

a parent's guide:

getting ready for **kindergarten**



assessing if your child is ready for kindergarten

As your child's first and most important teacher, your support for her upcoming school experience is critical. Research shows that children grow and learn at different rates and that they learn best with active, hands-on involvement.

The following pages provide a general guideline of school-readiness skills based on the Preschool Learning Foundations. If you have concerns about whether your child is really ready for kindergarten, visit [scoe.org/directory](https://www.scoe.org/directory) for a district contact list.

NOTE: Kindergarten registration starts between January and February each year. Check with your local district at the beginning of the year for specific deadlines.

physical development

- Jumps with two feet, hops with one foot
- Kicks a ball
- Catches a ball with two hands
- Draws and colors beyond scribbling
- Cuts on a line with scissors
- Can zip, button, and snap
- Manages own clothing and toileting

Visit the park and encourage your child to run, jump, and climb. Play with balls of different sizes; support his fine motor development by providing opportunities to strengthen his hands and fingers; mold with Play-Doh; draw with paint and crayons, and cut up magazines with child-safe scissors.



**It's essential
that you give
your child a lot of
time to play—
it's how children
learn best!**



social and emotional

- Feels comfortable in new situations and has a positive approach to new experiences and learning; curious and excited about school
- Shares and takes turns; uses good manners
- Participates in group activities, is learning to resolve conflicts
- Cooperates with family, friends, and teachers
- Separates from parents easily
- Talks about her feelings
- Concentrates on activities and pays attention for several minutes at a time

Encourage your child to share her ideas, talk about her feelings, and solve problems. Provide opportunities for her to work cooperatively with other children and adults. Preschool, play groups, and play dates are wonderful environments for children to practice these skills.

mathematics

- Knows her age
- Counts several numbers in sequence
- Counts several items, pointing at each one
- Knows several numbers by sight
- Understands that numbers mean quantity (“I want two toys.”)
- Sorts and classifies items (cars, food, shapes); compares groups, understanding which group has more, fewer, or the same as
- Solves simple addition and subtraction problems with small numbers of objects (“If you have three crackers and you eat one, how many are left?”)
- Identifies shapes like circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles

Help your child learn to count by talking about numbers and quantity and counting things in her environment. Have her categorize her toys when she cleans up, sort laundry or silverware, or count steps on the stairs. Point out the names of shapes in the environment as you walk or drive through town.

literacy

- Has been read to often; knows how to hold books appropriately, can turn pages, and demonstrates an increasing enjoyment of books
- Knows that words, not pictures, are read and have meaning
- Recognizes her first name and other familiar words
- Names several letters
- Comprehends details of a story (can answer questions about a story that you’ve read to her); retells parts of a story



Visit the library and surround your child with books every day. Refer to books when she asks a question. Play games with letters and display her written name where it can be seen and recognized daily. It is key that you model reading to her by reading yourself.

writing

- Holds a pencil with a finger grasp (not a fist)
- Writes letters or shapes to represent words
- Writes his first name
- Draws pictures of himself
- Associates letters with sounds

Writing can take place with a paintbrush and water on the sidewalk or with a stick on the sand at the beach. Your child may need help learning to write his name—make this a fun experience so that he enjoys writing when he goes to school. Before taking a trip to the grocery store, have him help you write a few items for the shopping list.



language

- Uses language to communicate, problem solve, and seek information
- Speaks clearly and is understood by others
- Has conversations with others, using full sentences and maintaining the topic discussed
- Asks and answers questions
- Names colors and shapes
- Listens to, remembers, and follows one-and-two-step directions (“Please close the door and bring me the book.”)
- Recites poems and songs

Family conversations during dinner, telling stories about your day, playing imagination games with friends, and reading books are all great ways to build language skills.

According to kindergarten teachers, your child should most importantly be able to:

- Use the toilet, wash hands, dress, eat, and blow nose independently
- Stay focused and pay attention for moderate periods of time
- Ask for help when needed
- Hold a pencil, use a crayon, and cut with scissors
- Carry, unzip, and place items in and out of a backpack
- Open and close lunch containers and eat lunch independently



5340 Skylane Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 524-2600

scoe.org

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