



School Readiness

In general, when assessing a child's readiness for school, it is just as important to consider their social and emotional development as their cognitive and physical abilities. How children cope is just as important as what they know. So consider:

- 1 Are they emotional and physically independent?
- 2 Do they trust adults outside the family sufficiently to be able to transfer their necessary dependence to a teacher?
- 3 Can they accept a teacher's authority, and share his/her attention with others?
- 4 Are they self-confident?
- 5 Are they secure in their love?
- 6 Are they able to get along with their peers?
- 7 Are they able to get along with older children?
- 8 Are they able to get along with adults?
- 9 Are they able to share?
- 10 Are they able to take turns?
- 11 Are they able to co-operative?
- 12 Are they curious about what is happening around them?
- 13 Are they interested in learning new things?
- 14 Are they willing to participate in-group experiences?
- 15 Are they able to communicate verbally with others?
- 16 Do they enjoy stories?
- 17 Do they enjoy music?
- 18 Do they enjoy imaginative play?
- 19 Can they concentrate on something that interests them for 20 minutes or more?
- 20 Do they finish tasks?
- 21 Do they tidy up after themselves?
- 22 Do they accept the responsibility of using/caring for equipment properly?

If your child can do most of these things most of the time, then they are probably ready for school, if then cannot, then just wait and see what happens over the next few months. Major changes can occur readily as a child matures.

Research indicates that the child who is likely to be successful is:

- 1 Independent
- 2 Self-confident
- 3 Has a positive self-image
- 4 Feels accepted by others
- 5 Feels respected by others
- 6 Is motivated by interest in learning
- 7 Has an ability to concentrate
- 8 Have parents who show a real interest in their learning.

The best advice for parents to prepare your child for school is:

- 1 Encourage independence
- 2 Build self-confidence
- 3 Show a true and loving interest in all that your child does.
- 4 Provide appropriate learning experiences when an interest is shown
- 5 Talk with your child as much as possible
- 6 Read with your child as much as possible
- 7 Join with them in activities (music, dancing, listening, puzzles, park, etc)
- 8 Accept them for what they are
- 9 Lend support whenever it is needed.

When deciding on school for next year:

- 1 Ask for current literature on school readiness
- 2 Visit all of your local schools and ask questions.
- 3 Make sure that all of your decisions are based on what is best for your child, not what you would like them to do or be (this is particularly important in choosing the school that best caters for your child's personality and interest).

The skill set children need to have prior to commencing school is:

Fine Motor Skills - development of the body - fingers, wrists, toes, being able to dress myself, hold pencils and brushes, thread items, fold paper and manipulate dough and clay.

Eye-Hand Co-ordination - the ability to co-ordinate what your eyes see and what you wish your hands to do - treading, cutting with scissors, or sewing.

Gross Motor Skills - large muscles developed through active play - climbing, throwing and catching balls or beanbags, jumping, balancing and running.

Social skills - being able to be a part of a large group, able to cope with emotions, has the ability to take turns and share.