

Working Together for Kindergarten Success



Making the Transition from Child Care to Kindergarten



America's most trusted child care resource.

1-800-424-2246

ChildCareAware.org



A Little Preparation Goes a Long Way

As a parent, you play a powerful role in your child's development. The early learning experiences you provide for your child can build a strong foundation and a zest for learning that will last a lifetime.

Your child care provider also plays an important role in your child's early learning. By partnering together and starting early, you and your child care provider can prepare your child for the next big step—kindergarten!

Learn more about how to help your child along the road to school success . . .

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Right from the Start

Your child begins to develop the skills needed for school right from birth!

Learning is a process that builds and grows over time. Parents and child care providers play an important role in helping children learn.

What your child learns at home and in child care makes a big difference in your child's school success.

A strong connection between what your child learns in child care and at home helps strengthen learning.

What You Need to Know About Kindergarten Readiness

Getting ready is a team effort.

Kindergarten readiness means more than making sure your child has the skills needed to be successful in school. It also means that you, your child's child care provider and a new school are working together to meet your child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs.

Every child learns at a different pace.

Children grow and develop at different rates. Some children walk, talk or read earlier than others. What is important is that children have many opportunities to experience learning activities with caring adults.

Playing with adults and other children, looking at books, drawing, writing and talking are all important ways that children learn and become ready for school.

If you notice your child is having a hard time with a particular skill, have it checked out. Discuss it with your pediatrician and call your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) to help you find the right resource. You want to give your child any needed help as soon as you can.

You also want to check with the school about the skills they expect your child to have at the start of kindergarten.

The Basics That Your Child Should Know

Most children that are successful in kindergarten can:

- » **Take care of personal needs, like going to the bathroom, washing hands or tying their shoes**
- » **Name many common objects in their environment, including their own name and the names of family members**
- » **Listen to an adult and follow directions**
- » **Cooperate and play with other children, especially in small groups**
- » **Show an interest in books and reading, often holding books and turning pages on their own**
- » **Sing songs and remember common rhymes**
- » **Recognize labels and signs**
- » **Pretend to read and write**

Helping Your Child Make a Good Transition

Begin to think about your child's transition plan several months before the start of school. Talk to your provider and the school your child will attend about how they help children transition to kindergarten.

Every child is different, and you know your child best.

Children who are shy may approach kindergarten differently than children who are outgoing. Talk to your child care provider and future kindergarten teacher about your child's personality. Discuss how your child's unique characteristics will be supported.



What You Can Do

- ❑ **Be positive.** The best thing you can do is help your child develop a love for learning and an eagerness to try new things! Your child is guided by things you say and do and by the feelings you show. If your child can tell that you are happy and excited about kindergarten as a new adventure, he or she will follow your lead.
- ❑ **Talk about it.** Talk with your child about the new places, people and things that happen in kindergarten. Your child may feel anxious and show it by asking lots of questions. Take this opportunity to comfort your child by answering questions and talking about the new change as often as possible.
- ❑ **Read books about starting a new school.** Encourage your child to express feelings about starting a new school by telling stories, drawing pictures or by asking questions.
- ❑ **Start a routine.** Kindergarten programs can be more structured than many child care programs. Set up a daily schedule to help your child get into the habit of doing things at the same time every day.
- ❑ **You may need to adjust bed time to make sure your child gets enough sleep.** Naptime or rest time may not be a part of your child's kindergarten schedule.
- ❑ **Make play dates with children who will be in your child's class.** It will help your child to already have some friends when kindergarten starts.

Working With Your Child Care Provider

Set up a meeting with your child care provider. Discuss how you can work together to help your child make a good transition. Talk about what you are doing at home, your child's progress in child care, and the steps you both can take to ease the transition into kindergarten.

There are things your child care provider can do to help your child.

- ❑ Talk to your child about the upcoming change and the new things there will be to do in kindergarten
- ❑ Have a photo album of the new school for your child that includes pictures of the school (inside and outside), school bus and teachers
- ❑ Read books about going to kindergarten
- ❑ Set up play areas with "school" props
- ❑ Allow children to tell stories about school
- ❑ Take field trips to kindergarten classes in your community
- ❑ Make a book or folder with your child's "work" (drawings, pictures, pretend writing, etc.) for your child's kindergarten teacher

Working With Your Child's New School

Arrange a meeting with your child's new teacher and future school. It's best if you can meet with your child's new teacher, but you may not know who that is until nearly the first day of school. If you cannot meet with the teacher, meet with the school principal.

In your meeting, have an open discussion about your child's strengths, challenges, personality, likes and dislikes. Share the steps you and your child care provider have taken to prepare your child for kindergarten. Ask for additional suggestions and input.

Make a visit to the school with your child. During the visit, show your child where kindergarteners play, eat lunch and are picked up after school. If possible, introduce your child to the kindergarten teacher.

Saying Goodbye

One of the hardest things your child will have to do is say goodbye to the friends and caregivers your child has grown to love. Let your child know that it is all right to be sad and to miss friends. Arrange times for your child to get together with old friends.

Staying Involved

It's a fact. Children whose parents are involved in their education do better in school. Communicate often with your child's teacher about how your child is doing. Find out how you can support what your child is learning in school at home. Whenever you can, participate in school activities like PTA, bake sales and other school projects.

By investing your time in your child's education, you contribute to their success later in life—a gift that will last a lifetime.

Find Help in Your Community

This brochure will help get you started, but a call to your local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agency can provide you with additional information and resources on how to help your child make a successful transition.

Call 1-800-424-2246 to find the CCR&R in your area.

Child Care Aware® is committed to helping parents find the best information on locating quality child care and child care resources in their community. In partnership with Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&R), Child Care Aware® builds consumer awareness and supports families in making choices for the care and education of their children.



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For additional resources or help finding your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R), call:

1-800-424-2246

TTY Line: 1-866-278-9428

ChildCareAware.org

For local information contact:



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