

Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?

Prepare Them With These 20 Skills

Scholastic News

Your child may be anxious about leaving home and making friends — that's OK! Nervousness is natural. To ease first-day jitters, you can read books with your child from [this list that encourages social-emotional skills for kindergartners](#), so they can put their best foot forward when meeting new people.

When the day arrives, students will be expected to know some basic skills, like how to hold a pencil and write their first name. Other skills, like writing simple sentences using sight words, will take time. General goals for the year focus on children building strong pre-reading skills, practicing letter formation, enhancing their listening and communication skills, getting an introduction to basic math concepts, and acquiring an active interest in the world.

1. Identify some letters of the alphabet.

The 12 books in [My First BOB Books: Alphabet](#) are a wonderful primer for learning the ABCs in a fun and easy-to-understand way.

2. Grip a pencil, crayon, or marker correctly.

Smith recommends the "Pinch and Flip" method:

"Lay the pencil flat in front of the child with the lead pointing at the child," he says. "Have the child pinch the pencil like they would pinch somebody else and flip the pencil back toward the child with the eraser going over the hand. Then rest it on the middle finger."

3. Write their first name using upper- and lowercase letters, if possible.

Smith says that writing names is good practice for learning letter cases.

“Parents should make it very clear that uppercase letters are for the first letter of a name and lowercase letters are for the rest of the letters in a name,” he says.

For practice, the *Scholastic Early Learners: Write and Wipe Learn to Write* is a convenient tool: After your child traces the letters, wipe the book clean to start again!

4. Learn sounds corresponding to vowels and consonants.

A foundation in phonics begins when you’re *tracking words with your finger as you read aloud* to your child. For brushing up on phonics, the 10 books in *Bob’s Book Set #1: Beginning Readers* is a great tool for use before school starts or as a supplement to classroom learning.

5. Recognize some common sight words, like “said” and “do.”

Sight words are high-frequency words — among the most common in the English language — that do not follow the general rules of spelling and syllables, making them difficult for students to decode. Enter the *100 Write-and-Learn Sight Word Practice Pages* workbook, which can help kids get a head start on memorizing these words for improved reading fluency.

6. Be able to recognize names of colors and parts of the body.

Kids get a dual lesson with *Flash Cards: Colors & Shapes* — and a head start in math.

7. Recognize and produce rhyming words.

Books that feature rhyming and repetition are a boon for your child’s phonological development — the pairing of sounds with spoken words and, later, spelling.

8. Repeat full name and birthday.

9. Recite the days of the week and months of the year.

10. Classify objects according to their size, shape, and quantity.

Classification skills are the building blocks of important math concepts. With *Little Skill Seekers: Sorting & Matching*, children practice and hone these skills by sorting, matching, and grouping objects.

11. Count to 10.

There are plenty of counting books that teach the basics, but *Scholastic Early Learners: Kindergarten Extra Big Skills Workbook: Math Practice* has enough activities — and delightful illustrations — to keep kids learning through to graduation.

12. Listen attentively without interrupting and raise hand to speak.

13. Follow multi-step directions.

Following directions is a comprehension skill, which your child can build at their own pace with the *Scholastic Success With Grade 1: Reading Comprehension* workbook.

Smith offers this simple example for use at home: "Go to the kitchen, get a spoon, and bring it to me."

14. Work together with a friend or in small groups on a team project.

Sharing is caring. Look no further than best-selling animal friends *Peppa Pig* and *Elephant* to teach this important lesson.

15. Use scissors, glue, paint, and other art materials with relative ease.

[Klutz activity kits](#) are a fantastic way to bring learning to life with crafts and experiment with assembling objects.

16. Manage bathroom needs.

17. Get dressed.

Kindergarten is a great time for weaning off assistance in everyday routines that kids can perform themselves. Exhibit A: Zipping up a jacket.

18. Clean up after self.

19. Separate from parents easily.

Help soothe nerves with [Clifford Goes to Kindergarten](#), which finds Emily Elizabeth anxious about leaving home as well.

20. Know how to interact with a book.

“It’s really helpful if students know how to hold a book and turn a page,” Smith says.

Find more expert-approved kindergarten books, tips, and resources on [how to prepare for school](#) at our guide to [getting ready for kindergarten](#). Shop books to get ready for kindergarten below! You can find all books and activities at [The Scholastic Store](#).