



Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist for Families



Kindergarten readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support a healthy foundation for school success and lifelong learning.

All children grow and develop at their own pace. The Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist identifies the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that help children be prepared to enter school with confidence. Use this checklist to focus on the areas you can help your child with to be ready for kindergarten.

If you have concerns about your child's development, contact your primary care physician or the county health department in your community.

■■■■■■■■ Skills Measured at Kindergarten Entry ■■■■■■■■

These skills are often formally assessed by kindergarten teachers early in the year to determine a student's readiness and the support they will need to succeed.

Language Development

- Understands an increasing number and variety of words for objects, actions, and ways to describe things
- Comprehends who, what, why, and where questions

Emergent Literacy

- Decides if two words rhyme (e.g., cat and bat)
- Recognizes and names letters, especially in their own name or on road signs, storefronts, and restaurant signs
- Produces the correct sounds for some of the letters of the alphabet
- Writes some letters correctly, especially those in their own name
- Holds books right-side up; turns pages one at a time from front to back

Mathematical Thinking

- Says numbers in order up to 20
- Compares whether the objects in one group are more than, less than, or the same as objects in another group
- Counts objects using one number for each object
- Recognizes up to four objects in a group without counting
- Recognizes numerals 1-10
- Sorts objects by color, shape, and size
- Recognizes and repeats patterns such as triangle, square, triangle, square
- Measures and compares the height of objects
- Arranges objects from shortest to longest (e.g., shoe sizes or different lengths of yarn)
- Recognizes and names familiar shapes such as a square, triangle, circle, or rectangle
- Understands and uses words such as inside, outside, up, down, over, or under



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■■■■■■■■ Skills and Behaviors for School Success ■■■■■■■■

While these skills and behaviors may not be formally assessed, they are crucial for ensuring a student is ready to learn in kindergarten.

Language Development

- Performs up to three-step directions
- Uses four- to six-word sentences
- Tells increasingly detailed stories or ideas
- Communicates clearly enough to be understood by most people
- Takes turns in conversations with others
- Responds to the English language
- Speaks and expresses themselves in English

Emergent Literacy

- Listens to, talks about, and engages in stories being read
- Participates in singing songs and saying rhymes
- Retells stories from favorite books and personal experiences

Social and Emotional Development

- Separates from caregiver and goes to another trusted adult
- Takes turns and plays cooperatively with other children

Cognitive Development

- Completes a task such as working a puzzle
- Adapts to new situations
- Focuses and pays attention during an activity such as storytime

Physical Development and Health

- Makes a variety of lines and shapes, such as + ○ - △ □
- Uses a three-point finger grip on a pencil, crayon, or paintbrush
- Uses scissors correctly to cut out simple shapes and pictures
- Demonstrates awareness of safe behavior and follows basic safety rules and routines
- Takes responsibility for personal self-care routines such as handwashing, brushing teeth, dressing, and toileting
- Can express own health needs, such as "I'm hungry," "My head hurts," "I'm tired."



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Additional Skills, Knowledge, and Behaviors Aligned to Child Development Milestones

These skills are not formally assessed at entry and are not necessarily critical for readiness, but they can help ease the transition and enhance the overall kindergarten experience.

Social and Emotional Development

- Expresses basic emotions, such as happy, sad, mad, or scared
- Responds sympathetically to others' distress with words or actions
- Recognizes similarities or differences in interests, ideas, feelings, and abilities between themselves and others (e.g., "I can run faster than my friend" or "My dad and I both like to tell stories")

Cognitive Development

- Exhibits curiosity, interest, and willingness to explore new things
- Engages in memory games such as "What's Missing?" or simple memory activities
- Uses number and letter-like forms or drawings to represent ideas or feelings

Physical Development and Health

- Gallops, slides, hops, leaps, and skips
- Steers a tricycle or other ride-on toys
- Balances on a beam or stands on one leg
- Catches a ball with both hands
- Tosses or throws a ball
- Kicks a moving ball while running
- Pours liquids without spilling
- Builds structures with construction or interlocking blocks
- Buttons, zips, laces, buckles and begins to manipulate more complex fasteners
- Names a variety of foods or begins to classify food items as either fruits or vegetables and healthy or unhealthy



Science and Technology

- Asks questions about the world around them (e.g., "What do plants need to grow?")
- Recognizes that living things change over time (e.g., babies grow and become adults, and seeds grow and become plants.)
- Describes objects and materials by their physical properties and sorts them based on similarities and differences
- Explores the functionality of digital devices

Social Studies

- Knows their first and last name and age; knows the names and cultural heritage of family members
- Understands and talks about today, yesterday, tomorrow, after lunch, day, and night
- Shows awareness of familiar buildings and special places in the community, such as home, school, grocery store, and park

Creativity and Aesthetics

- Expresses themselves by singing and moving to the beat and speed of music
- Creates art independently by using a variety of art materials with purpose and planning
- Uses pretend play to process experiences, feelings, and roles represented in fantasy or real-life scenarios (e.g., reenacting a visit to the doctor, pretending to rock a baby or be a cashier)



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