

## Ready for Kindergarten

Written by Joy Venhorst  
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Many parents wonder if their child is ready for kindergarten at age five. School readiness is complex. It is more than chronological age or the ability to recite numbers, letters, and colors. Here are some questions to think about as you decide if your child is school-ready.

Is your child socially ready?

For instance, does she trust other adults and children? Can she play in a group?

Is your child emotionally ready?

Does she have some degree of independence and self-direction? Does she have self-control; is she able to wait when there is a delay? Is she reasonably confident and willing to try new things?

Does your child have the language skills she'll need?

Can she understand directions? Is she able to express her needs to adults and other children? Can she express her thoughts in sentences?

Is your child physically ready?

Can she dress, eat, and toilet herself? Can she run and jump? Does she have a sense of space and balance? Can she manipulate small objects? Can she copy simple line drawings and hold a pencil properly?

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Is your child intellectually ready? Is she able to focus and concentrate on an activity for 10 to 15 minutes? Does she understand that letters stand for something; that printed words are spoken language expressed in writing? Can she remember simple routines? Is she able to stick with and solve simple problems?

Children see everything and are influenced by what they see. For example, they notice how parents spend their time, what they read, what TV programs they watch. One of the best things a parent can do is read to children. It prepares them for school in several ways. Reading to a child for as little as ten minutes a day:

§ Helps develop security and independence (through the close body contact/sitting on mom or dad's lap).

§ Helps the child practice using language and learning concepts.

§ Helps to develop an interest in the world and its people, and most importantly.

§ Helps to develop the belief that learning can be fun.

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