



GETTING MY CHILD READY FOR KINDERGARTEN



ABC



Although children are magical, being ready for Kindergarten doesn't just happen by magic.

We all want to ensure that we are giving our children a solid start in their early years, ages 3 - 5, be that at home or in a Pre-K program. Regardless of what setting you choose, Good Reason Houston wants to arm you with clarity about what your child should know, be able to do, and believe about themselves by the time they are ready for Kindergarten so that you can better support and advocate for their growth. As with all guidance, this by no means is a hard and fast rule for all students and all learning styles. Every child is unique. We hope this list will give you a starting point for supporting the incredible growth possible in these critical early years.



How to use this: Here is a general checklist of the basic knowledge and skills that help give all young children a strong start in Kindergarten and elementary school.¹

Kindergarten-Ready Checklist

- Health and Body Wellness**
 - Go up and down steps, hop, run, jump, and climb
 - Play catch
 - Ride a tricycle
 - Keep momentum on a swing by pumping arms and legs
- Work Habits**
 - Listen attentively to a book being read aloud for at least 10 minutes when in a group and 15-20 minutes when sitting with an adult one-on-one
 - Play with a toy/do an age-appropriate activity and concentrate independently for at least 15 minutes
 - Follow multi-step directions, such as, "Bring your shoes and your socks and then sit down on the bench."
- Social and Emotional Development**
 - Care for personal needs, such as using the bathroom independently, dressing oneself, using appropriate table manners, etc.
 - Recognize and greet familiar people by name
 - Use verbal forms of politeness, such as "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," etc.
 - Follow rules established for specific settings (e.g., public places like a library or bus)
 - Follow the rules of simple games
 - Play cooperatively with other children, taking turns, and sharing toys as necessary
- Language**
 - Give and respond to full name
 - Clearly communicate needs, desires, and feelings using words
 - Speak in sentences that are mostly grammatically correct
 - Carry on a simple conversation with an adult, taking turns, staying on topic, contributing to the conversation by answering and asking questions, etc.
 - Sequentially describe a personal experience
 - Ask and answer questions
- Health and Body Wellness**
 - Understand and use words to describe position in space, such as "over/under," "in/on," "up/down," etc.
 - Understand and use words to describe time, such as the names of the days of the week, "morning/afternoon/evening," "today/tomorrow/yesterday," etc.
- Literacy**
 - Recite familiar nursery rhymes from memory
 - Identify rhyming words in familiar nursery rhymes
 - Give the beginning sound heard in a spoken word
 - Answer questions about what is happening in a book that is being read aloud
 - Retell a familiar story in their own words
 - Pretend to read a book
 - Name the letters and give the sounds of letters in their own first name
 - Draw and copy simple lines and marks
 - Write first name, even if some mistakes are present
 - Cut straight lines with scissors
 - Dictate thoughts and ideas to an adult
- Math**
 - Identify whether objects are the same or different
 - Complete puzzles with 8-15 pieces
 - Rote count from 1 to 10
 - Count up to 6 objects correctly
 - Compare groups of objects
 - Compare the size of objects
 - Categorize objects by size, color, shape, etc.
 - Identify some numerals
- General Knowledge**
 - Recognize and name: parts of the body, colors and shapes, household objects, food and clothing, animals and their habitats (such as farm, ocean, jungle, desert)
 - Identify and explain the use of the five senses and their associated body parts
 - Identify the parts of a plant, its needs, and its life cycle
 - Talk about some properties of water, light, and air

Things you can do to support at home:

- 1. Talk with your child**
 - Word knowledge is one of the most important parts of being able to read, so expose your child to lots of words to describe the living and material world, ideas, and feelings.
 - Nurture emotional recognition by talking about feelings frequently, both by talking about your own and helping children label theirs. "It looks like you are frustrated." "That smile tells me you're happy."
 - Help children think through scenarios before they occur (such as, wanting to be the first to do something), and use cues and subtle reminders to help children recall agreed-upon behavior expectations.
 - Develop your child's sense of self: Provide emotionally-responsive and sensitive care, ensuring warm, stable, and reliable environments and relationships. This should be done through consistently responding to cues and verbalizations, implementing routines like a nightly bedtime and book, and following predictable schedules.
- 2. Read aloud daily:** This should be fun and educational at the same time. A child ready to go to Kindergarten will be able to listen to picture books for up to 30 minutes. With your child, choose a picture book with a good story and pictures. Read through the book with a clear voice and expression, and stop as needed to answer questions or offer information. When you're finished, review and discuss. Then, let your child share some thoughts. Ask questions like, "Have you ever... (done what one of the characters did?)" "Why... (did something in the story happen?)"
- 3. Sing:** Children grow their knowledge of words and sense of the melody of language by hearing songs, and the ability to keep a rhythm and move in dance is important for their understanding and control of movement.
- 4. Play:** Much of the body wellness that ensures children will be able to maintain attention in Kindergarten comes from healthy physical activity, outdoors when possible, and from the sense of fun that comes from moving freely and with others.

If you would like to dive in deeper to what your child should know, consider reviewing the book *What Your Preschooler Needs to Know* or this comprehensive guide to the *Preschool Core Knowledge Sequence*.