

Kindergarten Readiness Rescue Union School District

Preparing for kindergarten is an exciting time for both children and their parents. It can also be a bit intimidating. Parents often wonder if their child is ready for the kindergarten experience. It is important that children have a solid foundation on which to build. The items listed here are compiled from the California State Department of Education (State Standards), California Reading and Literature Project, and observations of kindergarten teachers. The following information is meant to be a general guide and not a checklist. Some children will not know or understand some of the items, and others will know more.

General Life and Motor Skills

- **Independently** manages own clothing and bathroom habits
- Says first and last name
- Has had numerous experiences to develop fine motor skills including using crayons, scissors, and pencil (including using correct tripod pencil grip)
- Has established hand dominance
- Has had experiences to develop gross motor skills including riding tricycles, bouncing and catching balls, hopping, etc (can walk and run with an even gait)
- Can sit and listen in a group situation for at least 15 minutes
- Will participate in group activities such as singing and chanting
- Can follow simple directions
- Has had many peer group experiences in order to be comfortable in the school setting
- Takes turns listening and speaking
- Understands having responsibilities such as making his/her bed, cleaning up own room, feeding a pet, etc

Language Arts Concepts and Skills

- Recognizes print in the environment
- Recognizes rhyming words
- Recognizes some letters and knows own name, including recognizing and identifying letters in his/her own name
- Begins to demonstrate reading-like behaviors, such as pretending to read and write
- Begins to demonstrate understanding of picture books and simple stories
- Retells stories, makes predictions, and connects stories to background experiences in a teacher-guided group format
- Uses complete sentences
- Recites familiar nursery rhymes and poems
- Listens to and enjoys books
- Has had someone read to him/her for literally hundreds of hours
- Writes first name, using a capital at the beginning and the remainder of the letters in lower case (Letters should be formed from the top of the letter going down as opposed to from the bottom of the letter going up.)

Math Concepts and Skills

- Recognizes color and basic shapes
- Understands the concept of size (small, medium, large)
- Can count orally to at least 10
- Can accurately count objects to at least 10
- Can recognize the numbers to 10
- Begins to write numbers (As with letters, numbers should be formed beginning from the top and going down.)
- Has had experiences building with various types of blocks

Tips for Lessons

Help your child hold the pencil

Preparing the hand for holding a pencil starts very early, long before you'd give a child a pencil. Give your child lots of finger foods. While certain toys aren't safe before age three or so because children will swallow them, food is fine! Picking up small grains of rice, dry cereal, raisins, and small cubes of cheese develops finger dexterity and the open pinch that will be used for pencils later.

I suggest that you closely monitor how your child holds a crayon or marker. Some children actually do pick up and use a crayon correctly very early. But if your child is holding the crayon with a fist grip, put the crayons away. It is hard to break bad habits. But it is easy to break crayons. Break crayons (while your child isn't looking!) and arrange the little bits attractively in small bowls by color, perhaps on a lazy susan to make them appealing. Give your child the writing tools that elicit a good grip. You will notice a developmental change when your child shifts from writing with big arm movements to actual handwriting when the child learns to rest the hand on the paper. Continually show your child how to hold the pencil correctly.

Properly forming letters

If your child is interested in writing letters, please take the time to review the following website for information on correct letter formation. We have found that once a child begins to form a letter incorrectly, it is almost impossible to break them from bad habits. Check out Handwriting Without Tears for charts on the correct formation of letters.

www.hwttears.com - click on the Parent tab, then Parent Extras and Letter Formation Charts.

Show children how to write their names

Children want to write their names and they usually can if you show them how to write in capitals first. Feel free to teach the letters for your child's name out of workbook order. If your child can write some letters but not others let her write what she can, and you can complete the remainder. Blank paper is fine, but draw a smiley face at the very top left corner of the paper and start there. Place the pencil at the top of the paper for every letter. You should have your own paper and write each letter stroke by stroke for your child to imitate. Be sure to start at the top. You may use a single bottom line for children who can stop on a line. For children who can't stop, give them a narrow strip of paper to write on. They will use the height of the paper as the height of the letters.

Teach informally as you go about life

Stuck in a grocery line? Look for letters! Many of the frustrations of everyday life can be turned into pleasant, worthwhile experiences if you look for something around you to share with your child. Books are wonderful, but signs will do when you're out and about.

Learning Activities - Get Ready for Kindergarten

The following activities are things that you and your child can do together to prepare for learning in kindergarten. Children have a genuine interest in learning and you can join with your child to foster their development, readiness for school and love of learning.

"I think it helps little children feel good about who they are when we adults put value on the many things children can do." Fred Rogers

- **Read with your child every day.** talk about the stories as you read, point and label new things, point out first letters and sounds
- Visit the local library. Go to the storytime.
- Play games with your child.
- Play puzzles.
- Build with blocks.
- Cook together - let your child mix and measure with you.
- Count objects around the house.
- Listen to music together
- Limit TV and video games
- Play "pretend" with your child.
- Create art together - use paper scissors, crayons, markers, paints, old magazines & glue sticks.
- Plan "play dates" with other children.
- Play outside together - run, stretch, jump, climb & swing, bounce balls, throw & catch balls or bean bags.
- Play with play dough or clay.
- Practice printing letters and your child's first and last name.
- Practice zipping, buttoning, snapping and tying.
- Practice hand washing and toileting without help
- Play thinking games in the car:
 - 20 questions
 - "I am thinking of a number between 1 and 10"
 - Look for letters on signs
 - Count all the red (any color) cars or trucks
 - Name 3 objects you see
 - Look for shapes
 - Read sign words like "Exit" or "Stop"

Jobs That 4, 5 AND 6-Year-Olds Can Do!!!

- Set the table
- Put most groceries away
- Help make the grocery list
- Feed pets and clean cages
- Start learning to vacuum, dust furniture
- Help with dishes or fill dishwasher
- Make goal charts
- Fix cold cereal for breakfast
- Share toys with friends
- Get the mail
- Help sort laundry
- Make sandwiches
- Pour own drink of milk or water
- Tear up lettuce for salad
- Make bed and pick up toys in room
- Dress self and pick out clothes for the day
- Fold clean clothes and put them away
- Pay for small purchases (with an adult present)
- Answer the phone (when an adult is home)
- Tie shoes
- Water plants, rake the lawn
- Cook simple foods with adult supervision
- Prepare own school snack, lunch

Ready - Set - Go!

Once in school, children come into daily contact with new opportunities to learn and grow. In kindergarten, your child will listen to stories, work with small groups of children with math materials, solve puzzles, learn letter names and sounds, draw pictures, have time to play with children and solve problems of all kinds. Your child will learn songs, games, and nursery rhymes. Children will begin formal instruction in reading, writing and math.

In kindergarten, children will be exposed to new children, a new structure to their day and new ideas. They will engage in both independent and group activities, and they will be exposed to new ideas for art, science and music. Parents can help aid this transition from home to school by encouraging and giving their children positive preschool learning experiences and by having a positive attitude toward school.

Success in Kindergarten

We want all children to have a successful experience in kindergarten. Research has shown that a child's educational experience is most successful when parents are involved. A few days before school starts in August, parents and children are invited to Kindergarten Orientation. Information is shared with parents, and children have the opportunity to meet the teachers and see their classrooms. During the first few days of school, members of the kindergarten team assess each child individually. This is a time when we get to know the children and learn valuable information that helps us plan instruction. In addition, we ask parents to complete a survey telling us more about their child. Throughout the year we provide many opportunities for parents to be involved in kindergarten. Some of these opportunities include: Back-to-School Night, working in the classroom, completing projects at home, sending in items from a "wish list," working on activities from the homework calendar, and chaperoning on field trips.

Beginning Days of School

- Make sure you are a little early to school the first few days
- **Be on time to pick up your child at school or the bus stop.**
- At home, have a simple relaxing after school routine - drive or walk home, have a snack, some time for free play, a homework activity, reading and then a quiet evening routine.
- Be positive about school.
- Plan to take pictures.
- Say goodbye before you leave. Never sneak out. Follow the teacher's lead if your child is having trouble letting go.
- Volunteer in your child's classroom. Spend time playing with the children
- Talk with other parents - get to know them and our child's classmates.
- Show your child you are interested in school. Ask specific questions about their day - "What did you play today?" or "Tell me about story time."
- Look in your child's folder every day.
- Attend school events and conferences.