

Widely-Held Expectations for Beginning Kindergarten Children

By Kindergarten Teacher Shirley Tronnes

We recognize that children learn at different rates and as individuals will shine more brightly in some areas. The following expectations are provided as a reference point for assessing your child's ongoing development as well as providing goals a parent may want to focus on. Children who have mastered most of the following skills before coming to kindergarten tend to be more self-confident and ready for the kindergarten program.

Emotional and Social Development

- Is able to separate, without much distress, from familiar people, places and things
- Is aware that others have feelings
- Is willing to assert him/herself when something is important to them
- Sees self as a powerful doer (example – if they can't reach something they will get a stool)
- Is able to handle difficulties with others, without being aggressive, hitting, biting or kicking
- Is willing to cleanup or help cleanup after him/herself
- Has some regular chores that he/she is responsible for at home

Intellectual Development

- Is willing to explore the world around him/her by object manipulation and by playing
- Can communicate their first and last names when asked
- Is curious about print in their environment
- Likes to listen to stories
- Pretends to read and write
- Reads some advertising and traffic signs
- Counts by memory to at least 10
- Recognizes some numerals and letters
- Can follow most directional words such as up, over, under, beside, near and far
- Is able to make personal choice when given options
- Can sing or say simple songs or poems

Physical Development

- Is willing and able to use a variety of hand-eye coordination tools such as scissors, crayons and pencils
- Is able to concentrate on one thing for a long time if he/she is interested in it
- Is able to dress self, including putting their shoes on (if you child cannot tie please do not send shoes with laces to school)
- Is able to wash and dry their own hands
- Is able to print his or her name Is able to put their papers, books and things in their backpack without help

Children at Risk

Parents of children in British Columbia have the option of delaying their child's entrance to school.

This can be a very difficult decision for parents to make. I encourage you to focus on your individual child's readiness rather than on their birth date. In general children who are quite young and immature often struggle with the kindergarten program and tend to continue that struggle into grade one. If a child's entrance is delayed for maturation concerns, they usually display more confidence and have fewer difficulties with the program the following year. A child's attitude and confidence are critical factors in their ability to learn. "How they see themselves" in these early grades seems to be perpetuated throughout their school years.

Incidentally I have never had a parent tell me they were sorry they delayed their child's entrance to school. I have had many look back at their child's experiences in elementary school and say they wished they had held their child back. The following points may be helpful in making your decision. It is important to remember that it is a combination of these points that lead us to be concerned about a child's readiness for school, not any single factor.

- your child will not be five years old until after the month of August
- your child is a boy with a birthday between August and December (boys tend to be mature later than girls)
- your child is not able to do many of the things listed in the above list of "widely-held expectations for beginning kindergarten children"
- your child is young (birthday after August) and is not interested in going to School District #23 (Central Okanagan)-your child shows little or no interest in printing, drawing, cutting
- your child shows little or no interest in books or in discussing stories
- your child had great difficulty sharing, taking turns and cooperating with others
- your child was born prematurely and his/her corrected age would fall within the next Kindergarten year
- your child is physically small (because of their birthdate not because of heredity), tires easily 3-5 minutes dedication time to a task

And has difficulty doing things for him/herself

Please contact your child's kindergarten teacher before the school year begins if you would like to discuss your concerns.

