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**Just a reminder...If anyone has a topic they would like me to research I would be happy to do it. Please just give me a call or send me an e-mail ([kdjnbauer@verizon.net](mailto:kdjnbauer@verizon.net)).**

**I believe it is that time of year again. Mothers of four and five year olds are registering their children for Kindergarten already. I did it last year, and I remember it was a little nerve racking. I had many questions about whether or not my children were ready for this big step. Attached is an article from [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com). The article includes a list of 8 things to ask yourself when considering your child's readiness for Kindergarten. There is more information out there, but I thought this article would be a good place to start.**

### **What is kindergarten readiness?**

Experts say no single or simple factor determines whether a child is ready for kindergarten. Instead, a child's development needs to be evaluated on several fronts. His ability to think logically, speak clearly, and interact well with other children and adults are all critically important to success in school. A child's physical development also needs to be considered.

In reality, very few children are equally competent in all these areas. Many children who are advanced mentally may lag behind emotionally, while children who are extremely adept physically may be slower in terms of language development.

But most early childhood educators agree that a child's brain development is the most important gauge of readiness for kindergarten. In other words, your child may be small for his age, and lagging behind other kids socially and physically, but if his language, thinking, and perceptual skills are in place, then he'll probably do well in kindergarten.

### **How can I tell if my child is ready?**

If he's in preschool, talk to the teacher. She probably has a good sense of his development and how he compares with other children who would be at his grade level.

If your child is not in preschool or you just want another opinion, check with your pediatrician. She will know about your child's physical development and can offer helpful feedback as to whether your child is ready.

You can also talk with family members and friends who know your child well. Pay particular attention to the comments of teachers, or those who have experience working with children in schools, whether as a staff person or a volunteer.

Visiting a kindergarten class in the school in which you plan to enroll your child can also give you invaluable information. As you stand in the back of the room, pay attention to how the other children are behaving, how they play with each other, and what kinds of skills they have. Can you picture your child sitting in one of those chairs and joining in an activity?

Ultimately, though, you know your child best. Think about what he's like when he plays with others, and when he's alone in his room. Then ask yourself the following:

- 1) Can my child listen to instructions and then follow them? Children need these skills to function in class, to keep up with the teacher and with their peers.
- 2) Is he able to put on his coat and go to the bathroom by himself? Children need to be somewhat self-sufficient by school age.
- 3) Can he recite the alphabet and count? Most kindergarten teachers assume that children have at least a rudimentary familiarity with the ABCs and numbers though these subjects will be covered as part of the [kindergarten curriculum](#).
- 4) Can he hold a pencil? Cut with scissors? He will need these fine motor skills to begin working on writing the alphabet and to keep up with classroom projects.

5) Does he show an interest in books? Does he try to "read" a book by telling a story based on the pictures? This is a sign that his language development is on a par with other kindergartners and that he's ready to start learning how to read.

6) Is he curious and receptive to learning new things? If a child's curiosity is stronger than his fear of the unfamiliar, he will do well in school.

7) Does he get along well with other kids? Does he share and know how to take turns? He'll be interacting with other children all day, so your child's social skills are particularly important for success in school.

8) Can he work together with others as part of a group? The ability to put his needs second, to compromise and join in a consensus with other children, is also part of emotional competence.

If you answered "yes" to most of these questions and "sometimes" to the rest, your child is ready for kindergarten. If not, your child might well benefit from another year of preschool, or from one of the transitional or pre-K classes now being offered by many private schools.