



GET READY FOR SCHOOL!

Kindergarten has become more academic than ever before. Because of this, preparing your child for school is particularly important. The steps listed below are widely recommended by area elementary school teachers to help parents and children enjoy learning.

Step 1: Read to Your Child as Often as Possible

- Research demonstrates reading to your child will help them develop the necessary literacy and grammar skills they need to do well in school. According to the National Institute for Literacy, a child who has a family member read to them at least three times per week is twice as likely upon entering kindergarten to score in the top 25% for reading.
- Let your child choose which stories he or she wants to hear. Don't worry if the same ones are chosen over and over again because repetition helps a child build language skills.
- As your child develops literacy skills, encourage him or her to read and keep in mind when a child describes a picture they see, they are developing literacy skills. Encourage them to read books, magazines, food containers, etc.
- Regularly visit your local library. As the start of school approaches, read books related to school transition to your child.

Step 2: Make Learning Fun

- Everyday activities can be learning experiences. For example, have your child help fold towels and count the number of towels folded, separate them into colors, sizes and patterns.
- Allow your child to help you cook; let him or her read the recipe directions and share the names of ingredients in each dish.
- While waiting in line at the store, play "Eye Spy" and have your child find red rectangles, yellow squares, green circles, etc.
- On car trips, have your child identify letters as you pass signs and billboards.
- Learn nursery rhymes and teach them to your children. Sing them together.
- Grab a paint brush and a bowl of water and head outside. Let your child use the water to "paint" letters on the sidewalk, patio or driveway.
- Play board games with your children and don't always let them win. Playing the game teaches a child to take turns and follow directions. Losing a game occasionally teaches them to accept loss.
- Allow your child to finger paint, color, draw, use scissors, cut and paste. All of these activities are fun for children and work on their fine motor skills, imagination and creativity.

Step 3: Visit Your Child's School

- Every school welcomes children to visit their facility before enrolling. Call your local elementary school office to determine their policy and then schedule a visit.
- During your school visit get to know your child's teacher and other school staff.
- Get a list of entry requirements such as immunizations and other required documentation.
- Learn what transportation arrangements are needed for your child to travel to and from school and practice the routine with your child before the first day of school.
- Ask for a school calendar of events and pay attention to the kindergarten registration dates and times.
- Find out what the procedure is if your child becomes sick or hurt while at school and have a backup plan.
- Keep a positive attitude towards the school and staff. They are there to help you and your child.
- Ask what volunteer opportunities are available for you and your family.



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Step 4: What Schools Expect from Children When They Enter Kindergarten

A wide range of child care, Head Start and elementary school teachers in Clarion and Jefferson Counties have been surveyed and consulted on school readiness. They unanimously reported children need to have at least some of the following skills upon entering kindergarten:

- Social and emotional skills such as how to follow simple directions, stay in seats, share and work with others, accept loss, stay on task for at least 10 minutes and know the meaning of and use words such as “excuse me,” “please” and “thank you.”
- Listening skills are particularly important so children can follow directions and be safe while at school and traveling to or from school.
- Self-help skills such as being able to use the toilet independently, put on a coat, work zippers, buttons and snaps, tie shoes, use a tissue and wash hands.
- Language skills such as listening, speaking, knowledge of a range of words and concepts and understanding simple stories.
- General knowledge of shapes, colors and social conventions such as holidays and events.

Step 5: Things to Remember

- Not every child will be able to read and write before entering school and that’s okay.
- Establish a bedtime schedule and stick to it. Children need plenty of rest on a regular schedule every night, including weekends.
- Children need competent and confident parenting; health and nutrition care; guidance and instruction and constant, stable, appropriate supervision to succeed in school and life.
- Encourage enthusiasm, curiosity, persistence and an interest in learning new things.
- Children are naturally creative and imaginative. Let them use these skills to explore their world and develop a love for learning.
- Communicate with your child. Ask questions of them and listen to their answers.

The key is to make learning fun!

To learn more about school readiness or how to help your child prepare for school, contact Community Action, Inc.’s Local Education and Resource Network (LEARN) at (814) 938-3302 ext. 204 or email LEARN@jccap.org.



Resource information provided by Terrific Transitions www.terrifictransitions.org, www.finebynine.org and Head Start.

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