

Getting Ready For School Is Fun And Easy

Make school readiness a part of your family's everyday routines. There's a big plus! Children love this special attention.

Common activities that are great for learning . . .

Snack time — look on food boxes or cans, saying letters together

Driving—sing songs and read signs, pointing out various letters

Preparing meals—put magnetic letters on the refrigerator for play

Shopping—talk about beginning letters of clothes, food or toys

Nap time—read a loved story with feeling and let children “read” the story, too

Doing chores—put signs on a few objects at home, such as “bed” and make a game of saying letters aloud



Play time—point to an object and ask children to say words that rhyme, including silly words: ball, tall, dall, jall, nall

Eating—say nonsense rhymes, such as *Hey Diddle, Diddle*

Indoor play—cut out magazine pictures with children, encouraging them to make up stories about the pictures or describe objects in them

Lesson time—spell personal names with flash cards. Let children match each capital letter with its lowercase form, or put the letters in order. Draw a letter and find objects that begin with the same sound (ball, boy, bike)

Library visits—make weekly trips to the library part of your family's fun time together. Books about going to school help build children's confidence about kindergarten. A librarian can help you find them.

Here are a few favorite titles:

Froggy Goes to School by Jonathan London

My Kindergarten by Rosemary Wells

Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come! by Nancy Carlson

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Welcome to Kindergarten by Anne Rockwell

Read With Your Child - It's The Most Important 20 Minutes Of Your Day

Studies show children must hear and share in hundreds of stories before they are ready to learn to read in school. It is also important for them to talk and talk about what they see every day and say the sounds of letters they are learning.

What Research Says About School Readiness

Education studies confirm that when schools engage families to support learning *at home* children do better in school, stay in school longer, like school more and feel better about themselves. These positives help children reach goals throughout life.

The way little boys and girls spend their time at home predicts success in school, not the family's income or background. Effective parents talk and read to children and spend time daily with them sharing learning activities. They limit television or computer time to one hour a day. Together, families discover learning is a joy.



Assessing Readiness To Read

East Valley's Kindergarten Literacy Assessment is based on research. This research shows that five-year-olds who know ten or more lower-case alphabet letters are the ones who are most likely to learn to read words by first grade. That means practicing both upper and lower-case letters at home is a good pre-reading activity.

A new kindergartener's ability to say letter sounds that begin words and to say rhyming words is important, too. These skills – called phonological awareness – better predict success in learning to read than does a child's IQ.

High performing schools, research shows, share information with parents *before* kindergarten on ways to get their children ready for reading.

Get Ready to Read! is a free and easy-to-use tool to see if children are on track for learning to read. Check out its 20 questions at www.ReadingRockets.org/GetReady (provided by the U.S. Department of Education).

Why Focus On School Readiness?

Today, only 50% of kindergarteners nationwide are *fully ready*. This means many children are one to two years behind their classmates the first day of school. Such a large difference is extremely hard to overcome. Even though kindergarten teachers try their best to make readers of all children, it is often impossible for unprepared students to close the readiness gap in one year while half the class continues to leap ahead in reading and learning.

Students who are not prepared for school struggle for years to catch up, and many never do. *Ready! For Kindergarten* teams up with parents to help children be ready to learn. Research shows that five-year-olds who are ready for school start ahead and stay ahead, year after year.

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is **reading aloud to children**. This is especially so during the preschool years.”

The Report of the Commission on Reading

OFF TO SCHOOL

A time to explore,

A time to learn



As parents, you want your children to have a happy and successful school experience. So do The Reading Foundation and the East Valley School District.

Starting school is an exciting time for children. One way to predict how ready a new student will be for kindergarten is to use the ideas and questionnaire in this brochure.



A partnership between your East Valley Schools and families to help young boys and girls be prepared, and eager, to start their education.

School Readiness - Does It Matter?

Often parents wonder what a typical five-year-old knows, or should know, the first day of school. There are readiness skills called *Kindergarten Targets*. They are not requirements but learning goals. Not every child will hit every goal — a child may be high on some skills and low on others.

Children who are taught these skills by their families get off to a great start at school. They start ahead and stay ahead, year after year.

Kindergarten Entry Targets for Children

Letters and Sounds

- Enjoy being read to and can retell a story
- Recognize and name 10-15 alphabet letters and their sounds
- Repeat beginning and ending sounds in words
- Speak in complete sentences
- Print his or her first name

Math

- Count in order from 1 to 20
- Recognize numbers and quantities to 10
- Name and sort items by color, shape and size
- Understand concepts such as more, less, same, above, below, big and small

Social

- Settle into new groups or situations
- Can concentrate on a task for five minutes
- Follow simple directions
- Show kindness and concern for others



The goal of our *Ready! For Kindergarten* program is to provide information to assist your family. If you have young children at home (newborn to age five), we encourage you to sign up for our free classes for parents on early learning. Just give us a call at 509-924-1830. Child care is provided.

Sample Kindergarten Literacy Assessment*

East Valley teachers ask new kindergarten students questions such as the ones below.

There are 100 in all. Most five-year-olds on the first day of school can answer **30 questions correctly**.

To help a child be ready for school, first ask these questions and then practice letter skills with them a few minutes each day.

Knowing Upper Case Letters (26 questions)

Point to one letter and ask what it is. If the child does not say it, just go on to the next letter (It helps to cover the other letters with your hand or a piece of paper). Flashcards also work well.

D F C B A P S Q T
 Z R E J G M U X H
 W I K N V O Y L

Knowing Lower Case Letters (26 questions)

Point to a letter and ask what it is. If the child does not say it, go on to the next letter.

d f c b a p s q t
 z r e j g m u x h
 w i k n v o y l

Recognizing Letter Sounds (26 questions)

Ask the child to say the letters below as they sound at the beginning of words.

Example: bin ball

d f c b a p s q t
 z r e j g m u x h
 w i k n v o y l

Recognizing Rhymes (5 questions)

Explain to the child that two words rhyme when the end of the words sound the same. Give an example: cat/hat. Give an example that does not rhyme: bed/rug. Ask if the grouped words rhyme.

lip / sip tell / sell boy / duck sick / desk can / van

Making Rhymes (5 questions)

Again, give an example of words that rhyme, such as cat/mat. Ask the child to think of another word that rhymes with cat. Next, ask for a few rhyming words to go with each of the words below. Nonsense words are fine.

run sing fill let mop

Saying the First Sound of a Word (4 questions)

Name the first object in the target picture (bed) and then the three objects on the rest of the line. Ask the child to point to the picture in the row that starts with the same beginning sound as the target picture (bird).



Saying the First Letter of a Word (5 questions)

Name the object in the picture and ask the child to tell you the first letter of the word.



Printing (counts for 3 questions)

Ask the child to print his or her first name.

*The main source for this assessment is *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, National Research Council. A similar test is given for math.

Vocabulary Matters, Too

The kindergarten assessment does not measure vocabulary, but children who know only 1,000 words when they start school cannot catch up with those who know 5,000 words. Vocabulary is an essential pre-reading skill because it links directly with reading comprehension. Reading many stories and talking about them helps little children build strong vocabularies.