

# Prepared for Kindergarten...What Does it Mean?

*A child's future academic success is dependent on being **ready to learn and participate** in a successful kindergarten experience.*

Parents and teachers often have differing opinions about which skills are most important for children's readiness for kindergarten. Parents are more likely to focus on cognitive skills. Teachers tend to view social-emotional development as equally important for kindergarten success. (National Institute for Early Education Research, [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org))

The questions listed below were compiled from conversations with Chittenden South Supervisory Union Early Education teachers and research-based child assessment information. If you can answer yes to *most* of these questions by the summer prior to kindergarten, then the child is likely to enter kindergarten prepared and eager to learn!

<b>Does the child participate in pretend or make-believe play?</b>	<i>This kind of play helps children work through conflicts and improve language skills.</i>
<b>Does the child get along well with other kids? Does he/she share and know how to take turns?</b>	<i>He/she will be interacting with other children all day, so your child's social skills are particularly important for success in school.</i>
<b>Can the child work together with others as part of a group?</b>	<i>The ability to put his/her needs second, to compromise and join in a consensus with other children, is a part of emotional competence.</i>
<b>Can the child explain "how to" get ready for bed, pick up toys, brush their teeth?</b>	<i>The ability to explain and plan for simple routines is an important skill.</i>
<b>Can the child listen to instructions and then follow them?</b>	<i>These skills help children keep up with the teacher and with their peers.</i>
<b>Can the child put on his coat? Use the bathroom independently?</b>	<i>Children need to have basic self-help skills.</i>
<b>Can the child hold a pencil? Cut with scissors?</b>	<i>These fine motor skills will allow a child to practice writing and complete other classroom projects.</i>
<b>Does the child show an interest in books? Does he/she try to "read" a book by telling a story based on the pictures?</b>	<i>This is a sign that his/her language and literacy skills are developing.</i>
<b>Is the child curious and excited about learning new things?</b>	<i>If a child's curiosity is stronger than his/her fear of the unfamiliar, he/she will likely be more comfortable entering kindergarten.</i>

## CSSU Kindergarten Checklist

Every child develops in his/her own way. There's no perfect formula that determines when children are truly ready for kindergarten. The information on the front of this handout describes some important skills that will help your child to be prepared for kindergarten.

This checklist includes additional skills found on most kindergarten checklists. Keep in mind, young children change fast -- if they can't do something this week, they may be able to do it a few weeks later.

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Not Yet
Recognizes 10 or more letters of the alphabet (10 lower and 10 upper case)			
Recognizes his/her most commonly used name in print			
Uses picture, symbols or letters to write or represent words or ideas			
Can identify several basic shapes			
Can count 5 or more objects			
Can identify basic colors			
Can solve problems verbally (talking it through)			
Will ask a familiar adult for help			
Can focus on a quiet activity (listen to a story, puzzles, blocks, painting...)			
Easily separates from parent/caregiver			

### **5 Fun Educational Activities For Young Children**

*Community experiences contribute positively to a child's development.*

1. A trip to the **Echo Lake Aquarium and Science Center**, 1 College St. Burlington. Echo Center has more than 100 interactive exhibits. \*\*
2. Our community has many **parks** and **playgrounds** perfect for picnics, climbing, sliding, swinging or playing a game of tag.
3. Sign your child up for a library card at your **Local Library**. Your local library has many free activities and story times.
4. Visit a **Farm**. Vermont has a long farming history. You can take your child to pick fruit (apples, berries...), watch maple syrup being made or visit the animals at **Shelburne Farms**. \*\*
5. Take a **Hike!** There are many family friendly trails in our area: Mt. Philo, Allen Brook Nature Trail, Shelburne Bay Park, Hinesburg Town Forest , and Five Tree Hill, to name a few.

(\*\* Free or discounted passes available at your local library\*\*)

*If you have questions regarding readiness for kindergarten, please contact your local elementary school.*