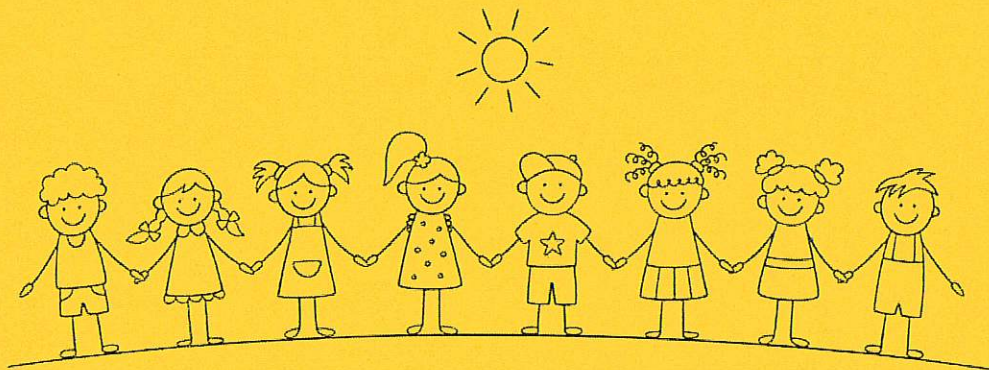


South Buffalo Elementary Kindergarten Readiness 2024



What is Kindergarten Readiness?

Kindergarten Readiness refers to a set of knowledge and host of skills that are important for children to develop prior to Kindergarten entry. While Kindergarten Readiness is not a one size fits all term, there are several generally agreed upon areas of child development that are important for children to make strides in before Kindergarten entry. Acquiring knowledge and skills in these areas is highly predictive of academic success in Kindergarten and beyond.

The main areas of Kindergarten Readiness Skills are:

- Gross and Fine Motor Skills
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Language and Communication
- Pre-Literacy
- Numeracy
- Executive Functioning/Cognitive Skills
- Independence and Self-Care
- Approaches to Learning

The following pages will review what these skill areas entail, why they are important, and how you can encourage development of these skills in your child prior to Kindergarten.



Gross & Fine Motor Skills

Gross motor skills refer to abilities that use large muscle groups in the arms, legs, and torso. Fine motor skills are the abilities that rely on small muscle groups in the hands and wrists.

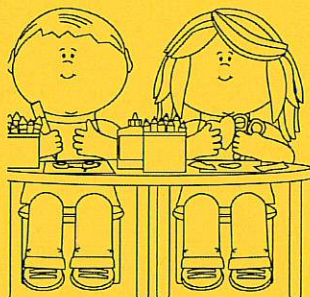
Gross motor skills are important in the development of core strength and stability and are used often in play and sports as well as various ways of sitting and moving in the classroom. They allow for greater exploration of the environment and surroundings, thus allowing for more experiences and learning. Fine motor skills are important in many aspects of the kindergarten day, including writing, drawing, coloring, grasping, cutting, eating, opening, and object manipulation.

Important Skills

- Balancing
- Walking on tiptoes
- Skipping
- Ability to sit crisscross applesauce on the floor and get up
- Holding a pencil
- Correctly holding and using scissors
- Opening lunch containers
- Zipping/buttoning clothes

Developing these Skills at Home

- Play with other children at a playground
- Develop age-appropriate obstacle courses
- Throw and catch a playground ball or beach ball
- Practice holding a pencil and drawing lines, shapes, and letters
- Color together as a family
- Use Play-Doh to create letters of the alphabet
- Practice using scissors by cutting Play-Doh
- String beads



Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and emotional learning refers to the process of helping children understand and manage their emotions, build positive relationships, and develop essential social skills that contribute to their overall well-being. In simpler terms, SEL for kindergarten students involves teaching them how to recognize and express their feelings, interact with others respectfully, and make good choices for success in school and everyday life.

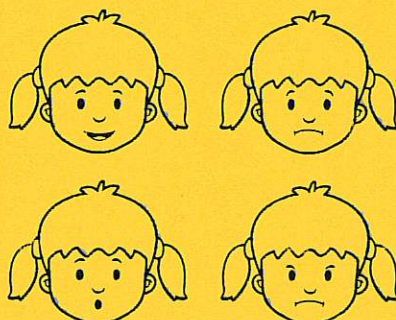
In the kindergarten classroom, SEL is often integrated into daily routines and activities such as circle time, storytime, and free play. Modeling positive behaviors and providing consistent guidance and encouragement at home is essential for young children to navigate kindergarten obstacles with confidence. Overall, SEL for kindergarten students lays the foundation for their social, emotional, and academic growth, setting them on a path toward success in school and life.

Important Skills

- Ability to identify different emotions
- Management/regulation of emotions
- Problem solving and communication with peers and adults
- Building relationships and empathy
- Self-confidence

Developing these Skills at Home

- Play emotion charades and guess each other's feelings through facial expressions
- Practice deep slow breathing, communicating, and counting when your child is having difficult emotions like anger or sadness
- Role play scenarios of taking turns, sharing, and asking for help - Board and card games are a great tool for role play
- Have play dates and encourage working together and kind words and actions (ex: thank you notes, helping with clean up, collaborative chores)
- Hold regular family meetings and meals where everyone gets a chance to say something that made them proud that day and something they are working on getting improving



Language & Communication Skills

Language and communication skills refer to the verbal abilities needed for classroom communication and expression. These skills include receptive language, or being able to understand what others are saying, and expressive language, or being able to articulate one's own thoughts, ideas, answers, needs, etc. These skills also include taking turns and listening to others.

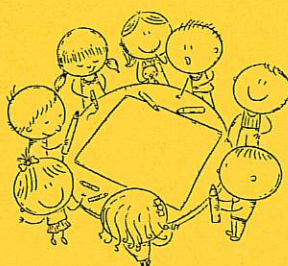
These skills are important for basic communication between the child, their teacher, and their peers. They are important for children's comprehension and learning as well as their ability to express this learning, ask questions, communicate needs and understanding. Language skills are also important foundational skills for learning how to read.

Important Skills

- Learning and using new words
- Listening, responding, taking turns, communicating, and having a conversation with others
- Asking for help and being able to communicate needs
- Ability to understand and follow classroom rules
- Understanding and acquiring new concepts and material
- Ability to describe items in detail
- Ability to talk about the events of one's day

Developing these Skills at Home

- Talk with your child whenever possible - about anything and everything!
- Have family conversations at mealtimes - practice taking turns talking and listening
- Talk about the events of each family member's day
- Model asking for help by asking your child for help with tasks
- Introduce new words by using them in your own vocabulary and explaining to your child what the words mean
- Play describing games where your child describes an item and you try to guess what it is, and vice-versa



Pre-Literacy Skills

Pre-literacy skills refer to the foundational abilities necessary to have in order to learn how to read. These skills include letter knowledge, phonological/phonemic awareness, concepts of print, vocabulary acquisition, and print/reading motivation. Letter knowledge refers to recognition of and ability to name the letters of the alphabet, as well as the knowledge that each letter has its own sound(s). Phonological & phonemic awareness pertain to the ability to recognize and manipulate language sounds. Concepts of print is the knowledge that print contains meaning, it is representative of things in our world, and it is organized in a certain way. Parts of a book and how we read print are also parts of print awareness. Vocabulary knowledge refers to the words we know and use in communication and reading. Print and reading motivation is the excitement toward, interest in, and enjoyment of reading and books.

These skills are important because they are precursors to reading and build a strong foundation for developing the ability to read print. Additionally, performance in these areas is highly predictive of later reading abilities as well as success in school.

Important Skills

- Being able to recognize and label each letter of the alphabet
- Ability to recognize and produce letter sounds
- Recognizing and producing rhyming words
- Knowledge of different parts of a book, how to hold a book, how to turn pages
- Being able to sit with an adult and enjoy listening to a read aloud of a book

Developing these Skills at Home

- Read aloud to your child every day
- Talk with your child about books while reading - how to hold them, turn the pages, etc.
- Have a variety of books available and accessible in your home
- Model enjoyment of reading by letting your child see you read for pleasure
- Play rhyming games with words or making up rhyming songs together
- Point out and read signs while driving/walking - focus not only on the words but also on beginning sounds of letters/words
- When encountering a new word in print or conversation, explain the meaning and talk about the word with your child



Numeracy Skills

Numeracy skills refer to basic math skills, the understanding of numbers, and the knowledge of how they represent the world. These skills are the foundations of later mathematical reasoning and ability. Early math readiness skills include understanding of quantity, counting, shapes, sizes, and comparison. They also include concepts of identifying patterns, matching and sorting, and recognizing the use of numbers in everyday life.

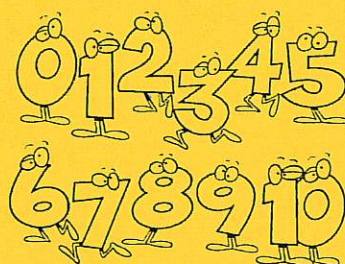
These skills are important because they allow for greater ability to interact with the environment and the understanding of world through number, patterns, and comparison. They also enhance children's mental capacity to understand later more complex mathematical thinking and concepts. They help promote creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Important Skills

- Ability to label and recognize numbers
- Being able to count aloud
- Understanding that an object represents one, and each object in a set can be counted once and only once
- Ability to understand the concepts of size and comparison - bigger, smaller, taller, shorter, greater than, less than, etc.
- Recognizing basic shapes
- Being able to match and sort objects by different attributes - size, color, etc.

Developing these Skills at Home

- Count everyday items together when the opportunity is presented - food items when putting them away, toys, books, crayons, items on a shelf, etc.
- Play matching and sorting games - ask your child to sort things based on color, size, type, etc.
- Point out shapes of objects encountered in the home
- Point out numbers in the environment when encountered - on signs, in books, etc.
- Have your child help measure while cooking - talk about greater than, less than, etc.
- Use comparison and number vocabulary while driving/on a walk - what is bigger, smaller, how many, etc.



Executive Functioning/Cognitive Skills

Executive Functioning refers to a host of skills that are involved with cognitive control, problem solving, and behavioral control. They include the ability to attend and focus, self-regulate behaviors and emotions, plan and work toward goals, adapt to new situations, and problem solve.

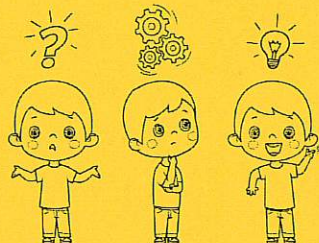
These skills are essential for optimal performance in school and have been shown to predict both reading and math skills throughout the school years. In kindergarten, these skills help children navigate the classroom environment and their school day. They are important not only for learning and understanding, but also being able to interact effectively with peers, teachers, and their surroundings.

Important Skills

- Ability to listen to directions, remember the directions, and complete the task
- Being able to sit quietly and pay attention during a read aloud
- Ability to adapt when plans or routines are changed
- Ability to control one's behaviors and emotions appropriately for a classroom setting
- Remembering and following daily routines
- Ability to follow rules
- Taking turns and working with peers

Developing these Skills at Home

- Play card and board games that require taking turns
- Talk about feelings/emotions and how to appropriately react to another person's emotions
- Establish simple morning and night routines that your child can independently manage and follow
- Storytelling - encourage your child to tell you a story or play a storytelling game where you make up a story together and take turns adding to it/telling different parts
- Cook together - follow a recipe and emphasize the importance of measuring, following rules, etc.
- Play movement games that require different responses, such as Simon Says, Freeze Dance, etc.



Independence & Self-Care Skills

Independence and self-care refer to the skills that are important for a child to develop in order to take care of oneself independently from an adult caregiver. These skills help children be able to manage themselves throughout the day in a classroom where the teacher's attention is divided among many children. They include simple personal hygiene skills, the ability to feed oneself, as well as the ability to work on and complete tasks independently.

These skills are important because they are basic to one's self-care and thus will be built upon throughout their school years. When transitioning into the school environment, it is important to be able to manage oneself and do things independently without constant adult attention and direction. It is also important to establish this independence because it builds self-confidence, self-esteem, and pride.

Important Skills

- Ability to use the restroom and wash hands independently
- Ability to cover one's nose/mouth when sneezing/coughing and ability to blow nose
- Getting dressed independently
- Being able to manage mealtime - feeding one's self, opening containers/bags, etc.
- Playing independently without adult direction
- Completing tasks without reminder to do so or reminder of directions

Developing these Skills at Home

- Encourage independence in your child during play, routines, etc. - Let them try to do things on their own and be generous with praise at each step
- Practice self-care and hygiene routines
- Have your child use utensils, open containers, and open bags at mealtimes
- Let your child dress themselves from start to finish - from choosing clothes to putting them on, fastening, etc.
- Have your child make self-care plans when going on outings - (ex: "We are going to the playground this afternoon, what all do we need to take with us?")
- Sing handwashing songs to practice this skill
- Play pretend - have your child pretend to be sick and show you how to blow their nose, cover their cough, etc.



Approaches to Learning

Approaches to learning involve creativity, curiosity, engagement and an enthusiasm for learning. These skills include being curious about the surrounding world and asking questions to learn more, enjoying the process of creating and coming up with new ideas, and actively participating when learning new material or skills. It also includes a positive attitude toward school and learning new things, as well as persistence, or willingness to keep trying even when tasks are difficult.

These skills are vital in order for children to become effective learners and active participants in the classroom setting. In order to learn optimally, children must want to learn and be engaged in the skills or content in which they are developing. When a child has a positive approach to learning, he/she is more likely to not only have better academic outcomes, but also enjoy school and the learning process more.

Important Skills

- Expressing interest in new things/topics/ideas and asking appropriate questions to gain more knowledge about these
- Engaging in imaginative play
- Interest in creating new things
- Ability to persevere when things are challenging
- Interest in school

Developing these Skills at Home

- Have positive conversations about school and ensure that your child understands what the school day will look like
- Visit the library and encourage your child to borrow some non-fiction books to learn about something in which they are interested
- Make time for arts and crafts - encourage independent creation by laying out materials and having your child make whatever comes to mind
- Encourage persistence when a task is difficult at home - don't immediately step in - encourage trying, different approaches to completion, and use praise when steps are accomplished
- Visit museums, parks, libraries, and other public areas of learning
- Take walks and ask questions together about the surrounding environment - research unknown things learn together

