

Kindergarten Readiness

Watch your child grow

Ages
Birth-2 Years

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

Entering kindergarten is a big change for you and your child. It is an exciting time, and it also might be a little scary for you both. You can help by preparing yourself and your child for this big step well ahead of time. Kindergarten readiness refers to the developmental domains that contribute to a child's ability to adapt to the kindergarten classroom, which is often a new and unfamiliar environment. While there is no single agreed upon definition of Kindergarten readiness, we have prepared a few activities that can help get your child ready to succeed in school and life and become great learners, thinkers, and doers.

Activities will Promote:

- Effective communication of emotions
- Persistence on challenging task
- Listening and attention to instructions
- Capacity to develop good relationships
- Self-regulation of emotions and behaviors
- Problem solving skills

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Communication:

For both children and grown-ups, being overwhelmed with big feelings (even pleasant ones, like excitement) is an opportunity to learn and practice three steps for handling feelings. (While the child won't actually be practicing these steps themselves if you role model this method with them starting now they will be able to do it themselves later!) I Notice: Pause to notice how your body feels — how do you feel inside your body? I Feel: Use a “feeling word” to name the feeling. I Can: Choose something that might help you manage the feeling.

Materials needed: You and your child

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Gross Motor

Gardening time! Have your child help you plant some veggies or flowers and get messy! Have them do some tummy time and place some soil in a baggie for the child to manipulate. As the skill level increases have them squat or kneel and dig/play in the soil, depending on skill level they can help you plant the seeds and carry the water for the plants. This type of movement promotes muscular strength, coordination, balance, and postural control.

Materials needed: You, your child, and Baggie, pot, soil, water, and seeds.

Fine Motor

Build a tower: Grab a few blocks or stackable containers. Have your child build a tower of three small blocks/containers high.

Materials needed: You, your child, and three blocks or containers

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Approaches to Learning

Peekaboo Many Ways: How many ways can you play "Peekaboo"? You can hide your eyes behind your hand, or use a hat, a napkin, or whatever is handy and then say "Peekaboo!" Help your child take a turn. What can they hide behind? Saying "I see you!" when one of you stops hiding should make you both laugh.

Materials needed: You, your child, and nay household object

Mathematics

Sea Explorer: Show your child the world from different points of view. When they're in your arms, crouch down low or lift them up in the air. Describe what you're doing and respond to their reactions. "You're swimming so fast, Look what you can see down here!" Moving your child around and talking about what you're doing helps them learn about important things like shape and space. Children learn these ideas through back and forth conversations, where you follow their lead and respond to their reactions

Materials needed: You and your child

Literacy/Language

Sound Conversations: If your child says "Ba," repeat the sound back to them. Then add on to it, "Ba, ba, ba." Do they try to copy your sounds? Add a new sound next, "Ba, ba, MA." Do they notice the change? Do they try to repeat it? Go back and forth repeating each other's sounds and building on them. Even conversations with only sounds encourage communication by your child, using sounds and actions to talk to you. Changing the sounds helps them pay careful attention to the differences between sounds—an important step in learning to talk.

Materials needed: You and your child

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Ages
2-3 Years

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Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Communication: Friendship Skills/Attachment

It's best to teach and practice this strategy when children are calm, so that they are already familiar with it when overwhelming feelings come up. For both children and grown-ups, being overwhelmed with big feelings (even pleasant ones, like excitement) is an opportunity to learn and practice three steps for handling feelings. I Notice: Pause to notice how your body feels — how do you feel inside your body? I Feel: Use a “feeling word” to name the feeling. I Can: Choose something that might help you manage the feeling..

Materials needed: You and your child

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Gross Motor

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Materials needed: You, your child, pot, soil, water, and seeds

Fine Motor

Build a tower: Grab a bunch of books and encourage your child to stack them into towers!

Materials needed: You and your child

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Approaches to Learning

Ask About Art: You can help your child get ready to learn to read. When they draw or create, get them talking about what they made and write down their answers. Instead of asking what a picture is, ask them to tell you about it. Maybe ask, "Is there something you want to say about your picture?" Rather than saying their picture is "good," try to notice things and let them respond to stretch their learning.

Materials needed: You, your child, child's drawing

Mathematics

Order and Sort: Encourage your child to sort objects during cleanup. Talk about what you're doing: "All of the small lids go in the little bowl and the big lids go in the big bowl." Then mix it up and ask them to put the small objects in the big bowl. You can also sort by shape or color. Being able to group things by size or color is an important skill. When you switch the rules of the game, you're helping them learn how to think flexibly, use self-control and not go on autopilot

Materials needed: you and your child

Literacy & Language

Night Search: Being in Arizona it gets hot, so the evening is a great time to be outside. Take a walk and as you go, point out what you see. Do you see birds, trees, leaves, people? Ask your child, "How many do you see?" Take turns pointing to different things all over! This type of activity helps your child learn to estimate numbers. They're using what they know about numbers and applying it. Being able to estimate is an important part of learning and using math

Materials needed: You and your child

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3-4 Years

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Social Emotional Learning (SEL) & Communication Friendship Skills/Social Relationships

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Materials needed: You, your child, paper and pencils

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Materials needed: You, your child, pot, soil, water, seeds

Fine Motor

Build a tower: Grab a bunch of books and encourage your child to stack them into towers!

Materials needed: You, your child, books

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Approaches to Learning

When stopped at a red light, talk about what the colors mean. Invite your child to be the "color lookout." Ask them, "What color will come next? What is it telling you to do?" Invite them to watch for the next light for as long as you can wait.

Materials needed: You, your child, on the go drive

Mathematics

Play "Big Time" to make waiting time fly by. Hold up an object—a magazine, an item from a bag, or a toy. Ask your child, "Can you find something bigger than this?" After they do, then ask, "Can you find something smaller than this?" When you take turns asking questions, this game becomes a back and forth conversation about size. It is a chance for them to focus on and explore the idea of size—something they will use to organize their understanding of the world.

Materials needed: You and your child

Literacy & Language

Laundry Delivery: After folding the laundry, ask your child to help you with "Laundry Delivery." Ask them, "Where do the towels go? That's right, in the bathroom! What about your pajamas? Yes! In your room. Which drawer?" Switch and let them pick the items and ask you where they go. When children learn to group things into categories, they learn how to organize and make sense of their world. Just think about how important matching is to reading, literacy, math, science, and many other subjects.

Materials needed: You and your child

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4-5 Years

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Social Emotional Learning (SEL) & Communication Trust and Emotional Security:

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Materials needed: You, your child, pot, soil, water, and seeds

Fine Motor

Pour out cereal, oatmeal, cornmeal, etc. onto the table and encourage your child to trace patterns or write their name in it.

Materials needed: You, your child, cereal, oatmeal, cornmeal, etc.

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4-5 Years

Approaches to Learning

Sometimes when you shop, your child seems to want everything in the store. They love to look around to find things they like. Give them other things to look for. You can say, "I see something orange and pointy. What is it? Yes! It's a carrot!" Now let your child describe an item for you to find.

Materials needed: You, your child, grocery shopping spree

Mathematics

Cart Manager: While grocery shopping, ask your child if they can manage the cart by sorting your shopping into vegetables, fruits, frozen foods, or by color. Can they find a way to keep the boxes lined up so they don't topple over? When your child sorts food and manages space, they're using math concepts. Sorting is important for learning math!

Materials needed: You, your child, and a shopping spree

Literacy & Language

Our Weather Wrap-Up: When you come in from outside, have a chat with your child about the weather. Were you hot or cold? Make sure you use simple sentences, but add bigger words, too. Talking with your child about their world helps to build their brain. Remember to ask questions: "Did your coat keep you warm?" And build on what they say: "The wind made me shiver just like you!"

Materials needed: You and your child

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