

## What is “Kindergarten Readiness”?

Kindergarten readiness is not simply being able to recite numbers, letters, shapes, and colors. School readiness is a constellation or combination of many factors. Few children are completely ready or not ready for kindergarten, and most will fall somewhere in between on a continuum of readiness. Below are some developmental skills identified as important from the Center for Early Education and Development:

### **Social Development**

- ☺ able to trust other adults and children
- ☺ able to play with, not just next to, other children
- ☺ able to learn and play in a group

### **Emotional Development**

- ☺ some degree of independence and self direction
- ☺ self control or ability to delay gratification (even briefly)
- ☺ reasonably confident and willing to try new things
- ☺ interested in school and in learning new things

### **Language Development**

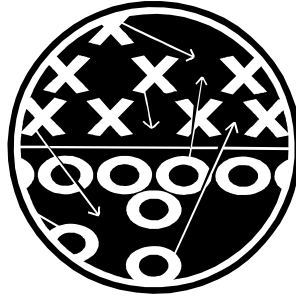
- ☺ able to understand directions
- ☺ able to express needs
- ☺ able to communicate with adults and other children
- ☺ can express thoughts in sentences
- ☺ reasonably broad vocabulary

### **Motor Development**

- ☺ can run and jump (if not handicapped)
- ☺ sense of spatial awareness and balance
- ☺ shows right or left dominance
- ☺ has self-help skills: dressing, eating, and toileting
- ☺ able to manipulate small objects
- ☺ can copy simple symbols
- ☺ can hold a pencil appropriately

### **Intellectual Development**

- ☺ able to focus and concentrate on an activity for 10 to 15 minutes
- ☺ understands that letters stand for something
- ☺ understands that printed text is spoken language written down
- ☺ has had experiences with environment (grocery store, post office, library, etc.)
- ☺ can follow simple directions and remember simple routines
- ☺ able to stick with and solve simple problems



## **How can parents help prepare their children for kindergarten?**

Parents can prepare their children for school by communicating that school is important and by helping their children develop the language skills and social behaviors needed for school.

It is important that parents feel and communicate that school is important and do their best to ensure their child's regular school attendance. Parents can model appropriate use of written materials, whether they are TV Guides, magazines, newspapers, or books. Using language often with children is important. This includes talking about events and feelings, in addition to giving directives. Finally, parent-child interaction which demonstrates social behaviors needed for school, such as complying with rules and expectations and delaying immediate gratification, is critical.

Obviously, it is important for parents to do their best to ensure that their children are healthy and consume reasonably nutritious foods in adequate amounts. Less obvious is the need for parents to monitor and control the amount and content of television watching in the household. Children who watch excessive amounts of television are losing precious time that could otherwise be spent in more mentally and physically challenging activities.

Finally, parents who read to their children for as little as ten minutes daily at bedtime are giving their children a bouquet of important readiness activities. These include close body contact (which promotes security and independence), practice in learning and using language skills, vicarious learning about the world and its peoples, and maybe most important, the concept that reading is fun.

Source: 2004 by the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED)