

# Kindergarten Readiness

Young children are often very excited about entering school. But the environment is often quite different from what they are used to at home or even in child care/preschool. In kindergarten, they will need to work well in large groups and get along with new adults and other children. They will have to share the teacher=s attention with other youngsters. The classroom routines may also be different.

## Social and Emotional Preparation

Most five-year-olds do not start school with good social skills or much emotional maturity. These take time and practice to learn. However, children improve their chances for success in kindergarten if they have had opportunities to *begin* developing the following qualities:

- **Confidence.** Children must learn to feel good about themselves and believe they can succeed. Confident children are more willing to attempt new tasks and try again if they don't succeed the first time.
- **Independence.** Children need to learn to do things for themselves.
- **Motivation.** Children must want to learn.
- **Curiosity.** Children are naturally curious and must remain so in order to get the most out of learning opportunities.
- **Persistence.** Children must learn to finish what they start.
- **Cooperation.** Children must be able to get along with others and learn to share and take turns.
- **Self-control.** Children must understand that some behaviors, such as hitting and biting, are inappropriate. They need to learn that there are good ways and bad ways to express anger.
- **Empathy.** Children must learn to have an interest in others and understand how others feel.

The following are ways parents/caregivers can help children acquire the qualities that will prepare them socially and emotionally for kindergarten:

- Be caring, loving, and dependable with your children.
- Set a good example.
- Have a positive attitude toward learning and toward school.
- Use firm but loving discipline.

- Let children do many things by themselves and give them opportunities to be successful.
- Encourage your children to play with other children and be with adults who are not family members.

## **Language and General Knowledge**

Kindergarteners participate in many activities that require them to use language and to solve problems. Children who can't or don't communicate easily may have problems in school. There are many things you can do to help children learn to communicate, solve problems, and develop an understanding of the world.

- Give your child opportunities to play. It is how children learn and solve problems.
- Talk to your children, listen to your children, and encourage them to talk.
- Answer and ask questions, particularly ones than require more than a “yes” or “no” response. Questions can help children learn to compare and classify things.
- Read aloud to your children every day and make reading materials available.
- Monitor television viewing. Good television can introduce children to new worlds and promote learning, but poor or too much TV can be harmful.
- Be realistic about your children's abilities and interests.
- Provide opportunities to do and see things.

Finally, children need nutritious food, enough sleep, opportunities to exercise, and regular medical care. The combination of good health and physical well-being, social and emotional maturity, language skills, an ability to solve problems and think creatively, and general knowledge of the world is what will help your child succeed in school.