

Preschool Readiness – Is Your Child Ready for Preschool?

There isn't a checklist of must-have skills kids need to start preschool. That's because young children develop at very different rates. But there are some areas you can look at to see if your child is ready for group learning.

These areas form a handy acronym: Here's how to tell if your child has the "PIECES" of preschool readiness in place.

P: Potty-trained

Faithful Foundations' policy is to require children entering first year preschool to be mostly toilet trained. We do allow pull-ups for the first part of the year to assist in protecting against accidents, especially if they're 3 years old or if they have special needs.

Children entering our second-year program (pre-K4), 4-year-olds entering the pre-K3 program, and all kindergarten students (pre-K5) are expected to be potty-trained.

I: Independent

By the time kids start preschool, they're expected to play games or do projects with other kids for a short period of time (5 to 10 minutes) without needing constant redirection from an adult. They also need to feed themselves and find their way around the classroom once they've had time to get to know the space.

E: Expressive

To be ready for preschool, kids need to be able to express themselves in a way that an unfamiliar adult can understand.

That doesn't mean your child needs to be speaking in full sentences. But kids do need to have an appropriate way of getting their feelings and needs across.

Kids who are expressive can understand what other people say. They might not yet follow directions with multiple steps, but they understand basic words and directions like “sit down” and “follow me.”

Preschoolers are also expected to have a basic understanding that other kids have feelings and needs.

C: Concentration

The ability to concentrate looks very different in a preschooler than it does in older kids. It also varies from child to child.

Most preschool-ready kids can pay attention to a short picture book being read aloud. Activities are typically limited to 10 or 20 minutes in a preschool classroom. Preschoolers have to concentrate on an activity for this amount of time.

Preschoolers need to follow directions most of the time and to focus on tasks without getting too distracted. But a little distraction is typical, especially if this is the first time your child has spent around a group of other kids.

E: Emotionally ready

Emotionally, there are a few things to look for when considering whether your child is ready for preschool. The first is the ability to say goodbye to a parent or caregiver without too much anxiety. It's common to be a little nervous. But kids who cry the entire day might not be ready to go to a full preschool program.

That said, many kids cry when you say goodbye on the first day or even throughout the first week.

Kids who are emotionally ready are more eager to go to school and want to make friends. They might not have the skills to make friends yet but *wanting* to make them is a good start.

S: Stamina

Children need a lot of physical and mental energy for preschool. Kids who aren't used to following a routine and being engaged can have a harder time adjusting to preschool.

One way to know if kids are ready is to look at their nap schedule. If they still take a long morning and afternoon nap, they might not be ready yet. To get your child ready, you can try merging your child's morning and afternoon naps into one longer afternoon nap.

Putting these "PIECES" together makes it easier to know if your child is ready for preschool. If these aren't all in place, try practicing some of them at home.

Key takeaways

- Most preschoolers are still working on readiness skills when they start preschool.
- Being able to follow instructions will help your child be ready for preschool.
- You can practice preschool readiness skills at home.