



KINDERGARTEN READINESS for St. Louise Parish School

At St. Louise School, we strive to set your child up for success as this first building block of his/her academic career is established. It is through a collaborative effort between teacher, parents, and student that St. Louise School is able to provide a quality education. The kindergarten year is very critical in starting to create your child's academic attitude and aptitude. Thus, we are committed to making this year a positive learning experience so to create in your child a positive life-long learner mindset.

In response to a question on kindergarten readiness, Dr. Loraine Stern, professor of pediatrics at U.C.L.A., was quoted as saying, "My own advice has always been, 'When in doubt, keep them out.'" She continued with, "School readiness involves more than just age. Social maturation and ability to sit and listen for extended periods, among other factors, are also important."

A British study supports this view. Researchers at Kings College London's department of child and adolescent psychiatry surveyed more than 10,000 children between the ages of 5-15. They questioned the children, along with their parents and teachers, about aspects of their emotions, social behavior, and peer relations. Those who were the youngest in the class, no matter what grade they were in, were more likely to show signs of stress.

State law is that a child must be 5 years old by August 31 in order to start kindergarten.



At St. Louise School, we have found that most of our kindergarten students enter our school at an age of 5½ to 6 years. To best set your child up for success for his/her academic career, we ask that you take into consideration different factors for kindergarten readiness, other than chronological age, which is far different than developmental maturation. A child's developmental maturation is a stronger indicator than chronological age for school readiness. Ideally, a child entering his/her first year of formal schooling will be well rounded emotionally, psychologically, physically, and cognitively.

In an effort to help you discern what is in the best interest of your child, in regard to setting him/her up for success for his/her academic career, we ask you to consider which of the indicators for kindergarten readiness on the following page your child exhibits. Children who are ready for kindergarten won't necessarily exhibit all of the following indicators, but they should exhibit the majority of them.

St. Louise Parish School's Indicators for Kindergarten Readiness

Emotional Maturation

- Shows interest/attention to activities without fidgeting
- Makes eye contact with adults
- Separates from parents without difficulty
- Willingly does things for self (including dressing self and bathroom needs)
- Expresses anger/frustration in words rather than actions
- Allows aggressive behavior to be redirected
- Pays attention during adult directed activity
- Controls impulsivity

Social Maturation

- Plays well by him/herself
- Plays parallel to others well
- Plays with a group creating something
- Shows sensitivity to the needs of others
- Works cooperatively with others
- Takes turns with objects and activities

Physical Maturation (Large Motor Skills)

- Walks down steps using alternating feet
- Runs with control over speed and direction
- Hops forward on one foot
- Climbs up and down equipment without difficulty
- Claps hands to rhythm and beat

Physical Maturation (Small Motor Skills)

- Shows hand preference – left/right
- Picks up and handles objects efficiently
- Uses drawing and writing tools with control and holds pencil correctly
- Writes first name
- Uses scissors with control
- Buttons and unbuttons shirt, and zips and unzips pants

Intellectual Maturation

- Recognizes/identifies basic shapes and colors
- Sorts objects by appearance
- Recalls past event, songs, rhymes, etc
- Shows interest in books
- Recognizes difference in size
- Follows two or more directions

Frequently Asked Questions for Kindergarten Readiness at St. Louise School

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREPARE OUR CHILD FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Developmental maturation is a gift given in God's time. For some children, if they are not ready, the only thing you can do is give them the "gift of time" and wait until the following year to enroll them in kindergarten. If your child is developmentally ready, our suggestion at St. Louise is that from now through September you repeatedly work with your child on the indicators stated on the previous page so that he/she can perform most or all of them.

ARE THERE THINGS TO WORK ON SPECIFICALLY FOR READING READINESS?

Your child does not need to know how to write all the letters of the alphabet before starting kindergarten. That is what he/she will learn in kindergarten. But your child should be able to sing the alphabet song and recognize some letters – both in lowercase and uppercase form. When you are out running errands, look for letters together on street signs, billboards, and store signs. "Read" the cereal box together at breakfast, looking for letters and numbers.

Your child should be able to write and recognize his/her own name. Talk about his/her name - what letter does it start with? How many letters are in it?

Nurture a love of language by reading to your child frequently each day. Educators agree that reading aloud to children regularly is a good predictor of early reading skills. Encourage your child to make up his/her own stories while looking at pictures. Visit libraries and bookstores often, and let your child see you reading books and the newspaper for enjoyment.

ARE THERE THINGS TO WORK ON SPECIFICALLY FOR MATH READINESS?

Your child should be able to count items to 10 before September. (Your child will learn to count to 100 and write the numerals 1 through 20 during the kindergarten year.) You can strengthen counting skills through simple games, including:

- Count the stairs as you go up or down.
- In the car, count other cars or stop signs.
- Play pattern games. For example, give your child green and purple grapes. Have him/her arrange them in different patterns - purple, green, purple, green... - or better yet, something at a higher level such as - green, green, purple, green, green, purple...
- Look for patterns in nature, such as rings on a caterpillar or things that come in pairs - eyes, ears, hands.
- Count and sort household items. Mix up the knives, forks, and spoons from the silverware drawer and have your child group them by type and count how many are in each group. Do the same with your sock drawer (by color, by size), your child's stuffed animal collection (group the animals by big and small; put all the bears together).
- Have your child help you fold and sort laundry. How many socks are there? How many T-shirts? Divide them into groups.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP PREPARE MY CHILD SOCIALLY?

Structure play activities by providing materials and social situations that encourage play. Through play, children learn concepts, improve their interactions with peers, practice using their large and small muscle groups, and practice making choices.

Encourage conversation. Children learn about language and self-expression when they engage in verbal exchanges with others.

Provide concrete learning experiences for children. Take children along with you to the grocery store, post office, library, and local children's museums. Letting them experience these places and talking with them about what they're seeing, hearing, touching, and so forth is exposing them to learning.

ARE THERE THINGS I SHOULD DO TO HELP MY CHILD PREPARE PHYSICALLY?

Before children can learn to write, they have to develop their fine motor skills. To help, give your child small jobs to do around the house that encourage him to use the muscles in his arms and fingers, such as opening mail, sorting silverware, stirring batter, and tying shoes.

You should also suggest that your child spend time writing or drawing on a big pad of paper with markers, crayons, or pencils. Some children may find more comfort in using thick-sized writing implements. Using scissors to cut out large shapes you draw on paper is a good idea. Playing with fluid materials like water and sand will help his/her coordination, too.

ANY OTHER IDEAS TO WORK ON WITH MY CHILD OVER THE SUMMER?

Devote some time to teaching concepts. Understanding the difference between words like "same" & "different" or "more" & "less" will help a child express his/her thoughts. Another important tool is the art of describing and making distinctions. That is why the characters on *Sesame Street* play "One of these things is not like the other..." You can do the same at home. Put three oranges and a banana in a bowl, and ask him/her to choose the one that's different and explain why. Discuss and help your child use place words (prepositions), such as "under," "above," "beside," and "through," and words that describe time, such as "before" and "after."

Without your help, make sure your child can use the toilet and toilet paper independently, wash hands, put on and take off a sweater and coat, put on and take off shoes (with either shoelaces or velcro), button and/or zip pants and/or jumpers, and eat unassisted.

WHAT DO I DO TO PREPARE FOR MY CHILD'S SEPARATION ANXIETY THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL?

Reading books about going to school may help ease worries. There are lots of great ones like Kindergarten Rocks or Tiptoe into Kindergarten. Play pretend about going to school. When you attend weekend Mass at St. Louise (if applicable), walk by the school building to point out various areas, and visit the playground equipment on the north end of the soccer field. On the first day of school – we call it "Passport Day" – you'll come to school with your child to meet the teacher and deliver school supplies. At that time you'll be able to tour and point out the office and other classrooms your child will attend during the school year (e.g. the library, the gym, and the computer lab.) Speak in positives, but in a matter of fact fashion about the first day, and about school in general. Don't build it up so much that it becomes stressful just thinking about it.