

Tips for Kindergarten Readiness

These simple tips can help support your child's development and readiness for kindergarten. They're based on Indiana's Early Learning Standards, teacher feedback, and research on social and emotional growth.

Use what works for your family. There's no need to do everything every day.



BUILDING STRONG BRAINS
Elkhart County's Early Childhood Initiative

Tip:

1

Foster Independence and Self-Care Skills

(Social-Emotional Development)

Developing the skills of self-regulation and positive social behaviors lead to a positive sense of self.

- Provide clothing that your child can manage independently, such as slip-ons or easy-to-fasten shoes, and let them practice dressing themselves.
- Practice using the bathroom independently, from start to finish, including establishing a routine of washing hands after sitting on the potty.
- When time permits, allow your child opportunities to independently attend to personal care routines, such as feeding themselves and brushing their teeth.
- Work as a family to create or talk about family rules (for example, “We take our own dishes to the sink after dinner”).
- Use everyday activities as teaching opportunities (for example, pushing microwave buttons to learn numbers).



Build Strong Language and Conversation Skills

(Communication & Understanding)

Frequent interactions with adults and opportunities to use language enable children to become competent speakers and listeners.

- Talk about your day and share your thoughts, then ask your child about theirs.
- Build back-and-forth conversation by adding to what your child says.
- Ask questions that require more than a yes/no response, such as, “What was your favorite thing to do at the park?”
- Model good language by thinking out loud, telling stories, and encouraging your child to do the same.

Tip:

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Tip:

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Make Reading a Daily, Interactive Experience (Early Reading)

Reading aloud daily builds vocabulary and a strong sense of print, which are precursors for reading and comprehending skills.

- Read 2-3 books a day with your child. Books with rhymes and ABCs help build skills.
- When reading story books, discuss the story by asking what happened, if the characters made good choices, and what part your child liked best.
- Point out letters as you travel your community, such as the 'M' in McDonald's.
- Have your child find letters they recognize in the book you are reading or find a letter that is the first letter in their name.



Develop Hand Strength and Practice Writing Tools

(Early Writing & Fine Motor)

Developing fine motor skills is essential, including the ability to hold a pencil correctly and use various creative tools.

- Put a writing toy (LED slate, notebook/pencil, or other writing tools) in the car near your child's car seat.
- Write your child's name and let them trace it with lots of different colors.
- Provide opportunities for your child to work with various materials to scribble, draw, and create (for example, playdough, sand, dirt, or rice).
- Encourage writing in play, such as writing out a food order when playing restaurant or making a grocery list.

Tip:

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Tip:

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Incorporate Counting, Shapes, and Patterns into Routines

(Math/Science)

Mathematics helps children form a sense of order and is easily nourished by everyday play and exploration.

- Find things on the table to count, such as the number of chicken nuggets or how many forks are present.
- Count objects during travel, such as how many blue cars you pass between school and home.
- Notice and create patterns in everyday activities, such as clapping and stomping to a song, arranging snacks in patterns, or lining up toys or shoes by size, color, or shape.



Tip:

6

Nurture Emotional Understanding and Resilience (Student Wellbeing)

Children need to be taught to understand and accept their feelings and develop skills in self-regulation.

- Create consistent (but flexible) routines for your child, especially during big life changes.
- Name emotions and model healthy ways to handle them (for example, saying, “You look angry. I’m feeling frustrated too, so I’m going to take a deep breath”).
- Prepare children for the next activity by giving them advance warning (for example, “In five minutes, we will have dinner”).
- Help your child feel secure by keeping them informed of your whereabouts and when you are coming back when separating from them.
- Model positive social interactions with other adults, such as making eye contact and using active listening skills.



Tips for Kindergarten Readiness

The content for these kindergarten readiness tips is derived from several research-based sources:

- 1. Indiana's Early Learning Standards:** These standards include concepts for children's development and address the skills and abilities children are to achieve from birth to age five.
- 2. Indiana Early Learning Family Guides (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Student Wellbeing, Approaches to Play & Learning, Creative Arts, Physical Health & Growth):** Guides created by the Indiana Department of Education providing overviews and suggestions for supporting a child's development at home.
- 3. Teacher Feedback and Emotional/Social Research Studies:** The readiness skills checklist, upon which many activities are based, was developed using feedback from teachers and studies on emotional and social research.
- 4. "How to Prepare for Kindergarten: 13 Things You Can (and Should) Do at Home":** Advice from a veteran teacher and literacy specialist on preparing children for kindergarten.
- 5. "Thriving in Kindergarten":** Top Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) Tips focused on topics like making learning fun, teaching respect, and helping a child feel secure.
- 6. BSB's R-V Ready for Kindergarten Team suggested tips in key areas.**

You can get more information online at buildingstrongbrains.net



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