



Preparing for Kindergarten

Mythbusting _ fact v. fiction



+ What is Kindergarten Readiness?

Academic readiness is only part of the story.

Personal and social awareness is even more important.



Is my child ready?



- What does my child actually need to know before they start kindergarten?
- What are the most important ways to prepare my child?
- How can I tell if they are ready?

+ Support in kindergarten



- If my child qualifies for PUF support...
 - Unlikely to be 1-1 support
 - Support is determined by the school and the strategist
 - Mainly teacher support (IPP) with a teaching assistant in class
 - Support is usually clustered and for parts of the day
 - Strategist and a school representative attends this year's final IPP and a transition package is given to them, containing recent assessments and the IPP
 - Therapy support starts after the EYE is completed

+ Support in kindergarten

- If my child qualifies for Mild/Moderate support...
 - Child will have an IPP in kindergarten
 - Support will be clustered, maybe 'pull out' sessions occasionally to work on goals
 - Mainly teacher support in the class with help of teaching assistant
 - Strategist and a school representative attends this year's final IPP and a transition package is given to them, containing recent assessments and the IPP
 - Therapy support starts after the EYE is completed





What is the EYE?



- EYE stands for Early Years Evaluation _happens in the fall term
- Assesses strengths and areas for growth in each of the developmental areas
 - Awareness of self and environment
 - Social skills and approaches to learning
 - Cognitive skills
 - Language and communication
 - Physical development
- Informs planning and teaching in the classroom, as well as identifies children that need additional support.



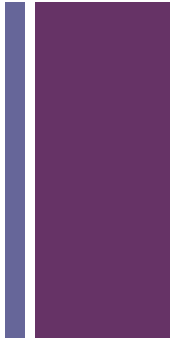
Fact v. Fiction – early academic skills

FICTION

- Must be able to count to 100
- Must be able to read, spell and write their name
- Must know all the letters of the alphabet
- Recognise and be able to read simple 'sight words'
- Count in ones, twos, fives and tens
- Must be able to write all the letters of the alphabet

FACT

- A developing awareness of what numbers look like – up to 10
- Recognize their name
- Beginning to recognize some letters of the alphabet – usually the ones in their names come first
- NO READING EXPECTATIONS!
- Counting in 1's to 10
- Hold a pencil using a tripod or similarly functional grasp. Makes marks using a pencil or pen.





Most importantly...

- Can use the washroom independently _ dressing, wiping, washing hands, as well as blowing nose, covering a sneeze or cough etc.
- Can dress or undress to go outside for recess/start and end of the day _ snaps, buttons or zippers. Can recognize their own belongings in the hallway.
- Can listen to, and follow simple 2 step instructions
- Is curious about and receptive to learning and trying new things
- Getting along with others _ sharing, taking turns, greeting, responding, protesting, requesting, cooperating with others
- Being able to advocate for themselves _ knowing how to ask for help, answer simple questions and generally communicate their needs to another adult or peer
- Not overly fearful of new situations, experiences or people
- Used to separating from parents at the start of the day
- Knows their own first and last name





Running before they can walk...

The dangers of unrealistic expectations

- Rushing children to advance their skills beyond developmental expectations can do more harm than good
- Many skills which are reported to be 'essential' in preschool or before they start school are not developmentally appropriate
- No kindergarten teacher expects children to start school being able to read, spell and do simple math.
- Children who are pushed into these skills before they are developmentally ready run a real risk of encountering learning difficulties in subsequent grades (usually grades 2-5)





What do teachers want?

Teachers do not expect all children to arrive at school with the same set of skills.

They know that children start school with a rich and varied skill set. Some are more advanced than others, some need more support than others.

This is what makes teaching interesting, fulfilling and so enjoyable!

- Happy children
- Socially aware children who are happy to be around other children
- Healthy children
- Children who are interested in the world around them
- Children who are eager to learn
- Children who are becoming increasingly self sufficient and capable



What can parents do to help their children be ready to start school?

- Make sure your child is familiar with and comfortable being left with other people for increasing lengths of time
- Encourage independent self care skills, teach them how to wipe, wash hands, do up their jackets, put on their shoes etc
- Make sure they know their first and last names (orally) and draw their attention to their first name in print
- Read to your child! Foster a love of books.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes
- Count things together
- Provide lots of opportunities for play with other children _ playdates, trips to park or play centres.
- Visit the school _ play outside or tour the school with your child and talk about school.
- Encourage them to be curious, ask questions and show interest in their world



Things to remember...

What is the best way you can support your child in their school years?

- You are your child's strongest advocate
- Be proactive
- Communicate with your child's teacher and the school in general
- Support your child at home