



## What children need to know to start school

### Social & Emotional School Readiness

Social and emotional skills are often cited as the most critical factor in school readiness. Research has proven a link between children's social skills and their long-term academic success. Simply put, learning is a social process. Young children struggle to learn when they have difficulty following directions, problems getting along with others and controlling their negative emotions.

The following have been identified as the key social and emotional skills for school success

- Get along with others (parents, teachers and peers),
- Follow directions,
- Identify and regulate their emotions and behaviors,
- Persist in a task,
- Engage in social conversation and cooperative play,
- Correctly interpret other's behaviors and emotions,
- Feel good about themselves and others.

### Is my child ready for Kindergarten?

It can be a very tough decision for parents to decide if their child has the skills needed to go to Kindergarten.

There are five essential areas of school readiness:

- Social & Emotional Development,
- Approaches to Learning,
- Language & Literacy,
- Cognition & General Knowledge and
- Physical Development & Health.

Children develop across all of these essential areas as they learn and grow.

### What can I do to help my child be ready?

Kindergarten teachers are less worried about children's knowledge of the ABC's and 123's than you might think!

What Kindergarten teachers site as being most helpful are self-help and social and emotional skills and approaches to learning.

- Take time to teach your child how to independently dress and undress, including shoes and coats.
- Work on problem-solving and direction following skills.
- Encourage your children's natural curiosity and love of learning, so that school and learning is fun and exciting!
- And of course, read to your children! MSUE recommends that parents engage children in 30 minutes a day of literacy activities to be prepared for Kindergarten!



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### What does Michigan require to enroll in Kindergarten?

The state of Michigan only has one requirement to enroll in Kindergarten, age eligibility.

- Children must be 5 on or before October 1, 2014 to attend Kindergarten in the school year 2014-2015.
- Parents of children with birthdays between October 1 and December 1 may get a waiver from their district to enroll their child, if they would like to do so.

### Prepare your child for the Kindergarten experience!

Starting Kindergarten is a fun, new and exciting experience! With a little encouragement and advance preparation, you can make your child's first day of school be a fun day to remember!

- Take time to read books with your children about what happens in the Kindergarten classroom before you go to school the first day!
  - The Night Before Kindergarten** by Natasha Wing
  - The Bernstein Bears Go to School** by Stan Bernstein
  - Little Critter: First Day of School** by Mercer Mayer
  - Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten** by Joseph Slate
  - Welcome to Kindergarten** by Anne Rockwell
  - Kindergarten Rocks!** by Katie Davis
  - The Twelve Days of Kindergarten: A Counting Book** by Deborah Lee Rose
- Attend your child's Kindergarten Open House or Meet the Teacher night if there is one offered.
- Help your child find their cubby, mailbox, desk, coat hook or locker.

Find more information about what children need to know to start Kindergarten, early childhood development and academic success at [www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu).