



Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Prepared by the Chula Vista Elementary School District
Student, Family, and Community Services and Support Division

As kindergarten registration time approaches many parents are wondering if their child is ready for school. A natural concern, and especially so if the child entering school is the first-born and kindergarten is new for the family. Starting school is exciting for children. It is the beginning of basic skills needed for future success and the start of independence. All children enter kindergarten at different levels of readiness but teachers agree on some basic skills that show a child is ready for school. When asked "What are the most important things that contribute to a child's success?" most kindergarten teachers say:

- Being curious and wanting to learn new things
- Be able to tell an adult what they need
- Knowing how to get along with other children, sharing and waiting for a turn
- Recognizing basic colors, shapes, and some letters of the alphabet
- Understand math terms like more than and less than
- Recognizing their first name in print
- Be able to count up to ten items one by one
- Know how to hold a pencil or crayon correctly for writing
- Be able to pay attention and follow simple directions
- Be able to use scissors
- Recognize when words rhyme (for example: see, me, fat, cat)
- Be able to use words- not tantrums- to express feelings of frustration or anger
- Use the bathroom by himself or herself
- Know how a book works- holding it, turning pages, naming things in the pictures
- Know his or her full name and age
- Be aware of other people's feelings
- Be able to be away from their parents without being too upset

When a child has mastered these skills the transition to kindergarten is easier, and as your child's first teacher you can support learning by many activities at home. Have simple conversations as you do daily activities to help your child develop vocabulary, for example; name the color of items as you sort laundry or put away groceries, mention the shape and size, describe the texture. Read, read and read some more! The time you spend enjoying books together prepares your child for school. Talk about the story, compare the art in different books, point out what you like on a page, and let your child guess what happens next. Reading is something you get to do together, and if you have positive feelings about reading, then your child will too.

These skills are guidelines, not requirements. It is age, not skill level, which determines when a child can start school. However, you can help your child learn and practice so he or she gets off to the best start. Your child's school may have suggestions for activities you can do in preparation for kindergarten or you can check out the resources on the *Parent* page at our website. Contact your neighborhood school for more information.

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