

FAMILY FOCUS

School Readiness

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Search “school readiness” on the internet and you get a wide variety of suggestions; from just letting children play, to a detailed checklist of what each child should be doing before he/she is deemed ready for this big change. Experts agree, if a child is unable to handle situations and navigate the classroom socially and emotionally, school experiences tend to be less successful. The good news is that activities to ensure that a child is ready for school can start as early as in the womb and it’s never too late to start!

Here are some tips to help your child get ready for school:

- Make sure your child’s basic needs are met - along with getting enough sleep and healthy nutrition, provide dependable routines/schedules, such as the same bedtime every night.
- Encourage social and emotional development - provide clear expectations, follow your child’s leads during play and communication, provide words for feelings and emotions, and teach positive behaviors to use in place of aggression.
- Focus on communication and listening skills - have back and forth conversations with your child.
- Promote different skills types - provide activities to draw out his/her self-expression and creativity.
- Sharpen cognitive skills - ask your child questions to get him/her thinking, sharing his/her opinions and talking while playing.
- Practice rules at home - even if it’s just a few to get him/her started. Consistently talk about the rules and explain the reasons behind them.
- Get “in tune” with your child - find out what your child’s strengths are and help expand them into other areas. Share his/her interests and what he/she likes to do. Learn about your child’s temperament and access resources to help you provide helpful interactions. Check out the Zero to Three website at www.zerotothree.org/child-development/temperament-behavior/tips-temperament.html.
- Talk with your child about what to expect when preparing for the home to school transition - match his/her emotion during these discussions, such as using enthusiasm when he/she is excited.
- Connect with the school - check with the school or teachers to find out what their expectations are for your child.
- Use the Kansas Early Learning Standards to help you prepare your child for school. Visit www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Early%20Childhood/Early%20Learning%20Standards/KsEarlyLearningStandards.pdf

Be patient with your child as his/her emotions about going to school may change daily. Start your focus on the emotional preparation - the letters, numbers and word recognition will follow.



**Do you know somebody interested in becoming a child care provider?
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