

School Readiness

KEY QUESTIONS ASKED:

- How do I know if my child is ready for school?
- What developmental areas are important for school?
- How can I encourage and prepare my child for school?

Differences between child care and school

- Size and layout of the classroom
- Fewer teachers to rely on
- The need to sit at a desk for longer periods
- Bigger playground and diverse ages of children
- New rules, routines and procedures
- Layout of the school i.e. the bathrooms
- New peer groups
- Wearing a school uniform

Essential skills necessary for entering school

- Play cooperatively with peers
- Follow a 2-3 step direction
- Work independently
- Share and take turns
- Initiate and maintain conversations
- Listen and concentrate
- Take care of own belongings
- Show empathy
- Be a functional member of a small group
- Follow rules

Factors determining school readiness

Physical factors;

Is your child tall or look older than others of the same age

Independence;

Your child's ability to perform self-help skills unaided

Social Maturity;

The way your child interacts with peers and other children

Development;

How proficient your child is in a number of developmental areas.

Indicators your child may not be ready for school

- Social and emotional insecurity or immaturity
- Speech or language problems
- Difficulty in one or more areas of development
- Problems with attending/concentrating skills or behaviour
- Unable to manage social situations involving problem solving
- Being significantly younger than most other children in the class



Seven Developmental areas important for starting school

1. Social: Turn taking, sharing, following rules, listening to group times

2. Emotional: Self confident, shows empathy, separates easily

3. Physical: Run, climb, balance, well coordinated, throw and catch a ball

4. Fine Motor: Draws, uses scissors, uses pincer grip, shows handedness

5. Language: Answer questions, maintains conversation, follow directions

6. Cognitive: Sorts, knows shapes, colours, can count, write own name

7. Self help: Toileting independently, looks after belongings, tidies up

How can you prepare your child for school

- Talking with your child about school and what it will be like
- Visiting the school and reflecting on what it was like
- Reading books about starting school

- Listening to children's expectations about school
- Encouraging your child's natural curiosity
- Making everyday things an exploration of language

Summary

- Children respond and react differently to starting school
- They may be ready but it will take time to adjust to the changes
- It is hard to predict how they will react and cope initially
- Decisions to hold a child back should not be taken lightly and all areas of development should be considered
- Support and reassure your child that it will be a happy and positive experience

This LDC Fact Sheet was compiled by Andrew Greenfield, Child and Educational Psychologist & Member of the LDC Management Committee, 2010, updated 2021.

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