



Best Beginnings



School Readiness

A guide to help you prepare your child for learning

Brought to you by



DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH &
HUMAN SERVICES



For more information please call
1 (866) 239-0458
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Ready Families

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Ready Communities

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Ready Services

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Ready Schools

Success in learning occurs before kindergarten. Families, communities, services and schools all play a part in a child's school readiness by supporting the development of skills and positive behaviors, as well as enhancing the environments in which they spend their time.

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Children Ready for School

Children are born ready to learn. The experiences that children have in the early years are the foundation for growth and development, and what they learn through these experiences are shaped by a child's family, community and school.

Ready Families

A child's early experiences involve relationships with parents and caregivers. Children come into the world eager for interaction. They want to connect right from the beginning. It is this emotional connection that gives them the confidence they need to learn.

Ready Families Provide:

Love and Attention. By giving our children love and attention, we help them feel safe, relaxed and happy.

A Predictable World. Regular routines and consistent responses give children a sense that adults and the world are trustworthy.



Play Time. Enjoyable activities stimulate the growth of a child's brain. Play provides children with opportunities for imitation, imagination and discovering more about their world.

Enriching Conversation. The child's brain is actively developing its capacity for speech and language. Spend time talking, reading and singing with your child whenever possible.

Understanding and Patience. You cannot spoil children by responding to them. Being attentive to a child's needs develops a line of trust between adult and child.

Time to Digest New Information. Beware of over-stimulation. Give children time to think, explore and process new information and experiences.



Ready Communities

Communities are made up of neighborhoods, churches, social groups, various cultures and businesses that contribute to how well children are prepared for school. To support children as eager learners, communities must support families with young children.

Ready Communities Provide:

Early Childhood Services. Many people provide quality early care and education. Whether it's you, a relative, a nanny, a regulated child care facility or a preschool, your child should have the opportunity to play and learn with a small group of children in a clean, safe environment with consistent caregivers.

Family Friendly Work Places. Many parents have the dual responsibility of raising children while earning a living. A family friendly workplace acknowledges that families need extra support by providing programs and consideration so that employees may succeed at both.



Child Friendly Places. Libraries, museums, parks, after school programs and community events such as festivals offer experiences that stimulate growth and learning.

Neighborhood Conditions. Neighborhoods often influence the quality of schools, housing and services available. Individuals within the community often serve as role models and can influence personal safety for everyone within the neighborhood through community meetings and neighborhood watch programs.

Ready Services

Programs proven to be influential in a child's development are those that have providers and families working together to meet the individual needs of each child and family.

Ready Services Provide:

Community Services. Services within the community such as Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, Head Start, Employment Services and Housing Assistance are available to provide support for children and families to ensure that every child has the opportunity for success.



Health and Dental Care. Prenatal care for pregnant mothers helps to ensure a successful beginning for both mother and child. As children grow, regular appointments with a family doctor, dentist or other healthcare professional can assure your child is achieving and maintaining good health.

Early Childhood Mental Health Services. Mental health services are helpful in addressing concerns or questions related to growth and development, special needs, behaviors and social skills. Mental health professionals skilled in child development can assist children and families in dealing with stressful situations.

Parent Education. Children don't come with instruction manuals; each has unique needs. Parenting classes and family support resources can provide techniques that focus on child development and guidance.



Ready Schools

Neighborhood schools often serve as the hub of a community. By making connections and creating partnerships with local child care providers and preschools, the transition to kindergarten is eased. Schools must be ready to address the diverse needs of the children and families in their community and be committed to each child's success.

Ready Schools Provide:

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum.

Children need to be taught by adults who understand them on an individual level. A ready teacher recognizes that children develop at different rates and will gear their instruction to each child's needs.

Parent-Teacher Partnership.

Parents are seen as the child's first teacher and are welcome in the classroom where open lines of communication exist.

Academic and Social Guidance. A well-balanced education program includes the traditional academic areas of language, math and science; as well as, focus on health, fitness, creativity, positive social skill development and following group rules.

Individualized Instruction. Some children need to look at something to understand it, others need to hear about it, while others need to get in there and handle it. Gearing instructional techniques to each individual child will help them reach their highest potential. Parents and teachers can work together to help children find success in learning.

Qualified Staff in Safe, Well-Equipped Classrooms.

Teachers qualified in early education are key to a child's success during the first three years of school. Class size should be appropriate for the age of the children. Buildings and classrooms are safe and equipped with a variety of materials and resources.

