

Kindergarten Readiness

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Overview

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relations, may inappropriately dominate others, and engage in attention-seeking behaviors (LaFreniere & Sroufe, 1985). Indicators of social competence regarding adult interactions include being able to follow directions, paying attention to the teacher when he or she is talking, and being able to ask for assistance.

A number of scholars emphasize the importance of social-emotional development as an indicator of kindergarten readiness, although some research has concluded that there is virtually no r

Print awareness	Understanding a variety of forms and functions related to print (directionality, differences between letters and words)
Phonology	Demonstrating awareness of the sound structures of spoken language
Early Math	
Counting	Counting from one (basic verbal counting); counting with cardinality (advanced counting); subitizing (instantly knowing how many are in a set)
Patterning	Duplicating and extending patterns
Geometry	Identifying two-dimensional shapes; building shapes from component shapes
Measurement	Using basic measurement instruments; understanding concepts of weight, length, and area
Social-Emotional Skills	
Behavior	Exhibiting age-appropriate internalizing behaviors (not being overly anxious) and externalizing behaviors (not having tantrums)
Social	Forming and maintaining positive peer relations and positive relations with adults
Learning-Related Skills	
Attention	Maintaining attention during sustained periods of time
Effort	Inhibiting dominant or automatic responses to exhibit an alternative behavior (e.g., being able to not talk to a peer when the teacher tells the children to be quiet)

Given that kindergarten readiness reflects at least three different areas (academic skills, social-emotional skills, learning-related skills), it is important to think about kindergarten

Head Start versus public preschools, evidence points to the importance of high-quality preschool for elevating children's kindergarten readiness (Hatfield et al., 2016). A recent study examined the kindergarten-readiness profiles of 338 children residing in low-income, rural, Appalachian communities. All of the children attended center-based preschool programs in the year prior to kindergarten entry. This study showed that one-fourth of children had well-developed readiness skills across all three dimensions of academic, social-emotional, and learning-related skills; importantly, the preschool programs these children attended were significantly higher in quality than those attended by children who had less-developed readiness skills. Furthermore, 16% of the children showed very poor readiness skills across all three dimensions, and these preschool programs they had attended were rated as the lowest in overall quality (Justice et al., 2016). Such work suggests that preschool attendance alone does not necessarily result in heightened kindergarten readiness, but that the quality of the preschool program is an especially important consideration.

Strategies for Improving Kindergarten Readiness

With a great deal of attention directed toward the importance of kindergarten readiness, coupled with evidence that a significant number of children arrive to school without adequate readiness, it is not surprising that there are a variety of strategies available by which to improve children's kindergarten readiness. Those discussed most frequently in the research include (1) preschool participation and (2) preschool curricula.

Preschool participation

children's social development, with an emphasis on exploration and free play. In the past two decades, preschools have become increasingly school-like, with curricula organized to

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Kaderavek & Dynia, 2015; Landry, Swank, Anthony & Assel, 2011). Many researcher-

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