

What Can I Do to Prepare My Child for Kindergarten?

In Washington State, any child who turns five by August 31st of the upcoming school year is ready for kindergarten.

If you want to help your child prepare for success in kindergarten, try the activities suggested in this guide and congratulate yourself on how much you are already doing to prepare your child for kindergarten. Then select a few new activities you can introduce to your child. Place emphasis on trying a new activity rather than mastering the skill. Remember that children learn by playing. You can show your child that learning is fun as well as important! There is no single measure that guarantees that a child is ready for kindergarten. In general, as your child nears his or her fifth birthday, he or she is ready to start school when it begins in the fall.

Most children are able to do many of the things listed in this brochure prior to beginning kindergarten. Keep in mind that each child will come to school with a variety of strengths and skills. Think of these skills as a way to identify your child's strengths, rather than using it to decide whether he or she is behind or ahead of other children. Talk to your pediatrician if you have any questions or concerns about your child's readiness. Once the school year begins, know that his or her teacher will create a learning environment that gives each individual student an opportunity to thrive and learn new skills throughout the year.



Kindergarten open houses are typically held in the spring. Please contact your child's future elementary school so that you don't miss out on these early opportunities to get important information and build relationships with teachers and staff. You will need your child's birth certificate and current immunization documentation in order to complete the registration process. In some districts, you may need proof of residency. You are encouraged to attend these events even if you don't have all of the documents required to complete the registration packet.

Talk to your child about the first day of school. Address any fears and concerns your child may have and reassure him/her that everything will be all right. Keep a positive attitude. If you are excited about the first day of school chances are your child will be too!

SELF/SWEL WaKIDS Steering Committee Updated January 2018

Information in this brochure aligns with child development information that can be found in the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012 for children ages 4 to 5 years old.

A downloadable copy can be found at:
www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning

Special thanks to the Clark County School Readiness Taskforce who initially developed this brochure in 2000.

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For additional information
info@selfwa.org | selfwa.org



Please scan or visit SELF's website to download a copy of the Kindergarten Transition Summary Form.

Completed forms can be turned in with your kindergarten registration paperwork.

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How will I know my child is ready for kindergarten?

ABOUT ME AND MY FAMILY AND CULTURE

My child...

- Understands that families are diverse.
- Describes what he/she likes and is interested in.
- Associates emotions with words and facial expressions.
- Enjoys pretend play, is curious and is interested in trying things out.
- Stays with a task for more than five minutes and attempts to solve problems that arise.

IDEAS TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILD

- Show a friendly and respectful way of listening and responding to what your child says. Be the model you want the child to be.
- Encourage your child to express feelings, when appropriate through words, artwork and expressive play.
- Encourage your child to talk about problems and ways to solve them. Provide extended time to play, away from television.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

My child...

- Understands that adults may want the child to do something different than he/she wants to do
- Initiates an activity with another child.
- Cooperates with other children, shares and takes turns.
- Makes decisions and solves problems with other children, with adult help.

IDEAS TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILD

- Facilitate play in groups. Modify activities so that all children can join in.
- Model fair ways to take turns, share and show respect for diversity.
- Let your child solve problems when playing with friends, but be nearby to help out if needed.

TOUCHING, SEEING, HEARING & MOVING AROUND

My child...

- Moves with purpose from one place to another using the whole body. For a child in a wheelchair, skills might include steering the chair into different spaces.
- Opens and closes blunt scissors with one hand, and cuts a straight line.
- Uses zippers, buttons and snaps. Strings large beads; folds paper; open and close containers.
- Spends time practicing skills that are difficult.

IDEAS TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILD

- Encourage your child to try a variety of activities
- Play games with your child where you mimic each other's motions.
- Give your child things to do with the hands, stay close to your child when he or she is trying something difficult.
- Give your child opportunities to learn through all of the senses (such as smelling flowers, feeling different textures of fabric, hearing an alarm clock, etc.)



Working together to build a community that nurtures the full potential of our youngest children.

GROWING UP HEALTHY

My child...

- Communicates the need to rest, drink and eat and use the restroom.
- Washes and dries hands before eating and after toileting with some adult help.
- Eats a variety of nutritious foods and eats independently. Knows what self-care items are used for (such as comb and toothbrush).
- Identifies trusted adults who can help in dangerous situations.
- Follows safety rules indoors and outdoors.

IDEAS TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILD

- Guide your child in taking care of him/herself, such as putting on a coat or wiping up spills.
- Model healthy eating habits, limited screen time (TV, DVDs, computers, tablets and games) and practice safety on your family walks and bike rides.

COMMUNICATING (LITERACY)

My child...

- Talks in sentences of five or six words.
- Remembers and follows directions involving two to three steps, including steps that are not related
- Can recognize own name in print.
- Identifies three or more letters with their sounds at the beginning of a word (such as “day,” “dog”, and “David” all begin with “d”).
- Can tell you what is going to happen next in a story. Makes up an ending.
- Is beginning to print or copy own name and identify at least some of the letters.
- Uses pretend writing activities during play.

IDEAS TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILD

- Have a conversation with your child about what your child is doing, listening to and seeing.
- When working with a child who is learning in two languages, use pictures, props and gestures, as needed.

- Play games with your child that require listening and following simple directions that change during the game.
- Read with your child everyday as often as possible. Ask questions and talk with your child about what you've read.
- Ask your child to tell a story, while you write it out to read back later.
- Print your child's name on things and help your child try to print it.

LEARNING ABOUT MY WORLD

My child...

- Asks adults questions to get information (as appropriate in the family's culture).
- Groups everyday objects that go together (such as shoe and sock, pencil and paper).
- Counts to 20 and beyond. Identifies by sight how many are in a small group of objects, up to four.
- Asks questions and identifies ways to find answers.
- Expresses self through art and music. Remembers words to a familiar song.

IDEAS TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILD

- Help your child apply numbers and counting to daily life (such as measuring ingredients for cooking).
- Engage your child in cooking, planting seeds and other activities that show cause and effect. Give your child opportunities through exploration, Model treating others with respect (such as including everyone in a game, calling others by their correct name, etc.).
- Tell stories and ask your child to draw them.