

18 Important Skills that are Helpful for Children Entering Kindergarten

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1. **Cutting with scissors** --Provide your child with safety scissors and supervise some cutting activities. Try cutting on straight lines and curved lines. Next, try cutting out shapes or just cutting out pictures in magazines.
2. **Sorting and grouping** -- Ask your child to sort things into groups by different characteristics. Start with color, and then try shapes, textures, and sizes. You can use buttons, toys, forks, knives, spoons or whatever group of objects you have.
3. **Counting** -- Count small groups of like the ones listed above by touching the objects one at a time and saying the numeral out loud. Children learn best by touching and seeing.
4. **Building with blocks, Legos or other toys** -- Play with your child. Ask questions about their process of building or playing. "Tell me about what you are building. Challenge their thinking and skills. Could you build a boat? Let's make a taller tower. What else do you think you could build?"
5. **Drawing shapes** -- Children can trace shapes with writing or drawing instruments. Then they can draw on top of dotted lines until they get the hang of drawing simple shapes like circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. They can make the shapes in sand, salt, and play dough. Outline the shapes and letter with glue and let it harden. The child can then trace the outline with their finger and feel the texture of the outline.
6. **Talk with your child each day** -- Have conversations with your child **every** day. Children naturally ask many questions which provides many opportunities for conversations. Also ask them questions about things you see while driving in the car, during visits to the grocery store, or playing in the yard. Here are some examples: What do you think that might be? What could it be used for? What does the shape look like? Where have you seen something like it before? Where would this come from? How else could we use it? How could we find out more about it?
7. **Writing name** -- Writing is a very developmental skill for children and occurs at a different rate for all children. Demonstrate to your child how to use a capital letter for the first letter of the first and last name **ONLY**. It is better to start on unlined paper. They can even draw in sand or salt with their finger. Draw in pudding, paint, or even shaving cream to add a sensory experience to the learning. Next have them trace over dotted lines that you have drawn to complete their name. Reversals and shaky letters are very common. Have the child form letters out of playdough and pipe cleaners over and over to help develop those much-needed fine motor skills that help with writing.
8. **Knowing shapes and colors** -- Children can work toward recognizing most common shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles. They should also be able to recognize the basic colors of red, yellow, green, blue, purple, black, brown, white, and pink. Just pointing out common objects and naming the color and shape of the objects can help accomplish this. You can use toys as well as other common household objects. Sorting objects by color and shape will help with this activity. Point and name colors everywhere you go. Make it a game you play in the car, the store, the doctor's office or anywhere
9. **Putting puzzles together** -- Start with simple shape puzzles with large pieces. This promotes logical thinking as well as shape recognition. Gradually, move to harder puzzles after simple shaped puzzles are mastered. Teach children the process for putting the edges in place first, like colors together, and looking for pieces that might fit together. Puzzles teach children to sit still and think. Most children don't understand the strategies of puzzle play. Help them learn to look for straight edges and similar colors so they match up pieces. This involves higher order thinking skills.

(Over)

10. **Listening and literacy skills** -- Read to your child every night and any other time they will listen. Ask questions about the story as you read. Ask questions about what is happening in the pictures. What will happen next? Ask questions about what might have happened?
11. **Environmental print** -- Early reading includes identifying environmental print. This is the print that is everywhere in our environment--magazines, newspapers, food containers, signs etc. Your child already recognizes many of these symbols and words. Build on this learning, by pointing out print everywhere that is meaningful to your child. The fast food restaurant signs, the name on the cereal box, the cookie box, candy wrappers, and street signs are just a few things to consider. You can cut these out and make collages, art work or just let your child play with them. You can collect these images into a book they can "read" by putting them into zip lock baggie pages and stapling like a book. The child can turn pages and say the names of the images as they pretend to read.
12. **Read, Read, Read** --Read stories, books, and/or nursery rhymes to your child each day. This not only lets the child hear literature, it allows them to hear oral language and vocabulary. Hearing nursery rhymes and saying them over and over is a critical part of oral language and reading development. This engagement with your child also helps build comprehension and thinking skills.
13. **Reading Readiness** --Point out letters and help your child with the name of the letters. They may already recognize these. They do not have to know the sound each letter makes, but that is the next step. **Saying and reading nursery rhymes and stories is VERY helpful in the reading process for children. Read, read, and read with your child every day!**
14. **Math** -- Grouping and sorting objects, as with the shapes is a great activity. Let the child count groups of objects. They may need to touch each one as they count. Pre-k counts objects 1-10, and verbally 1-30.
15. **Learn how to share with others** -- Allow your child to play with other children and observe them as they do this. Do they snatch and grab toys away? Do they understand what it means to share? Can they play side by side with another child without causing a disturbance? If not, you have some work to do as a parent getting your child ready to work, share, and play with others.
16. **Teach your child respect for adults** -- Please teach your child that a teacher is someone that is worthy of respect, and that you expect them to listen and obey the teacher. Emphasize that you respect the teacher also. This will go a long way toward helping your child and their attitude about school. We need your help and cooperation to make your child's education a success!
17. **Highlight letters or numbers** -- Give your child a highlighter or light-colored crayon and let them color all the letters or numbers in a section of the newspaper. They could look for the As or the Cs or all the number 3s, or certain words. Vary the task to keep it interesting.
18. **Name the letters and numbers wherever you go!** -- Make learning fun. Ask your child to look for letters, numbers, words or shapes in the world around them. Make it a game to spy these things. I see the shape of a _____. Describe and have them guess. I see a curved letter on that wall, do you? What letter is it? Don't drill, just make them aware in a fun way!



WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN!