

School Readiness

Formal reading, writing, counting, listening and talking are all important for starting school, but they are not as important as a child's social and emotional readiness.

For a child to learn constructively and happily, they need to be confident, resilient, and have social and emotional skills including:

Self-control, coping and problem solving

The ability to understand, name and regulate their own emotions; deal with conflict and stress; exercise patience and make choices and decisions.

For example, children need to be able to:

- appropriately express their emotions and deal with conflict and frustration without hitting or hurting others
- cope with disappointment and accept losing
- cooperate without frequent temper tantrums
- recognise and take basic responsibility for their own possessions (e.g. hang up a smock after painting).

Confidence

'Self-efficacy', independence, a sense of self-worth and competence to confront challenges and persist in the face of disappointment or frustration.

For example, children need to be able to:

- cope with transitions between routines and experiences
- be separated from their parent/caregiver when dropped off, without distress
- adapt to the more structured classroom environment and deal with new, unfamiliar situations
- understand the rules and follow a few simple directions at a time (without being distracted by others)
- cope with minimum adult supervision
- make some decisions and initiate their own play and work, without always following the lead of others or of needing lots of prompting.

Empathy, communication and sharing

The ability to form friendships, take turns in play and conversation; consider, understand and relate easily with others.

Children need to be able to:

- tune into non-verbal cues and absorb social information
- show an interest in other children (not necessarily a true friendship)
- socialise and play cooperatively with others
- give and take, share toys and equipment and participate in group activities (e.g. sharing pencils, board games, building a sandcastle together)
- talk with and respond to the teacher
- make their needs known and follow instructions and directions.

Concentration

The ability to stay focused and concentrate for short periods.

Children need to be able to:

- concentrate for short periods
- focus on tasks
- enjoy a variety of indoor and outdoor play
- shift their attention between tasks when required.

References

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