

Preschool Pieces:

Is your child ready for preschool?

At a Glance:

- Preschool readiness is more than a checklist of skills.
- Independence and concentration help preschoolers learn.
- Being able to communicate is a key skill for preschoolers.

Preschool helps children develop important social skills and get better at following instructions, which will be very useful in kindergarten and beyond.

Because very young children develop at such different rates, there isn't a checklist of must have skills kids need in order to start preschool. But there are some areas you can look at to see if your child is ready for group learning.

The following areas for a handy acronym: here's how to tell if your child has the "PIECES" of preschool readiness in place

P: Potty Trained

Not all preschools require children entering school to be toilet trained, especially if they are 3 years old or younger or if they have special needs.

However, most programs for 4-year olds and for pre-K will expect kids to be out of diapers. But don't worry if your child still needs help with washing up or has an accident that's not uncommon and is supported at this level.

I: Independent

Kids age 3 and 4 aren't expected to do everything on their own or to solve problems all by themselves, but a little independence is key.

By the time your child enters preschool he/she will be expected to play games or do projects with other kids for a short period of time without needing constant redirection from an adult. It's also important that she slash he can feed herself and find her way around the classroom once he/she knows it well.

Many preschool programs have activity time during which students are asked to pick a Learning Center such as a drawing or a building block area and interact with it for a short period. Preschoolers are expected to be independent enough to select an activity center without the teacher's help.

E: Expressive:

To be ready for preschool, kids need to be able to express themselves in a way that an unfamiliar adult can understand. That doesn't mean your child needs to be speaking in full sentences, just that he/she has an appropriate way of getting their feelings and needs across. That can be with words or gestures. If you have questions about your child's speaking skills, it's best to discuss with a pediatrician.

Kids who are expressive can understand what other people are saying. Your child may not be able to follow directions that have many steps but understanding basic words and directional phrases like “sit down” and “follow me” is important. Preschoolers are also expected to have a basic understanding that other kids have feelings and needs too.

C: Concentration

Being able to concentrate looks very different in a preschooler than it does in older kids, and this ability varies from child to child.

Most preschool ready kids can pay attention to a short picture book being read out loud. Activities are typically limited to 10 - 20 minutes in a preschool classroom. Preschoolers are expected to concentrate on an activity for this amount of time.

Preschoolers need to be able to follow directions most of the time and to focus on tasks without getting overly distracted. But a little distraction is typical, especially if this is the first time your child has spent every day around a group of other kids.

E: Emotionally Ready

Emotionally, there are a few things to look for when considering whether your child is preschool ready. The first is the ability to say goodbye to a parent or caregiver without too much anxiety. It's typical to be a little nervous, but if your child cries the entire day, he/she might not be ready to go to a full preschool program.

That said, many children will cry when you say goodbye on the first day or even throughout the first week period there are ways you can help your child develop coping skills at home.

A child who is emotionally ready is more eager to go to school and wants to make friends. He/she might not have the skills to make friends yet but wanting to make them is a good start.

S: Stamina

Children need a lot of physical and mental energy for preschool. Kids who aren't used to following a routine and being actively engaged can have a harder time adjusting to preschool.

Putting all the “PIECES” together can make it easier to know if your child is ready for preschool. If these aren't all in place, you can begin to practice some of them at home.

If you're still concerned that your child isn't able to do many of these things or isn't meeting his/her developmental milestones, it's a good idea to speak with your doctor. Together you can decide on next steps, which might include a referral for an early intervention evaluation to look at his/her skills.

Key Takeaways

- Most preschoolers are still working on readiness skills when they start preschool.

This article was taken from the internet and written by Amanda Morin. ILC preschool does not claim to use all these areas for evaluation or placement in our program. We believe in building relationships with families in preparation for future education. We are happy to help you evaluate if your child is ready for preschool.

