

Kindergarten readiness

Kindergarten is where most children learn to read and write. Though some kids can do this before entering kindergarten, it is not required or expected. Being ready for kindergarten means having well-developed preschool skills, and being academically, socially, and physically ready for the transition. Here are some signs that your child is ready for kindergarten:

Academically (pre-reading skills)

- Can retell a simple story
- Speaks in complete sentences of 5-6 words
- Writes name or recognizes letters in name
- Recognizes the title of a book
- Matches rhyming sounds
- Counts to ten

Socially

- Feels comfortable in a group
- Asks for help when needed
- Knows personal information (name, age, gender)
- Follows simple instructions
- Recognizes authority
- Is able to share

Physically

- Exhibits fine motor skills (holds pencil, traces shapes, buttons shirt, etc.)
- Exhibits motor coordination (rides a bike with training wheels, hops, skips)
- Manages bathroom needs

Is my child ready?

Most children start kindergarten at age 5. If your child's birthday falls in late spring or summer and will have just turned 5 at the beginning of the school year, or if you feel your child would benefit from another year of preschool, you might consider waiting until the next academic year.

Consider your child's academic skills, but also his or her temperament. Remember that if your child is on the older or younger end of the class, this has an impact not only on kindergarten, but also on middle school, high school, driving, and college. If he is the youngest in his class now, he will be then, too!

When in doubt

- Discuss your concerns with your child's preschool teacher.
- Discuss your concerns with the future principal and kindergarten teacher
- Tour the school and observe a kindergarten classroom
- Trust your instincts! You know your child best. Listen to others, think about your child, and then go with your gut

For more information about early literacy development, visit:
www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c62

