

## Getting Ready for Kindergarten: Skill Building

What skills are important for children to have who are entering kindergarten and what parents can do to help build these skills.

Kindergarten may be a time of transition for some, as your child leaves child care or nursery school programs to go to “big” school, or this might be the first time your child will be in a formal program on their own away from home and their primary caregiver (you!). Children come to kindergarten with diverse experiences from their first years of life. Children’s transition to school can also be very different based on these diverse experiences from their first years of life. Children’s transition to school can also be very different based on these diverse experiences.

Skills in different learning areas can vary greatly amongst children entering kindergarten. This is developmentally typical. However, there are some skills that you can help your child develop prior to that first day of school that are important and useful.

## Following Instructions & Problem Solving Skills

When we think about school readiness skills and ways to help children prepare for kindergarten, academics is what often first comes to mind such as literacy and numeracy (“Will they need to know all their letters?” “Do they need to know how to count?”)

While some degree of literacy and numeracy awareness is useful before starting kindergarten, your child’s ability to listen, comprehend, and carry out instructions will provide your child with independence, confidence, and a strong foundation to engage in learning activities at school.

### Tips to Help your Child Practice Following Instructions and Problem Solving Skills:

Try giving your child a few simple self-help tasks. Instructions with 2-3 steps is usually a good place to start.

Some examples:

- “Pick out a shirt, shorts, and socks to wear today.”
- “It’s time for a snack. Wash your hands with soap, dry your hands with a towel, and come sit at the table.”
- “Let’s clean up the toys. Can you put all the cars in the car box and all the blocks in the block bin.”

Much of the Kindergarten program is based on inquiry, exploration, and discovery.

The ability to ask questions, make predictions, and experiment will be useful for your child’s kindergarten experience.

You can facilitate the development of problem solving skills through play experiences and asking your child thought provoking questions during play.

It's also important to incorporate self-help problem solving questions throughout the day as well, such as: "It's raining outside, What do you think we should wear on our feet today so they don't get wet?"

Entering Kindergarten is a big leap of independence. Practice critical thinking and problem solving about self-help and self-awareness.

Sometimes knowing how to ask for help when needed is just as important and useful as conquering the skill itself. And it's always reassuring to remind your little one that teachers are always happy to help if they need it.

## Literacy and Numeracy: Learning Through Play

### Math Skills:

Here are some ways that you can facilitate math learning with your child through play:

- Build a tower with blocks and use a non-standard measuring unit (like your hands) to measure the tower. "How many hands can we count up the tower?"
- Look for different collections with attributes that could be sorted. For example: "Look at all the rocks we collected on our walk! Let's sort all the rough and pointy ones, and all the smooth rocks." "You have a big collection of small cars. Let's count them and see how many there are!"

These types of provocations and questions are also examples of how math concepts are taught in kindergarten.