

An ocean of information is available online to help parents answer the questions, “Is my child ready for kindergarten?” and “How can I get my child ready for kindergarten?” The information here is taken from a variety of trusted sources. If, after swimming through all the thoughts included, you still have questions please feel free to contact the school.

Definition

School readiness is defined as the "ability to cope, learn, and achieve without undue stress." Being able to recite the alphabet or count is not the same as having the developmental processing skills and maturation needed for success in school. School readiness and intellectual capacity (IQ) do not necessarily correlate. Each child is a unique human being who grows and develops at his/her own pace.

In Our Experience

- It is more often the child that begins school too young who needs to repeat a grade.
- Social-emotional maturity is equal in importance to academic readiness.
- Boys with summer birthdays are more likely to struggle.
- It's easier to have enrichment material for “very ready” children than it is to push a struggling student along.
- It's important to consider that your decision to begin kindergarten will set your child's trajectory for the next twelve years.
- When there is doubt about readiness, keep your child home one more year and allow time to grow emotionally.

Specialists in the field of child development feel strongly that school readiness is not something that is “trained” by things like preschool but may be enhanced by child's play and family activities.

Kindergarten programs differ from place to place. Different types of curriculum and the delivery of that curriculum require certain maturation levels in processing, attention-to-task, and social-emotional skills. At Faith Christian Academy, kindergarten is academically oriented; learning to read and do basic math is the foundation of each day. Forcing academics on the child who is not yet ready is not in the child's best interest.

Indicators of Readiness include:

- Enthusiasm toward learning
- Solid oral language skills
- The ability and willingness to learn
- The desire to be independent
- The ability to play with others
- Strong fine-motor skills
- Basic number and letter recognition

Incoming students should be able to:

- Count.
Can your child recite numbers in order? Can he count? These are not the same skills. Many children recite numbers but cannot actually count. Children entering kindergarten should be able to recognize two items without counting them, be able to count items to four, and be able to identify most numerals 1-10.
- Identify the primary colors.

- Identify circles, squares, and triangles.
- Understand the difference between words such as: before and after, today and tomorrow, same and different, more and less, under and above, beside, and through.
- Speak in complete sentences using grammar that is standard for his age.
- Use correct pronunciation for most words.
 - You may be so used to hearing your child speak, that you are unaware of immature speech patterns. Parents are often surprised when the kindergarten teacher suggests speech therapy or purposeful speech work at home. Children with incorrect speech patterns have more trouble with phonics and spelling because of pronunciation errors.
 - Listen to see if your child correctly repeats words such as:
 - this (not 'dis')
 - wrong (not wong)
 - ship (not sip or thip)
 - sink (not think)
 - like (not wike)
 - path (not paff)

Skills to Develop

- **Small (fine) motor skills**
Give your child plenty of opportunities to color, cut, glue, and write by painting, using Play-Doh, drawing with sidewalk chalk, etc. Work with puzzles, build with Duplos and Legos, and string beads. All these things strengthen fingers and develop eye-hand coordination needed for handwriting.
- **Speaking of handwriting**, unless you are prepared to insist on correct pencil grip, paper slant, and letter formation, don't worry about teaching your child how to write the alphabet. All experience indicates that poor habits are very difficult to break! Even with coloring, your child should be taught to hold a crayon correctly.
- **Large (gross) motor skills**
This may not seem like an academic skill, but gross motor skills prepare a child for classes and improve coordination and perception. Teach your child to ride a bicycle, toss a ball, run, skip, hop, gallop, swing, and climb.
- **Alphabet**
Read alphabet books together. Cut letters from fuzzy material, sandpaper, and anything else with interesting textures; let your child trace them as you say what they are. Examine letters wherever you are—in the doctor's office or in line at a store. Sing the alphabet song. Talk about the sounds a letter makes. Buy alphabet letters with magnets and let your child learn to spell his name or other words that interest him. Since lowercase letters are used far more often than capital letters, teach them as the priority.
- **Full name, address, telephone number, and parents' names**
Ask about these as you walk or ride in the car, do chores together or play. Try putting the telephone number to music. If you teach your child to write his first name, teach it correctly, that is, one capital letter at the beginning and all the rest lowercase.
- **Music**
Sing together. Listen to music. Play instruments, even if they are only homemade rhythm instruments. There is no better way to memorize than through song.

- **Imagination**

Imagination is essential. Play “what if” games, make up ridiculous stories, and welcome those invisible friends into your home. Read fantasy books and allow time to create and imagine. In today’s world of movies and video games, imagination is often hindered and limited by what a child sees. Limit video games, TV, and movies. Encourage self-creativity. Take your child to lots of interesting places: the zoo, museums, walks in the woods, ponds. Observe or keep a frog for a while, catch fireflies, go camping, etc. All these experiences increase vocabulary, imagination, and wonder for the world around them.

- **Read to your child**

Finally, read to your child every day. Read rhymes and poetry, too! Once your child begins to read, require the same of him. Good reading skills are key to school success.

Further Reading:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/kindergarten-readiness/art-20048432>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/megan-power/kindergarten-readiness-activities/>

https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/t2k_schoolreadiness.pdf