



# What your child really needs to be ready for kindergarten

A child's social, emotional, and behavioral readiness is exceedingly more important than what some assume to be academic readiness. Below are what a child really needs before starting kindergarten.

## NATURAL CURIOSITY

Most children are curious by nature, albeit in different ways. Some ask "why?" on repeat, while others quietly observe and collate. As long as a child is interested in learning (in any form), she'll be much more open to new experiences in kindergarten. A love of learning takes children to so many new places and will help them start elementary school on the right foot!

## FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Children need to be practiced at small movements of their hands and fingers. Strengthening their fingers and hands helps with writing throughout elementary school. Building with LEGO bricks, playing with play dough, and beading necklaces are some ways to strengthen children's fine motor skills.

## SELF-CONTROL

Young children are still developing their self-control in preschool and elementary school. They don't need to be perfectly in control of themselves to go into kindergarten. However, they do need to be able to sit and listen to a story. They also need to be able to quell some of their impulses (for example, the impulse to hit or push when mad). Getting along, or at least trying to get along, with other children is important.

## INDEPENDENCE

Going into kindergarten, children need to be interested and active in becoming independent. It's important that they are willing to try new things, and they also need to do certain things on their own. Some examples are zipping up backpacks, carrying their own lunchbox, and separating from their families. Parents can help this by giving children more and more simple tasks to do on their own. Giving children some time away from home (even in small increments) will also help with independence.

## SELF-CARE SKILLS

Upcoming kindergartners should be well on their way to caring for their own bodies. They should be able to dress and undress themselves, and they should be able to independently deal with the clothes they wear to school. Bathroom skills are of the utmost importance! Kiddos must be able to use the restroom themselves, wipe themselves, and wash their hands. I cannot stress how important these skills are!

## CONFIDENCE

I'm not referring to how outgoing a child is when I refer to confidence. Shyer, quieter children who are confident in their abilities are just as ready for kindergarten as more

extroverted children. No matter their temperament, children going into kindergarten should know that they can try new things on their own. They should understand that they can do their best while away from their parents.

## WHAT ABOUT ACADEMICS?

You'll notice I haven't listed any academic skills thus far. I don't agree with all the checklists floating around that say children need to practically be reading prior to kindergarten. Yes, sometimes kids are reading before kindergarten, and that's great, but it is not necessary!

Upcoming kindergartners should have some basic knowledge of the alphabet, especially when it comes to the letters in their names. Being able to count and identify numerals up to 10 is a great start, as well. A good foundation for mathematical concepts like shapes, colors, and sorting is also helpful.

I cannot stress enough that academic readiness is only one small part of being ready for kindergarten! I would suggest that you get a hold of the kindergarten standards of learning for your state. They will tell you what your child needs to know by the end of kindergarten.

## FURTHER READING



[Kindergarten Readiness](#)



[Teaching Children about Letters](#)



[Kindergarten Checklist](#)



[We Learn Naturally](#)