



## Preschool Readiness

Preschool/Group Learning helps children develop many important skills, get better at following instructions and learn to work well within a group. Skills which can be very useful in kindergarten and beyond.

As children at this age develop at such differing rates, it is difficult to have a set checklist of skills needed in order to start a preschool program, but there are some areas to consider in determining if your child is prepared for group learning.

### ➤ Self Help and Basic Need

While preschool age children cannot be expected to accomplish all tasks on their own, children entering a group learning environment should be able to take care of some self-help and basic needs on their own. Key areas would be, using the washroom, washing hands, and eating without assistance. They should also be able to verbalize their basic needs (“thirsty” or “potty”).

### ➤ Attention & Independence

Group Learning programs are designed to help children become more independent, gain attention skills, and build self esteem, but before children begin, some areas of emerging independence and attention skills should be in place. Children should be able to participate in activities for short periods of time (5-10 min) without needing constant redirection from an adult, they should be able to understand simple instructions, and once familiar with the classroom, be independent enough to select activities without a lot of Educator direction.

### ➤ Expressive

An important part of group learning readiness is a child’s ability to express themselves in a way that is understood by unfamiliar adults. This does not mean your child needs to be speaking in full sentences, this can be simple words or gestures that help them express their needs and feelings. It is also important that children be able to understand basic words and simple directional phrases as well such as “follow me” and “sit down”

## ➤ Concentration

Because distraction is typical for this age group, and concentration skills can vary dramatically, most preschool age learning programs realize that long periods of involvement or concentration will not be achievable by most preschoolers. Though before entering a program, Preschoolers should be able to follow simple directions most of the time and to focus on short (5-10 min) tasks without getting overly distracted.

## ➤ Emotionally Ready

It is quite normal for preschool age children to cry when parents say goodbye on the first day or even throughout the first week, especially if this is their first time away. Even a child who is emotionally ready and eager to go to “school” may feel anxiety and cry. Although, a child who is crying throughout the entire day, might not be ready to attend a group learning program.

## ➤ Stamina

Children will expend a large amount of physical and mental energy while in a group learning environment. Children who are not used to being actively engaged or children who still take long morning and afternoon naps can have a harder time adjusting to preschool.

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