Getting School Ready In Minnesota

"I want to be ready for kindergarten."



"How can kindergarten be ready for me?"

A guide for parents, family members, caregivers, and teachers of children who will be attending kindergarten in Minnesota.

Acknowledgements

In 2003, the Northland Foundation and the five other Minnesota Initiative Foundations launched the Minnesota Early Childhood

Initiative. Together, they are developing grassroots coalitions, made up of diverse community sectors, to strengthen local resources for young children and their families across the state.



The **Getting School Ready in Minnesota Guide** is part of a broader school readiness project developed by the Northland Foundation and the Northeastern Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative Regional Alliance. This Alliance is comprised of Aitkin County, Carlton County, Fond du Lac Reservation, Hermantown/Proctor, Itasca Area, Koochiching County, and Mesabi East School District Coalitions. Special thanks to the Alliance members who developed this guide. They include early care and education professionals from Early Childhood Family Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Family Services Collaboratives, Head Start, School Readiness, Child Care, and Ready 4 K.

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Minnesota Initiative Foundations

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Ready 4 K - www.ready4K.org

Credits

The **Getting School Ready In Minnesota Guide** is based on a publication developed by the Getting School Ready Project (Seattle/King County, Washington).

If children could tell us, here's what they might say:



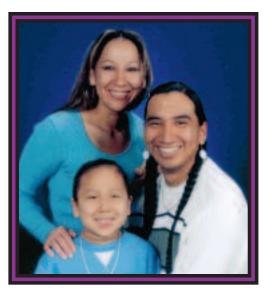
"I need adults to work together to help me get school ready."

How are you already helping? Read on to see.

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Getting School Ready In Minnesota

- What do children need to be ready for kindergarten?
- What can families and caregivers do to prepare their children for kindergarten, while the school is getting ready for them?



Children learn through a variety of activities and experiences. While there is no perfect formula to know when a child is ready for kindergarten, this guide can be used by parents, caregivers, and teachers to make good decisions in preparing a young child for kindergarten. Checklists and helpful hints are provided in this guide to help you

prepare a child to be a confident and successful learner.

Children benefit when their families participate and are involved in their learning and development. And yet, ALL – parents, caregivers, schools, and communities – contribute to the well being of children.

Social and Emotional Skills

Checklist of general expectations for children

Children entering kindergarten should be able to take care of themselves and their personal things and work independently.

	Hang coat on a hook Put on and take off shoes Handle toileting needs Pick up toys and put them in appropriate places Follow a daily routine Separate from caregiver and adjust to new settings Choose activities independently		
to:	nildren entering kindergarten should learn make friends, solve problems with others, ow empathy, and negotiate.		
	Join one or more children in play Interact easily with familiar adults Begin to recognize and respond to others' emotions Use words and phrases, such as "Can I play with you?" or "Please stop. I don't like that."		
Children entering kindergarten should have a growing sense of self to take risks as a learner			

Show increasing self direction and independence

Begin to have a sense of family and tradition

Social and Emotional Skill-Builders

Helpful hints for parents, caregivers, and teachers



"I need to feel excited and comfortable about starting kindergarten."

Things **you can** do:

- Let me know you're excited about me starting kindergarten.
- Give me a chance to visit my school before I start.
- Listen to my thoughts and ideas about school.
- Help me pretend I'm in school.

"I need to know what kindergarten will be like."

Things you can do:

- Teach me to follow directions by giving me simple steps.
- Help me to learn how to share with other children, stand in line, wait my turn, and sit in a group.

"I need to feel good about myself."

- Pay attention to me and listen to my ideas.
- Help me feel good about things I can do.
- Praise me for my strengths.
- Be patient and let me develop at my own pace.
- Teach me that all my feelings are okay, but not all my actions are okay.
- Teach me ways to calm myself when I get frustrated.

"I need to get along with others."

Things you can do:

- · Show me ways to make new friends.
- Help me understand how I can be friends with children who are different than me.
- Teach me to use words when someone hurts my feelings, such as "Please stop. That hurts my feelings."

"I need to know how to talk and listen to others."

Things **you can** do:

- Talk with me about things I find interesting.
- Teach me how to know when it's my turn to speak and when I need to listen.
- Teach me to use words to describe my feelings and needs, and when to use them.



Word Skills

Checklist of general expectations for children

Children entering kindergarten should be able to listen to stories and have conversations.

Listen and understand stories, conversations, and directions
Start conversations
Ask and respond to questions
Recognize rhyming words
Use a growing vocabulary

Children entering kindergarten should be able to recognize their names, interact with stories, re-tell stories, and make guesses using pictures.

- ☐ Recognize and name some letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name
- Guess what will happen next in a story using pictures as a quide
- ☐ Begin to show an interest and understanding in written language by asking "What does that say?"



Children entering kindergarten should be able to hold a pencil, write their names, and express themselves using pictures.

- ☐ Use scribbles, shapes, and pictures to represent thoughts or ideas
- ☐ Begin to copy or write their own name

Word Skill-Builders

Helpful hints for parents, caregivers, and teachers

"I need to be familiar with words and books."

- Teach me new words.
- Show me words and symbols in my language and the sounds they make.
- Read to me, take me to the library, and bring me books and magazines.
- Ask me questions about stories to help me understand their meaning.
- · Sing songs and teach me rhymes.
- · Write down my words or stories as I tell you.

Number Skills

Checklist of general expectations for children

Children	entering	kinderga	arten sh	ould be	able
to count,	sort, clas	sify, and	create j	patterns	

□ Count objects, such as cups, when setting the table□ Sort objects by color, size, or shape

Children entering kindergarten should be able to identify colors and shapes around them.

- ☐ Describe simple shapes
- ☐ Identify colors
- □ Play matching games

Children entering kindergarten should use language to describe math concepts.

- ☐ Use language to describe time, such as "today or tomorrow"
- □ Describe people or objects using "big, little, short, tall, long," etc.



Number Skill-Builders

Helpful hints for parents, caregivers, and teachers

"I need to know shapes, sizes, and colors."

Things you can do:

- · Give me things to sort by shape, size, or color.
- · Help me find and name shapes and colors all around me.

"I need to learn to count and understand that numbers have meaning."

- · Help me play counting games.
- · Let me count things at home.
- · Show me how numbers are used around me.



Learning Skills

Checklist of general expectations for children

Children entering kindergarten should have experiences through play to become confident learners.

ш	Be ilexible and imaginative in play
	Play for a period of time
	Stay with a task when faced with a challenge
	Use new ideas in solving problems or exploring objects
	Try to figure things out
	Seek and/or accept help when needed
	Apply knowledge and experiences to new situations

Learning Skill-Builders

Helpful hints for parents, caregivers, and teachers

"I need to be excited about learning."

Things you can do:

- Encourage me to explore with my senses to see, touch, hear, smell, and taste.
- Give me fun, exciting choices.
- · Give me lots of time to figure things out.

"I need to learn to try things and keep trying even when it seems hard."

- Give me activities that hold my interest.
- Help me explore and try new activities.
- Help me learn step by step.
- Teach me that making mistakes is part of learning.
- Show me different ways to understand my world.

Safety and Health Skill-Builders

Helpful hints for parents, caregivers, and teachers

"I need to be safe and feel safe."

Things you can do:

- Help me practice saying my name, address, and phone number.
- Teach me about crossing the street and watching for cars.
- Teach me about not talking to strangers and who is a safe person to ask for help.



"I need to have bathroom and self-help skills."

Things you can do:

- Teach me the words to tell other grown-ups when I need to go to the bathroom, or when I am feeling sick or hurt.
- Help me learn to go to the bathroom and wash my hands by myself.
- · Teach me to dress and tie my shoes.
- Encourage me to try things before I ask my teacher for help.

"I need to have my basic needs met before I come to school each day."

- Make sure I eat healthy food, get plenty of rest, and dress for the weather.
- Take me to all my medical check-ups and make sure I see the doctor and the dentist before I start school.
- Teach me how to brush my teeth.

"I need to be able to use my hands and fingers to do small tasks."

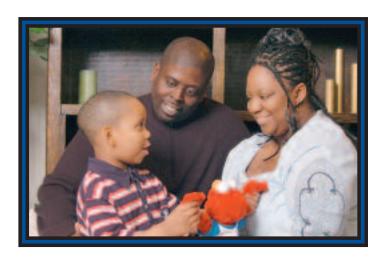
Things **you can** do:

- Help me to pick up, hold and use pencils, crayons, markers, paintbrushes, and scissors.
- Help me make things with blocks, paper, cardboard, and tape.



"I need to be able to use my arms, legs, and body to make big movements."

- Encourage me to run, jump, climb, dance, and move to music as I am able.
- Give me time each day to play outdoors.
- Encourage me to play and <u>limit my TV and computer</u> <u>time</u>.



Support For My Family, Culture, and Language

Helpful hints for parents, caregivers, and teachers

"I need to feel good about my family and culture, and to learn about other cultures."

Things you and my school can do:

- Show me books, tell me stories, and sing me songs about my culture and other cultures.
- Take me to places that teach me about my culture and other cultures.
- Use the language(s) I know to help me understand and learn.

"I need my school to welcome my family."

Things my school can do:

- Put up welcoming signs in the language I speak at home.
- · Learn about my community and culture before I arrive.
- · Let my family know who to go to with ideas or questions.
- Invite us to participate in the school, classroom, and PTA.

"My family and I want all the grown-ups at my school to know and respect my culture, my learning style, and my family."

Things **my school can** do:

- Understand that school may be my first introduction to cultures and languages other than my own.
- Let me know if my classroom teacher and others at school can speak my home language.
- Invite my family and me to share information with my teacher and classmates about my family or culture.
- Support my family culture by putting me in a class with other children who share my home language and culture.
- Let me know that speaking my language strengthens all my language skills.

Communication Among the Grown-ups in My Life

Helpful hints for parents, caregivers, and teachers

"My school experience will be best if my early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers, school staff, parents, and family members work together to help me learn."

Things you and my school can do:

- Share with each other.
- Share things happening in my life that might affect how I feel and act.
- · Participate in Early Childhood Screening.
- Find out about any special abilities and needs I have.
- · Learn about school and community services.
- Volunteer at school.



"I need my family to know what is happening at my school, what I am learning, and what I am expected to know."



Ensuring that all young children thrive and have a healthy life of learning, achieving, and succeeding.

Produced by:



Thank you



for your generous support.