

10 Simple Ways to Get Ready for Kindergarten

1. Read. A lot. As you read stories with your child, ask questions including:

- What do you think will happen next?
- What would you do if you were the main character?
- Why do you think he/she did that?
- Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why?

2. Write. Write your child's name in yellow marker or highlighter. Have her trace it with a pencil, making sure to start each letter at the top. When she's ready, have her write her name on her own.

3. Play. Help your child practice social skills by setting up play dates with friends. Before they begin, talk about what being a good friend looks like. Being clear about what you expect will set your child up for success.

4. Draw. Give your child blank paper and a pack of crayons. Drawing straight lines, curvy lines and shapes will help her strengthen her hand muscles for writing letters and words later.

5. Cut. Kindergarten is filled with art projects. Get your child ready now by giving her a pair of kid-sized scissors. Have her practice cutting paper, play dough and straws. {Adult supervision recommended.}

6. Give Directions. Help your child get ready to follow her teachers' directions by giving two-step directions. For example, "Please put on your shoes and zip up your coat". Or play Simon Says - "Simon says jump on one leg and touch your nose."

7. Count. Have your child practice counting to 20 and beyond when she's being pushed on the swing at the park, adding chocolate chips to cookie dough, picking flowers, etc.

8. Solve Puzzles. Placing puzzle pieces in their correct spot builds fine motor and spatial skills. As a bonus, it's also a great way to develop the perseverance she'll need when she's tackling tricky kindergarten activities later.

9. Sing. Help your child remember alphabet letters by singing the ABCs. Pick an alphabet letter and see how many times you can find it in a book. Talk about the letters in the names of family and friends. The more you practice alphabet letters, the better prepared she'll be to learn how to read.

10. Climb. Build your child's gross motor skills by encouraging her to play at parks, swim, join team sports, hop on hopscotch boards, etc. Being strong and active now will help her on the playground and in PE class later.