Fine Motor, Writing, And Kindergarten Readiness Skills

Kindergarten Round-Up
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Fine Motor Development and School Readiness

Small Motor Skills
- Small movements which occur in the fingers, in coordination with eyes

Fine Motor Skills
- A refined use of the small muscles in the hand, fingers, and thumb for tasks like writing, drawing, and coloring

School Readiness – Motor/Neurological
- Ready to hold writing tools
- Ready to use scissors
- Ready to button own clothing
- Ready to attend to tasks for 15-20 minutes

Activity Suggestions:
- Roll out play dough with a rolling pin (position hands normally on top of the handles; for advanced, try with hands positioned under the handles)
- Pull play dough apart and squeeze back into a ball
- Dribble a basketball; Practice counting at the same time
- Wall push-outs: stand 6-12 inches from wall, place palms flat on wall, bend at elbows to bring body toward wall, push out...Repeat...Count
- Screw nuts onto bolts; use various sizes (start with large size, moving to smaller)
- Use spray bottles; mist plants/grass, play in tub during bath time
- Use kitchen tongs to pick up and sort small objects (advance to tweezers)
- Build with Legos and tinker toys
- Use a hole puncher to create confetti from “waste” paper
- Play with “pick up” sticks or straws
- Use a peg board (Lite-Bright) to create pictures, letters, patterns
- Play board games that have small pieces that need to be grasped and moved
- Practice cutting: straight lines, curved lines, zigzag lines
- Put coins in a “bank” (slot); count at the same time
- Twist bottle/jar tops on and off
- Tear strips of paper to create an artistic masterpiece!
- Wind up toys
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Readiness Checklist

To help you prepare your child for school, please remember…
- You are your child’s first and most important teacher
- Each day your child is learning as you talk, play, and work together
- Readiness is a combination of age, individual growth, and experience
- Your child will develop at his or her own rate
- Your involvement will promote readiness
- Your child will learn by doing
- Play is an essential part of learning

This checklist will help you look at your child’s physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. It has been specifically designed to evaluate four and five year old children and reviews areas important to your child’s success in Kindergarten.

Concept Development
Does your child:
- recognize and/or name colors? Yes Not Yet
- match and/or sort items by color and shape? Yes Not Yet
- participate in art and music activities? Yes Not Yet
- understand concepts such as in/out, on/off, front/back? Yes Not Yet
- know body parts (head, shoulders, knees, etc.)? Yes Not Yet
- draw things that are recognizable? Yes Not Yet
- demonstrate curiosity, persistence and exploratory behavior? Yes Not Yet

Fun tips to help your child understand concepts: Provide toys which require thinking, like puzzles and blocks; Count objects around the house, such as plates and forks for the dinner table, crackers for snacks; Play games with your child using “action” words such as “Put the ball on the chair” and/or “Get the pot from under the sink”; Play Simon Says…”Put your hands on your head” or “Simon says, touch your nose”…

Health and Safety
Does your child:
- have a set daily routine/schedule (for bed, bath, meals, etc.)? Yes Not Yet
- have clean habits (eats with utensils, chews with mouth closed, covers nose/mouth to sneeze, washes hands after using restroom/before eating)? Yes Not Yet
- follow simple safety rules? Yes Not Yet
- visit the doctor and dentist regularly? Yes Not Yet
- eat healthy foods? Yes Not Yet

Fun tips to help your child be safe and healthy: Follow regular medical/dental checkups with a surprise (like a movie or visit to the library); Play outdoor games for exercise; Teach your child to swim; Make healthy eating fun (“ants on a log” are just celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins); Let your child pretend to be a police officer/fireman to practice simple safety rules like crossing the street…
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Readiness Checklist
(continued)

Language
Does your child:
- talk in sentences? Yes Not Yet
- follow through when you give him/her one or two directions? Yes Not Yet
- use descriptive language? (“That’s a tall building with round windows.”) Yes Not Yet
- sing and/or recite nursery rhymes, songs, quotes, anything familiar? Yes Not Yet
- pretend, create and make up songs and stories? Yes Not Yet
- converse…talk about every day experiences, tell or retell stories? Yes Not Yet
- ask questions about how things work? Yes Not Yet
- express his/her ideas so that others can understand? Yes Not Yet

Fun tips to help your child develop language: Play classical music before bed and ask your child to describe what it makes them think of; Have your child guess something by asking YES/NO questions; Let your child make the phone calls to invite people for a party; Create a story by taking turns adding to it (start with, “one day a little boy fell into a mud puddle”); Ask your child about their day; Laugh with your child…

Number Concept Development
Does your child:
- arrange items in groups according to size, shape or color? Yes Not Yet
- group items that are the same? Yes Not Yet
- arrange objects in size order, big to small or small to big? Yes Not Yet
- use words like bigger, smaller or heaviest to show comparison? Yes Not Yet
- compare the size of groups of items? Yes Not Yet
- show an understanding of the passing of time? Yes Not Yet

Fun tips to help your child understand number concepts: Assist your child in setting the dinner table (how many forks do you need?); Ask your child to separate groceries (cans, boxes, frozen, etc.); Play a game to “guess the heaviest/lightest” item; When cleaning their room, ask your child to pick-up like items (cars, books, clothes, etc.); Pick a color, then go on a bike ride and yell out anything you pass that color…

Physical Development
Does your child:
- put puzzles together? Yes Not Yet
- cut with scissors? Yes Not Yet
- try to tie their shoes? Yes Not Yet
- enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping and climbing? Yes Not Yet
- hold a crayon or marker? Yes Not Yet
- ride a tricycle? Yes Not Yet
- bounce a ball? Yes Not Yet

Fun tips to help your child develop physically: Go to the park to play on outdoor equipment; Let your child dress him/herself; Practice cutting pictures out of a magazine; Use writing instruments as often as possible (crayons, pencils, pens, markers); Bounce a ball and/or jump rope with your child; Go for a bike ride; Walk around your neighborhood collecting nature (leaves, stones, pinecones); Wash the car together…
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Reading (continued)

Reading

Does your child:
- enjoy getting a book as a present? Yes Not Yet
- have many books of his/her own and a special place to keep them? Yes Not Yet
- recognize his/her first name in print? Yes Not Yet
- look at books or pictures on his/her own? Yes Not Yet
- try to read in everyday situations (street signs, cereal boxes, etc.)? Yes Not Yet
- try to read along with you on favorite parts of a story or familiar sentences? Yes Not Yet
- know any nursery rhymes by heart? Yes Not Yet
- pretend to read books by reading the pictures? Yes Not Yet
- see you reading? Yes Not Yet

Social and Emotional Development

Social and Emotional Development

Does your child:
- use words to solve problems when angry/frustrated or ask for help? Yes Not Yet
- use words such as “please”, “thank you”, and “excuse me”? Yes Not Yet
- do things for him/herself (dress self, put toys away, use the restroom alone)? Yes Not Yet
- have success in taking turns and sharing? Yes Not Yet
- interact appropriately with peers and have friends? Yes Not Yet
- stay with an activity to completion (finish a picture, build something)? Yes Not Yet
- follow through when you give directions? Yes Not Yet
- comply with rules, limits, and routines? Yes Not Yet
- interact appropriately with adults? Yes Not Yet
- respect the rights, property, and feelings of others? Yes Not Yet

Fun tips to help your child read:
- Get a library card and let your child check out their own books;
- Subscribe to a children’s magazine so they can anticipate it coming regularly in the mail;
- Work with your child so that they can surprise someone special and read a book to them;
- Play a scavenger hunt game where your child must look through their books to find the items;
- Create a story using pictures cut out of magazines…

Fun tips to help your child develop socially/emotionally:
- Create a sticker chart to track behavior (with a special reward when they reach their goal!);
- Let your child plan a small party with friends;
- Purchase something to create or build with your child that will take multiple sessions to finish;
- Send your child on a scavenger hunt, following directional messages/clues to move them along…

Writing

Writing

Does your child:
- try to write, scribble, or draw? Yes Not Yet
- have a collection of paper, pencils, and/or crayons? Yes Not Yet
- like to receive notes from you or others? Yes Not Yet
- ask you to write words or notes to people? Yes Not Yet
- use chalk or magnetic letters? Yes Not Yet
- attempt to write his/her first/last name? Yes Not Yet
- attempt to invent his/her own spelling while writing (scribbling sentences)? Yes Not Yet
- see you writing (notes, recipes, lists, letters, reminders, etc.)? Yes Not Yet

Fun tips to help your child write:
- Ask your child to write their own name on thank-you notes for family/friends;
- Cut words out of magazines and newspapers that contain the same letters as their name;
- Use a light colored marker to print words and have your child go over all the letters with a pencil/crayon;
- Make signs with your child to label objects in their room and throughout the house…
PARENT TIPS:

- Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all skills that are critical to your child’s success throughout their school years and the rest of their lives. Talk to and listen to your child everyday...Share ideas and experiences together!
- Sing with your child and tell stories together (real and make-believe)!
- During these early years, remember to respond to the content/message of what your child is writing, **not** to how it looks on the surface.
- Read with your child everyday!
  - **BEFORE** reading, look through the book and try to discover what the book is about based on the pictures; discuss anything in the story that is familiar to your child; talk about the author, illustrator, and title of the book...
  - **DURING** the story, ask questions like: what do you think will happen next? why do you think he/she did that?; talk about the pictures, characters, and story events; allow your child to make comments and/or ask questions while you are reading...
  - **AFTER** reading, have your child retell the story; talk about what and/or who they did and did not like in the story, and why...
- Teach your child that learning is important and it can also be FUN!
- Help your child grow socially so that they are confident and secure when they are away from you; give them an opportunity to be a part of a group of children in a play group or preschool classroom.
- Children need to know how to take turns, compromise, obey those in authority, and be kind to others; show your child how to be a good friend.
- Remember that discipline should teach your child how to behave properly and safely, rather than how to accept punishment. Always remind your child that you love them, but dislike their misbehavior.
- Have high, but realistic, expectations for your child; understand their limits.
- Treat your child with respect and try to always be positive, using words of praise and encouragement; teach your child to say please, thank-you, and excuse me.
- Allow your child to show all types of feelings and help them understand that all feelings are okay; help them deal with difficult feelings like anger/jealousy.
- Be affectionate! Give hugs and smiles and spend lots of happy times together!
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**Pencil Grips**

The Traditional Pencil Grip is called "The Dynamic Tripod" and it is the pencil grip taught to most elementary school students; it is also the grip used by the majority of adults. It is felt to be the optimal grip for precision and speed and usually develops between the ages of 4-1/2 and 6 years. The identifying components of this grip are: wrist is bent back towards forearm, hand grasps pencil with stable thumb and index fingers while pencil rests on side of middle finger, fingers and thumb move when writing.

Alternative Mature Pencil Grips include (4) styles that result in legibility and speed that is equivalent to those who use the traditional grip and, therefore, should not be changed. These styles are:

- Lateral Tripod
- Modified Tripod
- Lateral Quadrupod
- Dynamic Quadrupod

Transitional Pencil Grips are used by children between 2 and 6 years of age before they develop a more mature grip. For most transitional grips, the whole hand moves as well as the wrist, forearm, and shoulder during writing. Fingers and thumb usually do not move. A small percentage of students continue to use these grips into adulthood.

- Static Tripod
- 4 or 5 Fingers
- Cross Thumb
- Static Quadrupod

Primitive Pencil Grips are seen in infants and toddlers as they begin to develop motor skills. These grips offer the child the most stability, but least mobility, for a tool gripped by the hand. Like the traditional grip, during writing the whole hand moves along with the wrist, forearm, and shoulder, but the fingers and thumb do not. These grips are rarely seen in kindergarteners and require intervention to help the student progress to a more functional pencil grip.

- Brush
- Palmar Supinate
- Extended Fingers
- Digital Pronate
- Interdigital
- Radial Cross Palmar
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ONLINE RESOURCES

www.abcya.com
ABCya.com is the leader in free educational kids computer games and activities for elementary students to learn on the web. All children's educational computer activities were created or approved by certified school teachers. All educational games are free and are modeled from primary grade lessons and enhanced to provide an interactive way for children to learn. Grade level lessons incorporate areas such as math and language arts while introducing basic computer skills. Many of the kindergarten and first grade activities are equipped with sound to enhance understanding. Fun children's holiday activities are available in grade level sections!

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Once upon a time a cat, a dog, a cow, and a little red hen lived on an old farm on a grassy hill surrounded by fields of golden wheat. One day, the little red hen found some grains of wheat scattered in the barnyard...

“Look what I’ve found,” she said; “Who will help me plant this wheat?”

“Not I,” said the cat,
“Not I,” said the dog,
“Not I,” said the cow,
“Then I’ll do it myself,” said the little red hen – and she did.

Some FUN Learning Ideas:
- Read this repetitive story with your child
- Trace the outline of the animals
- Cut out the animals
- Name the animals (“said Sandy the cat”) and retell the story using the animal pictures
- Make rhyming words using the animal names (cat-mat/rat, dog-hog/log, hen-pen/ten)
- Write out the animal names (cat/dog); let your child trace your letters; to advance, have them try writing the words on their own!
She knew that the seeds needed water to grow...

“Who will help me water the wheat?” asked the little red hen...

“Not I,” said the cat,
“Not I,” said the dog,
“Not I,” said the cow,
“Then I’ll do it myself,” said the little red hen – and she did.

When the wheat was tall and golden, she knew it was ready to be cut...

“Who will help me cut the wheat?” asked the little red hen...

“Not I,” said the cat,
“Not I,” said the dog,
“Not I,” said the cow,
“Then I’ll do it myself,” said the little red hen – and she did.

She knew the wheat had to be taken to the mill and ground into flour...

“Who will help me take the wheat to the mill?” asked the little red hen...

“Not I,” said the cat,
“Not I,” said the dog,
“Not I,” said the cow,
“Then I’ll do it myself,” said the little red hen – and she did.

At the mill, the wheat was ground into a powdery flour and the little red hen knew that it would make yummy bread...

“Who will help me make this flour into bread?” asked the little red hen...

“Not I,” said the cat,
“Not I,” said the dog,
“Not I,” said the cow,
“Then I’ll do it myself,” said the little red hen – and she did.

The Little Red Hen mixed the flour into a loaf of bread and popped it into the oven. Her kitchen filled with a delicious smell of baking bread and the other animals gathered around. The little red hen took the warm loaf of bread out of the oven and set it on the table...

“Now, who will help me eat this warm loaf of bread?” asked the little red hen...

“I will,” said the cat,
“I will,” said the dog,
“I will,” said the cow,

“Oh no you will not,” said the little red hen – “You did not help me plant the seed, or water the seed, or cut the wheat, or bring it to the mill, or bake it. So I shall eat it all by myself”...

But the little red hen was sad to be eating all alone... The other animals were sad too; they asked if they could help her the next time that she made fresh bread. So all of the animals went out into the barnyard to gather more wheat and this time they worked together to make the bread. It was delicious and the little red hen said that it tasted even better when it was shared with friends! After that, they all lived happily together, helping each other every day.