

Kindergarten Readiness Guidelines:

I found the following guideline on a “great schools” website very helpful. It includes a range of social, academic and developmental factors to consider when deciding if your child is ready for kindergarten: I’ve included in (parenthesis), some reasons why these are important.

- **Enthusiasm toward learning.** Is he eager to explore and discover? Is he comfortable asking questions? Does he persist even when a task is difficult? (If he is facing a task that he’s never tried and decides it’s too difficult, he may appear to be “difficult” - when he’s just afraid, or doesn’t feel safe asking a question or he doesn’t know how to ask the question. His reluctance, or refusal to follow directions may put him further behind.)
- **Language skills.** Does she communicate her needs? Express her feelings appropriately? (This is important because, she may feel intimidated, or shy, or not know how to explain why she’s upset with something. It could be that someone has done something mean to her. Not being able to express that can make her seem like the problem and be punished for not speaking up.)
- **Ability to listen.** Can he follow simple instructions? Is he able to listen to an entire story without interrupting? (This can be annoying and can create a domino effect where each child wants to interrupt and ask questions, or begin talking about something totally different. To stop this from happening, he may be gently scolded, which may cause him to refuse to participate in story time at all.)
- **Desire to be independent.** Does she separate from parents for the school day? Is she starting to take responsibility for her personal belongings? Can she follow simple two-step tasks? Can she use the bathroom by herself? (A Kindergarten teacher, with 20 students in a room, cannot leave them unattended to show one child how to hang up her coat and put away her things. They don’t typically coax a child to use the bathroom. If a child doesn’t know to ask, or needs prompting or gives the teacher a blank stare, it may be perceived as rebellion or stubbornness. If a child soils themselves, it would be very embarrassing for both the child and family.)
 - **Ability to interact with children and adults.** Is he able to share, compromise, take turns and problem-solve? (This is one of the biggest concerns for entering kindergarten. When a child has not learned to compromise and take turns, they tend to either be bullied, or bully others because they don’t know how to give-and-take. They need practice sharing, asking to play and asking to have what someone else has, then “wait” for the other child to say yes, or work out a solution that they can both agree on. How to “problem solve” with many different personality types their own age.)
- **Strong fine-motor skills.** Is she able to hold and use a pencil? Cut with scissors? Is she learning to write her name? (The fine motor muscles in the fingers need practice to get strong. It actually hurts to grip a pencil or use scissors at this age. Having the freedom to work at these skills in short bursts, with less strenuous expectations is much less frustrating, and encourages kids to keep trying. Kindergarteners spend a lot of time writing and cutting, and without prior practice, this can create a barrier that hinders their success.)
- **Basic letter and number awareness.** Can he sing and recite the alphabet and recognize some letters? Can he count to 10 and identify numbers one to five? (Although not

totally necessary to be accepted into kindergarten, it really helps if they have meet this criteria. In fact they will need "Strategic Support" if they don't know all 26 letters of the alphabet and the rest of the "bench mark goals" established by the common core standards at the beginning of the year. If you are like most parents, you will want your child to start kindergarten at or above what is expected, rather than behind, so he/she "feels" confident, instead of "feeling" like a loser. In their little minds, they are winners or losers. They always want to come in first. If they don't get to be first, answer first, have the right answer, they tend to cry, pout, throw a fit, melt down, or display angry outbursts and aggression. They just don't know how to handle the disappointment, or to express what they feel.)

(Guidelines from: <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/kindergarten-ready-or-not/>, edited comments in (parenthesis) by Kate Longacre.)

At Champion's Choice, our curriculum (<http://www.championschoice.org/preschool-curriculum/>) is designed to meet Montana Early Learning Standards in each developmental area. We use age appropriate approaches with play centered learning and hands on activities to make each concept fun and meaningful to a child's world. We use an integrated approach with theme based lessons that include the seven developmental domains: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Math, Social Studies, Science and Creativity.

In addition, we supplement the "kindergarten" readiness goals with writing practice, math skills and language sheets. These seat work segments are about 15 min. long – longer if the child is engaged, and shorter if they are not mature enough to handle that. If they don't finish the page, it is sent home or saved for later. Students are encouraged to finish, but not required to.

Eureka public school offers a free assessment test in the spring to determine kindergarten readiness. It's called, "Kindergarten Roundup". Children are asked questions to test their cognitive abilities. They might also be asked to perform tasks such as drawing shapes and sorting objects. The school's trained staff look over the findings and give parents their professional advice about their child's readiness. However, decisions should not be based entirely on test results. Observations by preschool teachers, caregivers, pediatricians and parents, should also be considered.