

# Readiness: What Skills Your Child Should Have

Use this guide to learn which skills your child should have at the start of the school year, and what skills he'll likely have built by the end.

By [Scholastic Parents Staff](#) Ages 4-6

Kindergarten is an exciting time of exploration. As your child's motor coordination increases, so too will his or her sense of independence, self-reliance, and [self-confidence](#). As the year progresses, kindergarteners will be expected to complete assignments with less outside help, accept more responsibilities, and follow rules more closely. Help support your child's mental and educational growth at home with our kindergarten readiness guide.

## Skills Required at the Beginning of Kindergarten

You may want to review this list and see if there is anything else you would like to teach your child before those first days of school. (We've suggested some handy tools that can help.) Keep in mind that this list is simply a guideline; the exact expectations may vary from program to program.

- Identify some letters of the alphabet ([Chicka Chicka Boom Boom](#) and [Letter Town](#) are two classic [books that teach the ABCs](#).)
- Grip a pencil, crayon, or marker correctly (with the thumb and forefinger supporting the tip)
- Write his first name using upper- and lowercase letters, if possible
- [Count to 10](#) (The interactive book [10 Playful Penguins](#) is a tactile way for kids to learn this skill – the 10 penguins disappear one by one!)
- Bounce a ball
- Classify objects according to their size, shape, and quantity (Help kids build classification skills with fun lessons that get a little harder each time with [Little Skill Seekers: Sorting & Matching](#) workbook.)
- Speak using complete sentences
- Recognize some common sight words, like “stop”
- Identify rhyming words (Try these fun [rhyming games](#) with your child, or try our fun [Learning Puzzles: Rhyming](#) set.)
- Use scissors, glue, paint, and other art materials with relative ease ([Klutz Jr.](#) activity kits are a handy way to craft with kids. One of our faves to build fine motor skills: [Klutz Jr: My Egg Carton Animals](#).)
- Repeat his full name, address, phone number, and birthday
- Play independently or focus on one activity with a friend for up to ten minutes
- Manage bathroom needs
- Dress himself
- Follow directions
- Clean up after himself

- Listen to a story without interrupting (Reading the [How Do Dinosaurs](#) series is a great way to [teach kids everyday manners](#).)
- Separate from parents easily

Don't panic if your child hasn't nailed everything on the list – she'll learn a lot in kindergarten. What's more important is to wean her from relying on you to do things she could do herself, such as zipping her jacket or tying her shoes. Give her the chance to show you what she can do – you might be in for a few surprises!

On top of making sure your little one enters the classroom with those principal skills, you'll want to emotionally prepare her for what can be a big transition for kids (and mom!). Ease those first-day-of-kindergarten jitters with these fun reads:

- [Clifford Goes to Kindergarten](#): Emily Elizabeth is nervous; her first day of kindergarten is coming up, and she doesn't know what it'll be like. Will she make friends? Will she miss her mom and dad? But with Clifford by her side, Emily Elizabeth discovers just how fun kindergarten can be!
- [Kindergarten Is Cool!](#) by Linda Elovitz Marshall: *When you wake up for school/you'll get dressed really cool/with your sneakers and socks/and your lunch in a box*, the book opens. With charming illustrations and catchy rhymes, this fun book will turn first-day nervousness into excitement.
- [Scholastic Reader Level 1: Ready for Kindergarten, Stinky Face?](#) by Lisa McCourt: Stinky Face is filled with curiosity and questions about kindergarten. "What if a hungry armadillo chases me at art time to eat my macaroni necklace?" Stinky Face asks. Luckily, Stinky Face's mom has answers for all of his kindergarten questions.

## Skills Acquired During Kindergarten

Although the curriculum may vary from school to school, general goals focus on children building strong pre-reading skills, practicing letter formation, enhancing listening and communication skills, getting an introduction to basic math concepts, and acquiring an active interest in the world. Generally speaking, your child will be expected to:

### Language Arts

- Recognize and [write all of the letters of the alphabet](#) in upper- and lowercase forms (Practice these skills over and over with the interactive [Scholastic Early Learners: Write and Wipe Learn to Write](#) workbook. Once your child traces the letters, wipe the book clean to start again!)
- Write his first and last name
- Learn sounds corresponding to vowels and consonants (Learn foundational phonics with the [Scholastic Learning Express: Phonics: Grades K–2](#) workbook.)
- Use initial consonant sounds and sound patterns to read words (for example, f + an = fan; r + an = ran)
- Identify several sight words, including names of colors (The colorful [Learning Mats: Sight Words](#) makes this fun.)

- Recognize and use rhyming words (The [BOB Books: Rhyming Words](#) helps kids through 10 minibooks and 100 flashcards.)
- Retell a story including details
- Put events of a story in order
- Write simple sentences using sight words and phonics skills (The [100 Write-and-Learn Sight Word Practice Pages](#) workbook teaches kids to write sentences with 100 sight words.)

## **Listening and Communication**

- Listen attentively
- Raise hands or wait to speak (Help your child learn basic manners with Clifford the Big Red Dog in [Clifford's Manners](#).)
- Act on instruction and repeat spoken directions
- Engage in question-and-answer dialogue with classmates and teachers
- Work as a team on projects or problem-solving

## **Math**

- Sort and classify objects using one or more attributes
- Recognize and write numbers to 30 (A numbers-oriented [tactile learning mat](#) makes this easier.)
- Count orally by ones, five, and tens
- Name ordinal numbers first through tenth
- Add and subtract using manipulatives (Cheerios, candy, etc.)
- Understand spatial relationships (top/bottom, near/far, ahead/behind)
- Compare quantities by estimating, weighing, and measuring
- Use graphs to gather information
- Recognize patterns and [shapes](#) (A slice of pizza is a triangle, and a button is a circle in our [Flash Cards: Colors & Shapes](#) set.)
- [Tell time to the nearest hour](#)
- Count coins (Our [Pretend and Play Calculator Cash Register](#) helps kids learn to count money as they play!)
- Recite the days of the week and months of the year (Our [magnetic calendar](#) teaches this, and the basics of time-management.)