

# Your Child Goes to KINDERGARTEN

## About Five-Year-Olds

**5** Your happy four-year-old has grown up to be a calmer and less excitable five-year-old. Five-year-olds are friendly, talkative, and affectionate toward adults. They are eager to please you, but they sense they are growing up and want to be thought of as children who are ready for school.

Five-year-olds are aware that written words mean something. They may recognize a few letters and words and pretend to read and write. They love to have

stories read or told to them. They especially like those with lots of action, movement, and repetition.

Five-year-olds are eager to try out their independence, but they need guidance from home to help them to set and understand limits. Five-year-olds need routines, including one for getting ready for school. Starting the day calm and relaxed at home with a healthy breakfast will help them to have a positive day at school. Choosing clothes and fixing sandwiches or snacks the night before can help to make mornings less pressured.

## What skills do children need in order to succeed in school?

For those of us who are concerned about the school readiness of children, it is important that they be:

- Socially adjusted, emotionally secure, and physically strong and coordinated.
- Able to communicate with adults and others, notice the connection between some letters of written language and their individual sounds in spoken language (for example: letter “m” makes the “mmm” sound) and show interest in stories, books, and reading.
- Able to recognize the relationship between a number and the quantity it represents, recognize patterns (for example: repeating color pattern on the edge of a rug), recognize shapes in books and in the environment (for example: some signs are squares), able to place items in a certain order (for example: largest to smallest).
- Aware of their environment/neighborhood, animal and plant life, as well as the roles of people in their families and communities.
- Comfortable with individual creativity and an appreciation for self-expression through the arts (for example: use clay, paint, markers, etc. with a purpose in mind).

Kindergarten teachers must evaluate each child during the first few weeks of school on indicators reflecting the skills and abilities that can reasonably be expected from children who are beginning kindergarten. Teachers provide information on these seven developmental dimensions: personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development and health. Please discuss your child’s results with the teacher during the scheduled fall parent-teacher conference.



## Some things you can do to support your child's learning in kindergarten include but are not limited to:

### Personal and Social Development

- **Develop a plan for the week.** Let your child help you to plan a weekly schedule of times and events, highlighting anything that will be out of your ordinary routine. This will help him to understand the order of things and give him the security of knowing his upcoming schedule.
- **Making choices.** You encourage independence when you let your child make some reasonable choices and decisions, such as choosing the story to read at bedtime or selecting a birthday card for a relative or friend.

### Language and Literacy

- **Play with words.** Play the name game using your child's first name and have her help to think of and recognize words that begin with the same sound as the first letter of her name. Find opportunities to sing songs, recite poems, and make up rhymes.
- **Make a word-card file.** Write words your child wants to read, one per index card, adding new cards as he learns new words. Encourage him to select word-cards from the file when he wants to copy a word or practice sounding out a special new word.
- **Take dictation.** Offer to help add a story to your child's drawings by writing down the words she tells you. Let her hear you sounding out the words as you write the letters so she sees the connection between spoken and written language. Saying stories is an important first step to writing them.
- **Take a part.** After reading, pretend to be one of the characters and encourage your child in acting out the stories you read together. Play the part with enthusiasm. Repeating the character's words with emphasis will encourage fluency later on when your child begins to read on his own.

### Mathematical Thinking

- **Collect things with your child.** Collect groups of things, such as container lids, buttons, key chains, and sort them using different rules that you and your child choose (for example: bigger ones from smaller ones, lids from food containers and lids from drink containers).
- **Be pattern detectives.** Hunt for patterns on clothing, in the wallpaper, on dishes, in the carpet.
- **Keep on counting.** While working around the house with your child, count aloud the number of socks as you do the

laundry, the number of potatoes as you make dinner. Solve problems, such as, "How many crackers will we need for everybody to have two with their soup?"

- **Search for shapes with your child.** Look for all the shapes (triangle, circle, square, etc.) that you can find inside your house or see on the way to the store.

### Scientific Thinking

- **Use your senses like a scientist.** Encourage your child to look at, smell, listen to and feel things in the environment. Take a walk in the woods and talk about the things you can touch, smell, see, and hear.
- **Wonder with your child.** Let your child hear you wondering about things that intrigue or mystify you, such as, "I wonder why we can see a rainbow in the mist from the garden hose!" Question your child about his explanations by asking, "How do you know that?" or, "Tell me why you think that." Encourage people like your doctor, the plumber, and the cable t.v. technician to give your child explanations to questions he can understand.

### Social Studies

- **Different rules for different places.** Talk with your child about how rules for behavior can change depending upon where you are, such as behavior at the theater and behavior at a ball game.
- **Point out workers in the community.** Talk with your child about roles of people who help your family, such as the garbage collector, postal employees, grocery store clerks.

### The Arts

- **Foster creativity.** Keep art supplies on hand (crayons, markers, paper, scissors) and encourage your child to express his ideas and feelings in creative ways. Encourage talking about his creations ("Tell me about your picture."). Supply him with puppets and building materials, such as blocks and construction toys.
- **Make and enjoy music together.** Sing to her in the car, make an instrument, clap the beat, dance, play lots of different recorded music and talk about the different sounds. See a show or go to a concert.

### Physical Development and Health

- **Encourage activity.** Give her room to play every day in the neighborhood, your yard, the park, or in an organized sports or movement program.
- **Arrange ways for your child to help.** Ask him to do chores where he can use his hands, such as peeling vegetables, pouring juice, cracking open eggs, and mixing jello.



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