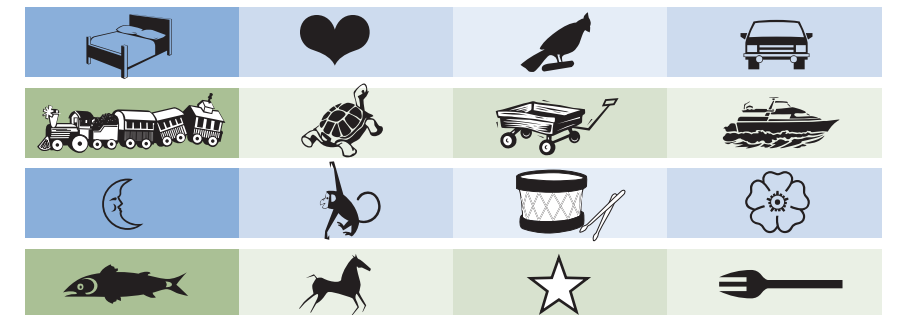
Making Rhymes (5 questions)

Again, give an example of words that rhyme, such as cat/mat. Ask the child to think of another word that rhymes with cat. Next, ask for a few rhyming words 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 questions)

Name the first object in the target picture (bed) and then the three objects on the rest of the line. Ask the child to point to the picture in the row that starts with the same beginning sound as the target picture (bird).



Saying the First Letter of a Word (5 questions)

Name the object in the picture and ask the child to tell you the first letter of the word.



Printing (counts for 3 questions)

Ask the child to print his or her first name.

*The main source for this assessment is *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, National Research Council. A similar test is given for math.

Vocabulary Matters, Too

The kindergarten assessment does not measure vocabulary, but children who know only 1,000 words when they start school cannot catch up with those who know 5,000 words. Vocabulary is an essential pre-reading skill because it links directly with reading comprehension. Reading many stories and talking about them helps young children build strong vocabularies.