

My Child Is Going To Kindergarten...Maybe?

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For many parents, the end of the school year means relaxing from the stress of PTO meetings and completing science fair projects! However, there are a few parents whose stress level won't decrease this summer...our future kindergarten parents. This article is written for them.

The first step has been completed- attending Kindergarten Open House. At this meeting, parents walked through the kindergarten classrooms, met the kindergarten staff, school administrators, curriculum directors and members of the PTO. After the Open House, parents had time to review and discuss the school expectations when your child enters kindergarten. Standards and assessments to be mastered by the end of kindergarten should also have been discussed. If you were unable to attend your child's Open House- please read the following charts:

Before Kindergarten

Speak and Listen

- Use and understand many words
- Speak in complete sentences
- Ask lots of questions
- Say and notice words that rhyme
- Make up and share personal stories about their interests

Read and Write

- Select familiar books and tell why they like them
- Retell favorite stories from books
- Hold a book upright
- Identify letters of the alphabet
- Recognize letter sounds
- Recognize, copy & print their first name
- Hold a pencil and write with it

Use Mathematics

- Recognize and count up to ten items
- Recognize the number symbols 1-10
- Describe and talk about objects that have different sizes, colors, shapes and patterns
- Sort items by 'same' and 'different'
- Use the words 'near', 'far', 'top', 'bottom', 'under', 'first', 'second', 'last'
- Sort objects from smallest to largest, shortest to tallest and lightest to heaviest

Participate and Cooperate

- Understand and participate in conversations

- Stay involved in directed activity to its completion
- Follow routines and directions
- Work and play together with other children

End-of-Year Kindergarten Expectations

(as approved from CT State Dept. of Education at time of this articles publication)

- Development of phonological awareness and alphabetic principle
- Organize information in proper sequence
- Activate prior knowledge when reading to establish a purpose & draw conclusions and make inferences after reading text; which can be supported
- Distinguishes between fact and opinion & fiction and non-fiction
- Responds to text using text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections
- Uses content vocabulary appropriately and continues to increase sight words and vocabulary through listening, speaking, reading & writing
- Recognizes patterns in text
- Listen, read and respond to text of multicultural experiences and make connections to their own lives; discuss variations between language patterns
- Recognize simple values and beliefs in text and how the reader's experiences may influence the interpretation
- Write and tell stories using organizational patterns appropriate to the mode of writing; listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models
- Begin to revise writing for organization, elaboration and publication-using a variety of ways, including technology
- Use appropriate language/diction when speaking
- Demonstrates use of capitalization, punctuation and proper spelling of familiar sight words
- Sort and classify objects using attributes
- Identify and extend patterns; make predictions
- Sort shapes and solids by physical characteristics
- Use numbers to count, order, compare, label, locate and measure
- Count adding one more to the previous number and group and count by ones and tens
- Use positional language to describe location, direction and position of objects
- Use calendars and clocks to measure and record time
- Use nonstandard units to estimate measures of length, area, temperature, weight and capacity

- Visualize information and make comparisons about information displayed in real and picture graphs
- Observe frequency of real-world events and identify the likelihood of future events

If you haven't noticed, I have yet to inform you of the science and social studies content! You may visit the CT State Department of Education website or contact your school's curriculum director for more information. And in case you are feeling a bit overwhelmed from all the expectations placed on students in kindergarten, let's not forget how many teachers must complete these requirements in a half day kindergarten program!

In conclusion, as the parent, you must decide if your child is ready for the kindergarten curriculum. Your decision should be based on pre-kindergarten assessments, professionals involved in your child's pre-school years (pediatrician, early childhood teachers, educational consultants), remedial services the school provides and most importantly-your parental instincts. As many educators can attest to, there has been an increase of parents deciding to wait another year before enrolling their child in kindergarten. The kindergarten curriculum has surpassed from arts & crafts and worksheets to guided reading, journal writing and math portfolios. Parents must honestly reflect and ask if their child is emotionally and socially prepared to master these state mandated kindergarten standards.

I hope the information regarding kindergarten expectations is helpful. As a Remedial Reading teacher, I enjoy working in the public school system and providing helpful information to parents and their children. *If you have any further questions/concerns I may help you answer, please send e-mail to Linda at LINDAMASSUCCI@aol.com*