

School Readiness.....Getting Ready for Kindergarten

In the preschool years, you can give your child many opportunities to practice and build school readiness skills. These are the skills that will help prepare your child for a successful kindergarten experience.

Math Skills

**Do you notice your child counting, sorting, or measuring?
Does she know her colors and shapes?**

Before entering kindergarten, children should have many opportunities to build math awareness in the following areas:

- Color identification: (red, green, blue, yellow, orange, purple, black, brown)
- Shape identification: (circle, square, rectangle, triangle)
- Spatial awareness: (top, bottom, under, in, out)
- Patterns: (red, blue, red, blue, red, blue)
- Sorting: (dirty clothes/clean clothes; red blocks/blue blocks)
- Numbers and quantity: (4 cookies for 4 people; count 10 blocks)
- Measurement: (objects can be measured by height, length, weight, or time)
- Comparisons: (something is shorter/longer or smaller/bigger than something else)

You can support your child's math skills when you:

Encourage your child's understanding of numbers and their use:

Point out numbers everywhere: on billboards, license plates, street signs, boxes, cans, bottles, clocks, calendars, newspapers.

Count things around you: trees in the yard, steps to the laundry room, swings at the park, letters that come in the mail, toys, books, chairs, shoes, money, plates for the dinner table.

Keep a set of magnetic numbers on your refrigerator to help your child become familiar with the numerals.

Give your child opportunities for sorting, organizing, and recognizing patterns:

Ask your child for help sorting the laundry: shirts in one pile, socks in another, pants in another. Let him help match socks when the laundry comes out of the dryer.

Collect groups of objects such as buttons, stones, or bottle caps and sort them by size, color, or other characteristics.

Help your child arrange her books on a shelf by category: animal books, counting books, books about families, books about feelings, and so on.

Point out patterns: in a garden, on a cereal box, around the edge of a rug.

Create a pattern with blocks, pegs, or beads and ask your child to copy or continue the pattern. Then let your child create patterns that you try to duplicate.

Give your child experiences with measurement concepts:

Cook or bake together. Let your child use measuring spoons and cups to measure ingredients into a bowl while you read the directions.

Mark your child's height and weight on a growth chart, and talk about the changes as you observe them together.

Create a family calendar and mark off days before a special event, such as a birthday, family vacation, or a grandparent's visit.

Help your child compare items: a big pile of leaves, a small pile of leaves; more, less, or the same amount of milk; long, longer, and the longest piece of string.

Give your child a tape measure and let him measure different things around the house.

Help your child understand shapes and spatial relationships:

Go on a shape search around your house and around town. Look for circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles.

Together cut a variety of shapes from construction paper or old magazines and sort them by shape.

Use positional words to ask your child to find something or put something away: "Look in the *bottom* of the drawer." "Find it *under* the box." "Put it *beside* your bed."

Encourage your child to play with puzzles.