

K is for **KINDERGARTEN READINESS**

Ensuring Communities Create “Ready” Schools

“Kindergarten readiness” is a phrase used to describe the knowledge, skills, or learning approaches children need to be successful when they enter kindergarten. In preschool, emphasis is often placed on preparing children for the social and academic requirements of kindergarten. Supporting children’s successes and addressing their challenges in kindergarten can have lasting influences on later development and learning. Beyond focusing on how **children** can be ready, it is equally important to ensure **schools and classrooms** are ready to support all children and families as they enter kindergarten.

Strategies For Creating “Ready” Schools

Here are four recommended strategies for creating “ready” schools to meet the needs of all children and their families as they enter kindergarten.

Strategy 1: Create opportunities for families to learn about the school and expectations for kindergarten.

- School personnel should ensure families have formal (e.g., meet the teacher) and informal (e.g., speaking to other parents) opportunities to learn about the school and expectations for kindergarten.
- Support the family as they make plans for any changes in the child’s daily routine (e.g., school start time, stopping a daily nap, or taking the bus).
- When possible, offer opportunities for the child to transition gradually into the kindergarten classroom (e.g., attending for half a day for a month before attending a full day).

Strategy 3: Learn about and meet each child’s unique needs to support a successful transition to kindergarten.

- Communicate about the child’s strengths, needs, and approaches to learning that have been observed in preschool (if applicable) and at home.
- Share information with the kindergarten teacher about the child’s previous learning experiences at home, in preschool, and in community environments.
- Use formal and informal information to individualize supports for each child (e.g., a child who did not have preschool experience might need more support).

Strategy 2: Build collaborative partnerships to ensure success.

- Facilitate periodic communication between those in the “sending” environments (e.g., home or early learning center) and those in the “receiving” environment (i.e., kindergarten) at least 6 months before the child begins kindergarten.
- Help the child understand how activities, routines, and expectations are similar or different across environments (e.g., make a “countdown to kindergarten” calendar).
- Ensure opportunities for families to be engaged during and after the initial transition to kindergarten (e.g., volunteering in the classroom, eating lunch with their child).

Strategy 4: Communicate about child development and learning in kindergarten.

- Discuss with the family how information about children’s social and academic progress is collected and summarized in kindergarten (e.g., progress reports).
- Share formal and informal information about children’s strengths, needs, and progress during the kindergarten year.
- Communicate information about children’s development and learning, including successes and challenges, in ways that are useful to and preferred by the family (e.g., written or verbal).

What We Are Doing

The Anita Zucker Center and our collaborators support early learning programs to use practices that promote “ready” schools and successful transitions to kindergarten.

Visit our website to access more information or resources and learn more about what we are doing.

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