

What Can I Do to Prepare My Child for Kindergarten?

In kindergarten, your child will develop skills in a variety of areas. However, kindergarten makes up only a small part of each day. The key to a successful school year is a strong partnership between home and school. Review the activities in this brochure and congratulate yourself on how much you are already doing to prepare your child for kindergarten. Then select a few new activities you can introduce to your child. Place emphasis on trying a new activity rather than mastering the skill. Remember that children learn by playing. You can show your child that learning is fun as well as important! There is no single measure that guarantees that a child is ready for kindergarten. In general, as your child nears his or her fifth birthday, he or she is ready to start school when it begins in the fall. In addition, the following information describes where most students are developmentally before beginning kindergarten.

Keep in mind that each child will come to school with a variety of strengths and skills. Think of the following list as a way to identify your child's strengths, rather than using it to decide whether he or she is behind or ahead of other children.

If you want to help your child prepare for success in kindergarten, try the activities suggested in this guide. And once the school year begins, know that his or her teacher will create a learning environment that gives each individual student an opportunity to thrive and learn new skills throughout the year.

Talk to your child about the first day of school. Address any fears and concerns your child may have and reassure him/her that everything will be alright. Keep a positive attitude. If you are excited about the first day of school chances are your child will be too!

Talk to your pediatrician if you have any questions or concerns about your child's readiness. You can also contact the school your child will attend by calling the district office in your area:

BATTLE GROUND SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-885-5300 www.bgsd.k12.wa.us

CAMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-833-5400 www.camas.wednet.edu

EVERGREEN SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-604-4000 www.egreen.wednet.edu

GREEN MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-225-7366 www.greenmountainschool.us

HOCKINSON SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-448-6400 www.hock.k12.wa.us

LA CENTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-263-2131 www.lacenterschools.org

RIDGEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-619-1300 www.ridge.k12.wa.us

VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-313-1000 www.vansd.org

WASHOUGAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
360-954-3000 www.washougal.k12.wa.us

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND
360-696-6321 www.wssb.gov

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
360-696-6525 www.wsd.wa.gov

It is very important that you register early for kindergarten. You can contact your child's school as early as spring. You must have their birth certificate and current immunization documentation in order to complete the registration process.



SUPPORT FOR EARLY LEARNING & FAMILIES



SELF Vision: A caring community where all young children thrive.

SELF READY SCHOOLS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Updated February 2008

Information was taken from the Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks for children ages 60 months to kindergarten entry.

A downloadable complete copy can be found at:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/benchmarks.aspx>

For more information, please contact SELF
(360) 213-3486
email: director@selfwa.org
www.selfwa.org

Special thanks to the Clark County School Readiness Taskforce who initially developed this brochure in 2000.

How will I know my child is ready for Kindergarten?



Signs of Language and Literacy Readiness

My child:

- Identifies many alphabet letters, especially those in his or her own name.
- Knows that alphabet letters make words.
- Connects most sounds with letters.
- Attempts to read and write.
- Knows the difference between pictures and print in a book, and knows that print is what a person reads.
- Retells simple stories in sequence.
- Listens to a story and makes connections to real life.
- Asks questions and makes comments that show he or she understands the story.

Activities to do with your child:

- Read by yourself to set a good example.
- Give your child many reading materials to explore and writing materials to use.
- Visit the library often, and participate in story times and other activities there.
- Encourage your child to write notes using scribble writing and pretend spelling. Have them read it to you.
- Read aloud signs like “No Parking” and “Exit,” and talk about what the signs mean.
- Play with alphabet letters, and help your child to identify letter names and words that begin with the sound the letter makes.
- Use new and different words to describe what you see, hear, and feel. Do this to help your child develop language skills.

Signs of Math and Science Readiness

My Child:

- Counts to at least 31 from memory.
- Counts at least 10 objects.
- Identifies shapes and colors.
- Sorts by colors and shapes.
- Understands that letters are different from numbers.
- Is curious about nature and the community .
- Is curious about how things work.

Activities to do with your child:

- Play simple math games with dice, cards, and dominoes.
- Make a simple recipe together. Count and measure ingredients.
- Collect and count items such as stones, leaves, buttons, or shells, and sort by color, shape, size or any other characteristic your child selects.
- Play “Sink or Float” with your child by finding a number of small items. Predict which will sink and which will float. Try each one and write down what you learn.

Signs of Social and Emotional Readiness

My child:

- Recognizes and appreciates uniqueness in self, individuals and groups.
- Names and talks about his/her feelings and emotions.
- Develops friendships and cooperates with other children (e.g., taking turns and problem solving).
- Understands and follows rules and routines.
- Interacts comfortably and separates easily from familiar adults.
- Is curious and interested in learning and experiencing new things.
- Sustains attention to tasks and persists when facing challenges.

Activities to do with your child:

- Provide experiences to teach respect and appreciation for self and others.
- When reading a book to your child, discuss how the characters might be feeling.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play and interact with other children.
- Comment positively when your child is trying something challenging (e.g., “You are working really hard to tie your shoe.”)

Signs of Good Health and Physical Readiness

My child:

- Runs, jumps, plays outdoors and does other activities to help develop large muscle skills.
- Works puzzles, scribbles, colors, paints, cuts, pastes, and does other activities to help develop small muscle skills.
- Has independent bathroom skills.
- Is able to dress/undress, brush teeth and hair, help select clothing, pour juice and use utensils.
- Eats a balanced diet and gets plenty of rest.
- Receives regular medical and dental care, and has had all necessary immunizations.
- Knows first and last name, phone number, and basic personal information.
- Demonstrates awareness and understanding of safety rules.

Activities to do with your child:

- Visit parks, playgrounds, and swimming pools.
- Play games that encourage your child to move different body parts on command.
- Provide a variety of materials such as Play Dough, crayons, water colors, scissors and paper.
- Pick a place to display “masterpieces” at home and ask your child to tell you about his or her artistic creation.
- Practice fastening clothes and shoes with snaps, buttons, zippers, and laces.
- Use Poison Control stickers on dangerous items in your home. Talk about what the sticker means.
- Provide opportunities for your child to observe safety rules as he/she travels in motor vehicles and public transportation.

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