



DUFFERIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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10 Classroom Survival skills to teach your children *before* they go to school

Kindergarten readiness is not only about identifying numbers and letters. Children who have had few group experiences benefit from some training in the activities below.

A child who is familiar with the 10 areas listed below will feel more confident and successful in the classroom or in any group experience.

1. Teach your children to be independent

Ease out of tying laces, buttoning jackets, and other personal care jobs for your children the year before they enter kindergarten. Here is a short list of some of the things children struggle with for the first few months of class:

- opening lids on plastic food or drink containers or packaged foods
- knowing what to eat for snack and what to save for lunch
- using scissors - teach safety first, then begin with stiffer paper and good quality child's scissors
- using a glue stick
- folding papers and packing their lunch kits and papers into their backpacks
- hanging their jackets on a hook
- zipping their zippers, buttoning their buttons
- changing from outside to inside shoes
- taking off or putting on sweatshirts if they get too hot or cold

Knowing how to manage these little things helps kindergarten students to feel more capable in the classroom.

2. Train your kids to listen and follow directions

Train your kids to listen and follow directions with household activities. Say, "I want you to take these dirty clothes and put them in the blue laundry basket. Now repeat that back to me." As the child succeeds following one or two steps, add more.

3. Teach children to wait and be patient

Children who are used to getting their every need met immediately may have a hard time in school where children are required to wait for many things and may be the last to get a turn at an activity. As silly as it seems, set up situations where it is Daddy's or Mommy's turn to be first.

In a busy school setting, a teacher does not have time to reason with each child in the class.

Kindergarten readiness includes letting your child have experiences when you just say, "No", without explaining or reasoning with them.

4. Encourage your children to be problem solvers

Kindergarten readiness includes teaching children to be problem solvers. When your children come whining to you with a problem, pay them a penny or a nickel for each problem they can solve themselves. Often children get into the habit of expecting adults to fix all the difficulties in their life.

5. Teach children to lose gracefully

When playing games don't always let your children win. When they get to school they won't receive this advantage and children not accustomed to losing may pout or get angry and upset when playing with their peers. This does not help them make or keep friends.

6. Teach children to work

Encourage kindergarten readiness by expecting children to partake in family chores. Teach them that they are a vital part of the family structure and that their participation is necessary. Children need to feel needed and those used to helping will join in more readily when required to take part in classroom clean up and routines.

7. Teach children to identify and print their name

Put the child's name on the fridge or other places where he or she will see it on a regular basis. *Use a capital for the first letter and then lower case letters.* I have had tearful children who say, "That is not my name" when they see it above their coat hooks, as they had only previously seen their name printed with all capital letters.

Use cookie dough, modeling clay, a stick in the sand, paint and a brush, as well as paper and pencil to teach your children the letters in their name. Most teachers ask kindergarten students to print their names on their papers. Children who already know how to print their name quickly move on to the next activity while the ones who are still learning sit longer to practice this skill.

8. Teach children basic classroom hygiene

Another aspect of kindergarten readiness is hygiene. If kids are going to sneeze and there's no time to get a kleenex, teach them to sneeze on the sleeve part of their upper arm. Also teach them to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. They will have fewer chances of giving and getting germs.

9. Build their classroom vocabulary

Show you child what the term "line up" means. For some children this is a mystery when they arrive in class. Unfortunately, lining up is part of school life. Going to the gym, to the library, or out for recess all require lining up quietly so teachers can count heads and children get out the doors safely. Other terms such as front, back, behind you, in front of you, forwards, backwards may be used as children move around the classroom.

10. Teach your child basic friendship skills

Making friends is not easy for all children. Those that know how to share, take turns, and express their feelings and wants are more successful than those without these basic skills.

Skills for making friends are an important part of kindergarten readiness.

- Teach children to be polite, to say thank you and please

- Teach them to listen to friends and to not interrupt repeatedly
- Give your children time to speak up for themselves when an adult talks to them
- Role-play: pretend you are part of a group of kids playing and show your child how to join in by saying, “What are you playing? How can I join the game?” rather than, “Can I play with you?”
- ***Some kids will call your child names and will be pushy with your child. Don't convey to your children that they are being bullied, rather explain to them that there are children who have not learned how to be a good friend. Role-play things to say and how to say them so your child will feel empowered, rather than feel like a victim.***
- Role-play the power of "I" statements spoken loudly and firmly with your child. "I do not like it when you hit. Stop it now. I will share the blocks and give you a turn soon." Also teach them to get adult help if the other child will not listen.