

# What to Expect in Kindergarten

Here are the skills your child should have at the beginning — and by the end — of the school year.

Kindergarten is an exciting time of exploration for your child. As their motor coordination increases, so too will their sense of independence, self-reliance, and self-confidence. As the year progresses, they'll be expected to complete assignments with less outside help, accept more responsibilities, and follow rules more closely.

## Skills Required at the Beginning of Kindergarten

Below is a list of skills kindergarten teachers like to see in their students when school starts. If your child has been attending preschool, rest assured that their teachers have been working on many of these skills. If not, you've probably been working on at least some of them at home. You may want to review the list and see if there is anything else you would like to review and/or teach your child at home.

- Identify some letters of the alphabet
- Grip a pencil, crayon, or marker correctly (with the thumb and forefinger supporting the tip)
- Use scissors, glue, paint, and other art materials with relative ease
- Write his first name using upper and lowercase letters, if possible
- Count to ten
- Bounce a ball
- Classify objects according to their size, shape, and quantity
- Speak using complete sentences
- Recognize some common sight words, like "stop"
- Identify rhyming words
- Repeat his full name, address, phone number, and birthday
- Play independently or focus on one activity with a friend for up to ten minutes
- Manage bathroom needs
- Dress himself
- Follow directions
- Clean up after himself

- Listen to a story without interrupting
- Separate from parents easily
- Don't panic if your child hasn't nailed everything on the list — he/she will learn a lot in kindergarten. What's more important is to wean them from relying on you to do things they could do on their own, such as zipping their jacket or tying their own shoes. Give them the chance to show you what they can do for themselves — you might be in for a few surprises!

### **Skills Acquired During Kindergarten**

Our general goals focus on children building strong pre-reading skills, practicing letter formation, enhancing listening and communication skills, getting an introduction to basic math concepts, and acquiring an active interest in the world. Generally speaking, your child will be expected to:

#### **Language Arts**

- Recognize and write all of the letters of the alphabet in upper and lowercase forms
- Write his first and last name
- Learn sounds corresponding to vowels and consonants
- Use initial consonant sounds and sound patterns to read words (for example, f + an = fan; r + an = ran)
- Identify several sight words, including names of colors
- Recognize and use rhyming words
- Retell a story including details
- Put events of a story in order
- Write simple sentences using sight words and phonics skills

#### **Listening and Communication**

- Listen attentively
- Raise hands or wait to speak
- Act on instruction and repeat spoken directions
- Engage in question-and-answer dialogue with classmates and teachers
- Work as a team on projects or problem-solving

#### **Math**

- Sort and classify objects using one or more attributes
- Recognize and write numbers to 30
- Count orally by ones, five, and tens

- Name ordinal numbers first through tenth
- Add and subtract using manipulatives (Cheerios, candy or other objects that can be picked up)
- Understand spatial relationships (top/bottom, near/far, before/behind)
- Compare quantities by estimating, weighing, and measuring
- Use graphs to gather information
- Recognize patterns and shapes
- Tell time to the nearest hour
- Count coins
- Recite the days of the week and months of the year

### **Other skills**

- Art and music: Experiment with different materials and methods
- Health and physical education: Learn essentials about nutrition and functions of the body
- Social studies: Identify major religious and civic holidays and historical figures; appreciate similarities and differences across individuals, families and traditions; understand different roles in communities
- Science: Use all senses to observe and experiment with plants and animals, weather and temperature

### **Homework**

- Teachers may send home math worksheets to reinforce lessons taught in school, or may ask children to practice printing numbers and letters. Other assignments might include experimenting, exploring, observing or creating things at home. Your child might be asked to:
  - Draw a picture of things in the backyard that begin with B
  - Look for words she recognizes at the supermarket
  - Make a graph to show how much time she spends sleeping, going to school, eating, and playing
  - Bring a small plant home and chart its growth
- Be sure to sit with your child as he does his homework - it will inform you of what he is learning and what he might need help in. More importantly, it will show that you care about what he learns in school. In addition, **the best way to bolster your child's pre-reading skills is to read to him for at least 15 minutes every night**. Teachers unanimously agree that reading is the most important skill your child needs to excel in school. Even if your child

doesn't know how to read yet, exposing him to literature will help him to cultivate good reading habits and a lifelong regard for reading.