

[Ready for K Through Play](#)



Families are their children's first teacher. Caregivers play such an important role in both their school readiness and their overall academic success. Getting your child(ren) ready for school doesn't have to involve endless hours of drill type activities.

It can be playful, informal and fun. When children are having fun, in a comfortable and engaging way - learning occurs naturally. Though your child will have a year of amazing growth and learning in Kindergarten, it is ideal to provide them with both the tools and the necessary foundation they will need to be successful. In a quality preschool program, learning through play won't just be rhetoric, but will be a core tenet of their program's approach and a well defined aspect of the curriculum.

Learning to write is of course, part of preschool, and children need to spend ample time practicing their letters. Can that be achieved through play? It can if they practice writing a stick in a sandbox. That's not to say there is no place for a worksheet in preschool, but that shouldn't be the primary method of teaching. It is also important to understand children need ample time for unstructured play, as it's key to their social development.



Benefits of Unstructured Play

Unstructured play is likely what you think of when you hear 'play' and what gives you pause as to kindergarten readiness--kids running around and choosing what to do and when to do it.

But, during that unstructured time, children are learning important skills, often called '[soft skills](#)'. These include communication, socialization, problem solving, negotiation, and leadership. We will forever argue that they're just as critical '[hard skills](#)'. When two preschoolers are fighting over whose turn it is on a swing and there's no adult around to solve the problem, what happens? Well, often they'll argue for a bit before deciding to take turns.

Let's examine that. Children arguing are learning what tactics work and don't work to achieve their results--negotiation skills. They are learning persuasion and how to win arguments (even if you don't want them to learn that). They're learning how to coexist with other people. They're learning how to solve the problem of two people and one swing.

What do I need to prepare for kindergarten?

There are so many different opinions on the skills that children need to work on to prepare for kindergarten.

Here are a few skills that are important for kids to work on as they prepare for kindergarten:

- Self help skills (putting on his own coat, unpacking his own lunch, opening her water bottle, etc.)
- Fine motor skills (zipping, buttoning, pre-writing skills like drawing lines and coloring)

- Sitting and listening to a book read aloud
- Participating in and following simple routines
- Language skills (communicating with others- kids and adults)
- Social skills (making friends, being a good friend, taking turns, etc.)
- Basic learning skills (knowing name, alphabet letters, numbers, etc.)

Source: Paper Pinecone

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