

Going To Kindergarten Is A BIG Step

The move from preschool or day care to kindergarten is a major event!

How Can I Tell If My Child Is Ready for Kindergarten?

In General, a child going into kindergarten should be able to:

- Follow spoken directions and obey rules
- Listen without interrupting
- Get along with others
- Use words to express feelings
- Speak clearly
- Use the bathroom without help
- Put on (and take off) shoes and coat without help
- Sing or recite the alphabet
- Count to 10

What will Kindergarten be like?

- Dealing with more people
- New Settings and Activities
- Bigger Class Sizes
- More Structure
- More Focus on Learning

As a parent, it's important to:

Understand Your Child

Every child develops at a different rate.

- Avoid comparing him or her to others.
- Don't try to pressure your child to learn new skills before he or she is ready.

Be Patient

Some children going into kindergarten may not have all the skills, but most will develop them.

Helping Your Child Make The Change

Before kindergarten begins, give your child plenty of opportunities to:

Play

Give your child time to:

- Just be a kid— it's how he or she learns and grows best
- Play with other children (ones who will be in the same class, if possible).

Explore The World

Together, you can:

- Visit parks, zoos, farms and museums
- Go on nature walks
- Explore local neighborhoods

Read and Write

The two of you can:

- Go to the library
- Read aloud and tell stories

Provide crayons and paper for drawing and writing.

Have Fun With Math and Science

Let your child help you:

- Cook (measure and mix ingredients)
- Shop (look at prices and identify money)
- Plant a garden—indoors or out

Learn Social Skills

Encourage your child to:

- Be polite.
- State his or her feelings, not act them out.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully.

Feel Important

Give your child some responsibilities, such as:

- Setting the table
- Putting clothes and toys away

Be sure to recognize his or her efforts, not just results.

Be a Positive Role Model

Your actions shape your child's:

- Health habits, including healthy eating and exercise
- Values, such as respect and honesty
- Attitudes about school, learning and life in general

Getting Ready for the First Day

As it nears:

Go Over Safety Rules

Be sure your child knows:

- His or her full name, street address and phone number, parents' or guardians' names
- What the plan is if a parent can't come to pick him or her up after school
- Note: Parents should never leave young children unsupervised to and from school.

Practice Healthy Habits

Encourage your child to:

- Wash hands after using the bathroom and before eating
- Take regular bath or showers
- Brush teeth at least 2 times a day and floss daily
- Wear clean clothes

Ask your health-care provider if your child has all needed shots (immunizations).

Make A Routine

Try to:

- Set a bedtime (young children need about 10-12 hours of sleep each night).
- Plan regular times for meals and chores.

Activities to Help Your Child Get Ready for Kindergarten

- Set aside a special time to read to your child each day.
- Encourage your child to dress him or herself. Teach your child how to use zippers, put shoes on and take shoes off.
- Say "please" and "thank you".
- Ask your child to pick up toys at the end of play.
- Find a picture book without words. Ask your child to tell you the story based on what he or she sees.
- Have your child make choices (for example, which socks to wear). Making choices builds independence and confidence.
- Explain why sharing toys with others is important.
- Encourage the artist in your child. Provide crayons, safety scissors and large sheets of paper.
- Ask your child to tell you a story.
- Help your child learn the names of basic colors.
- Teach your child to say his or her first and last name, address and phone number.
- Read aloud tip: Move your fingers under the words as you say them. This will help prepare your child to read from left to right.
- Make sure your child's immunizations (shots) are up to date.
- Encourage your child to use the toilet and wash hands by him-or herself.
- Help your child find different shapes around your house.
- Play a card or board game that involves taking turns.
- Explain that good manners help people get along with each other.
- Walk or drive by your child's school. Point to his or her classroom, if possible.
- Help your child practice writing his or her first name. Start with a capital letter, then use lowercase for the rest.
- Give your child simple tasks that involve matching, sorting or counting objects (socks, towels, utensils, etc.).
- Praise your child when you see him or her sharing toys or helping others.
- Tell your child about the fun things you did when you were in school.
- Ask a librarian to help you find children's stories about starting school.
- Adjust your child's sleeping and eating times to the school-year schedule.