



# Getting Ready for Kindergarten!

Your student is on their way to **starting kindergarten**! This is an exciting time. A **strong transition** from preschool will set up your child for **success** in kindergarten and beyond. This guide includes **ideas and strategies** to support this transition.

## A PLAN FOR A STRONG START

### 4-6 WEEKS BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS:

- Begin talking about kindergarten with your child. Show your child that you are excited.
- Select books from the library about kindergarten students or classrooms and read them together. Suggested titles can be found later in this guide.
- Try out some of the activities within this guide to support kindergarten readiness.

### 2 WEEKS BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS:

- Reach out to the school to learn about back-to-school events or activities.
- Establish and follow a bedtime and wake time that aligns with your school's schedule.
- Encourage your child to make predictions about what kindergarten will be like. Talk about what might be similar or different from preschool.

### 1 WEEK BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS:

- Attend any orientations or "back to school" events hosted at the school. If possible, tour the classroom and meet their new teacher.
- Make a plan for getting your child to and from school on time every day.

### 3-5 DAYS BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS:

- Get ready for the first day! Check what school supplies you may need or any uniform policies to follow.
- Share your feelings about the first day of school. Allow your child to share their feelings about the transition to a new classroom or a new school.

### 1 DAY BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS:

- Talk about the plan for the first day of school. Remind your child about their new teacher and new classmates.
- Plan for drop-off by talking about how you'll say goodbye. Decide if you'll wave, hug, or high-five!
- Show your excitement and enthusiasm for the start of kindergarten!

# LET'S GET READY!

This quick reference sheet can be used as a guide to prepare your child for kindergarten. This list contains suggested skills or abilities your child should display by five years old. Please keep in mind this is not a fully comprehensive list.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

**Your child should be able to recognize and express their feelings to adults and other children. Here are some things to look for:**

- Describing and managing their feelings.
- Recognizing the feelings of others.
- Sharing space and cooperating with others.

## READING AND WRITING

**Your child should be able to recognize and name at least 15 letters and know the letter-sound correspondences. Their reading and writing skills may also include:**

- Matching and generating words that rhyme.
- Isolating the first sound or last sound from a word.
- Recalling facts, characters, or details from a book.
- Writing their first name by themselves and their last name with support.

## PHYSICAL

**Your child should be able to run, jump, and adjust their speed and direction. Here are some physical skills to look for:**

- Balancing on a narrow platform or one foot.
- Independently using zippers, snaps, and buttons.
- Using their hands to maneuver everyday objects.

## LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENT

**Your child should be able to communicate ideas and tell stories in complete sentences. Some other skills include:**

- Engaging in back-and-forth conversation.
- Extending a conversation with questions.
- Following two-step and three-step directions.

## MATHEMATICAL REASONING

**Your child should be able to count to 20 and identify basic shapes and written numerals 1-10. Other math skills could include:**

- Using their fingers or objects to represent numbers.
- Understanding 'more' and 'less.'
- Sorting objects based on two or three characteristics.

## APPROACHES TO LEARNING

**Your child should demonstrate an interest in learning and exploring new things and ideas. Other learning skills to look for:**

- Selecting and completing a difficult task.
- Seeking out answers to questions.
- Showing creativity and self-expression.

# ACTIVITIES TO TRY OUT AT HOME

Integrate these games and activities into your everyday routines before kindergarten begins.

## KITCHEN CONNECTIONS

While preparing a meal, have your child help. Skills practiced include:

- Counting and measuring.
- Opening packaging independently.
- Pausing to talk about problem-solving.

## ADDING ALL-AROUND

Fill a container with small toys or objects. Take a handful and have your child take a handful.

Then practice:

- Counting the toys in each hand.
- Deciding who has more.
- Combining the toys to find the total number.

## SOUND COLLAGE

Choose a letter sound that is often at the start of words (b, t, sh, etc). Send your child on a sound scavenger hunt to:

- Find images in old magazines that start with the same sound.
- Cut out and stick words and photos with the sound to a piece of paper.
- Think of and draw words that start with the same letter.

## “SO THEN” STORYTELLERS

Start telling a pretend story, say “so then...” and ask your child to take over the story. This activity lets them:

- Use their imagination.
- Practice conversation and storytelling skills.
- Let out their silly side.

## VOCABULARY BUILDERS

Expand your child’s use of advanced language by:

- Extending your sentences with descriptive words.
- Asking them questions about their experience.
- Encouraging them to ask questions, too.

## OBSTACLE COURSE

Create an obstacle course at home or the park by:

- Choosing 3-4 tasks that require different skills.
- Practicing the obstacle course together.
- Challenging them to see how fast they can go.

## LETTER EXPLORATION

When traveling, choose a letter of the alphabet for your child to look for. This lets them practice:

- Writing.
- Identifying objects.
- Finding letters.

## COOL COLLECTORS

Choose an object to collect and a target number. After you have collected the objects practice:

- Sorting and organizing.
- Grouping the objects based on characteristics.
- Comparing the sizes of the groups.

## MIC'D UP

Let your child be the star and pretend to interview them. Ask questions that prompt your child to:

- Tell stories.
- Describe themselves.
- Express feelings.



# READING EVERY DAY

Reading to your child every day is one of the best ways you can prepare your child for kindergarten. Here are a few tips for reading with your child.

- 1 Choose books that are both familiar favorites and new titles.**  
Visit your local library to explore a variety of books. Try reading a longer book over multiple days. Try reading a book about an unknown topic to learn something new! Re-reading books multiple times is great, too!
- 2 Engage in conversation during reading.**  
Pausing every few pages allows you to talk about the text. You can make predictions about what will happen next, talk about the characters' feelings, or pause to look at a map or diagram.
- 3 Use the book to work on foundational literacy skills.**  
Before reading, choose a letter to focus on. Each time you see the letter or hear its sound, point it out. This activity is great during a second or third read of a book. Choosing books with rhyming patterns is also a great option.
- 4 Include non-fiction books.**  
Add more non-fiction books to your reading rotation. Start with topics that are of interest to your child or family. Complement the book with an activity to make the learning come alive. If you read about boats, build a ship out of boxes. If you read about earthworms, see if you can find a few after the next rainstorm.
- 5 Make it fun.**  
Adults can make reading fun so children see it as a joyful activity. Try reading using different voices, in different locations, and at different times of the day. Ask family members to share a favorite book.

## CHECK-OUT SOME OF THESE GREAT BOOKS!

English Title	Spanish Title
The Day You Begin	El día en que descubres quién eres
Chu's First Day of School	El primer día de escuela de Chu
Isabel and Her Colores Go To School	*Bilingual Text
Clifford Goes to Kindergarten	Clifford Va a Kindergarten
School's First Day of School	El Primer dia de un colegio

Check out CPS Libraries for more books and digital resources

