

My Pre-Kindergarten Goals

 <p>I can write my name!</p>	 <p>I know my colors!</p>	 <p>I know all my letter names!</p>	 <p>I know all my letter sounds!</p>
 <p>I can listen to a story and tell what it is about!</p>	 <p>2 syllables</p> <p>I can identify how many syllables are in a word!</p>	 <p>I can rhyme!</p>	 <p>I can identify the beginning sound of a word!</p>
 <p>lpl lll lgl</p> <p>I can segment words!</p>	 <p>I can draw a picture and tell a story to match!</p>	 <p>I can complete a pattern!</p>	 <p>I can identify shapes!</p>
 <p>I can count and tell how many!</p>	 <p>I can count to 20!</p>	 <p>10!!</p> <p>I can write the numbers 1-10!</p>	 <p>I know my birthday!</p>

TIPS | for parents of Kindergartners

Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader.

Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ **Talk to your child.**

Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.

■ **Say silly tongue twisters.**

Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

■ **Read it and experience it.**

Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.

■ **Use your child's name.**

Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John, jump*. And they both begin with the same letter, J."

■ **Play with puppets.**

Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is Mark. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *park* rhyme with *Mark*? Does *ball* rhyme with *Mark*?"

■ **Trace and say letters.**

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

■ **Write it down.**

Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage your child to use the letters and sounds he or she is learning about in school.

■ **Play sound games.**

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? *m-o-p*." Hold each sound longer than normal.

■ **Read it again and again.**

Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.

■ **Talk about letters and sounds.**

Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound *mummmmm*."

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.

Ed Extras: Pre-K

Helpful information about learning brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine

Kindergarten readiness

Kindergarten is where most children learn to read and write. Though some kids can do this before entering kindergarten, it is not required or expected. Being ready for kindergarten means having well-developed preschool skills, and being academically, socially, and physically ready for the transition. Here are some signs that your child is ready for kindergarten:

Academically (pre-reading skills)

- Can retell a simple story
- Speaks in complete sentences of 5-6 words
- Writes name or recognizes letters in name
- Recognizes the title of a book
- Matches rhyming sounds
- Counts to ten

Socially

- Feels comfortable in a group
- Asks for help when needed
- Knows personal information (name, age, gender)
- Follows simple instructions
- Recognizes authority
- Is able to share

Physically

- Exhibits fine motor skills (holds pencil, traces shapes, buttons shirt, etc.)
- Exhibits motor coordination (rides a bike with training wheels, hops, skips)
- Manages bathroom needs

Is my child ready?

Most children start kindergarten at age 5. If your child's birthday falls in late spring or summer and will have just turned 5 at the beginning of the school year, or if you feel your child would benefit from another year of preschool, you might consider waiting until the next academic year.

Consider your child's academic skills, but also his or her temperament. Remember that if your child is on the older or younger end of the class, this has an impact not only on kindergarten, but also on middle school, high school, driving, and going to college. If he is the youngest in his class now, he will be then, too!

When in doubt

- Discuss your concerns with your child's preschool teacher.
- Discuss your concerns with the future principal and kindergarten teacher
- Tour the school and observe a kindergarten classroom
- Trust your instincts! You know your child best. Listen to others, think about your child, and then go with your gut

For more information about early literacy development, visit:
www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c62

How to teach the alphabet to preschoolers

- 1. Read, read, and read.** Read nursery rhymes, rhyming books, picture books and chapter books. Just READ.
- 2. Notice print in the world around you.** Call attention to exit signs, the toothpaste tube, and the Cheerios box.
- 3. Begin letter learning by helping your child learn the letters of his name.** Before I start a more organized approach to teaching the alphabet to my preschoolers, they learn to recognize the letters of their name. For many playful ideas for name learning, visit my [Early Literacy Pinterest board](#).
- 4. Teach the alphabet letter by letter.** Not every early childhood teacher uses the Letter of the Week approach; many children learn their alphabet without it (my oldest two did). But I've found that Letter of the Week has been a helpful structure for me when designing learning activities at home. Even if you use more of a theme or unit approach to teaching preschoolers, you'll find a huge variety of learning activities in my [alphabet archives](#).

And when you purchase my [Letter of the Week curriculum](#), you'll have all the activities organized in an easy to follow format!

If you take one week per letter, you'll have time to:

- **read** books for each letter
- **do** fine motor activities
- **learn** simple rhymes and songs
- create some fun crafts and art projects
- **make** math connections
- have some sensory fun

(And more! It's all in [the ebook!](#))

- 4. Keep bringing it back to the whole alphabet.** If we're doing a lot of meaningful activities, we will keep coming back to the whole alphabet.
- 5. Be flexible.** You may find that after a few months of letter of the week, your child suddenly recognizes every letter. Awesome! Don't feel tied to this series. Pick and choose what (if any) activities you'd like to continue with. Even if you don't continue Letter of the Week, your child will still benefit from listening to the many wonderful books I recommend in my [alphabet book lists](#). You might also enjoy choosing some crafts and process art activities to do each week. And math activities certainly don't need to be tied to a particular letter!

6. Keep it fun. One way to keep your alphabet learning enjoyable is to include music. We love listening to [Heidi songs' alphabet songs](#) for the car. Also remember that kids this age learn best through play. They don't need fancy flash cards or loads of worksheets. They need a variety of activities to stimulate their brains and to reach them the way that *they* learn best.

Go to the measured mom website for free worksheets, materials, and other helpful information:

<https://www.themeasuredmom.com/learning/>

Searching the net for free preschool, and kindergarten worksheets, and activity ideas is a great help.

A Home for My Books

By: U.S. Department of Education (2005)

Creating a library of your child's books is a great way to show her how important reading is. It will also give her a special place to keep her books and will motivate her to keep pulling books from her own library to read. Here are some ideas for getting started!

Starting a home library for your child shows her how important books are. Having books of her own in a special place boosts the chance that your child will want to read even more. Here are some ideas for getting started!

What you need

- Books from bookstores, garage sales, flea markets, used book stores, and sales at your local library
- A bookcase, a cardboard box, or other materials to make a place for books

What to do

- Pick a special place for your child's books so that she knows where to look for them. A cardboard box that you can decorate together might make a good bookcase. Or you might clear one of the family bookshelves and make a special place for her to put her books.
- Help your child to arrange her books in some order — her favorite books, books about animals, or holiday books. Use whatever method will help her most easily find the book she's looking for.
- Borrow books from your local library. (See *Visiting the Library*.) Go to the children's section and spend time with your child reading and selecting books to take home and put in her special place. You might even have a box or space just for library books, so that they don't get mixed up with your child's own books.
- Encourage family members and friends to give books to your child as presents for birthdays and other occasions.
- When you and your child make your own books, you can add them to your home library.

When collecting and reading books are a part of family life, you send your child a message that books are important, enjoyable, and full of new things to learn!

References

"Helping Your Child Become a Reader." U.S. Department of Education. First published in September 2000. Revised 2002 and 2005.
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/index.html>
Browse in => Articles from A-Z > Children's books (21)
> Articles from A-Z > Libraries (7)

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/263177?theme=print>

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Your child is four and it's likely you'll be looking ahead to him starting school soon. There is a nagging worry that can trouble many parents: how do you know if your child is at the right level and has the skills he needs to fit in at school? How can you make sure he won't be trailing behind his classmates? Here's how you can make sure your child doesn't struggle and has a happy transition into formal education.

Your four-year-old will be confident in his gross motor skills, he'll be able to climb stairs like an adult, walk in a straight line, hop on one foot, and climb ladders or trees safely. It's likely he'll be better at ball games, able to throw and catch with more accuracy than just a year ago. Giving him the opportunity to continue practicing these skills is important since physical activity will help him develop more than just physical co-ordination, it will help him improve his social and cognitive skills as he learns to play with others. He'll also develop his thought processes in relation to spatial awareness, judgment, risk assessment and planning.

His fine motor skills will also be coming along at speed. By now, he'll be able to build a tower of ten or more blocks, construct more creative buildings and will start to understand concepts like balance and stability. He'll have a mature pincer grip when holding a pencil, his pictures will become more recognizable and realistic and he'll be getting better at coloring within the lines.



Picture: mature pincer grip

He'll be more comfortable with zips and buttons and may be able to dress himself without help. He'll be proficient using a spoon or fork but may be less dexterous when using a knife to cut his food. It's important to encourage him to be as independent as possible when eating and dressing. He'll be better at doing jigsaws, able to associate shapes and colors with the gaps in the puzzle.

At this age, any construction toys, materials for creative activities and paints or crayons will help him develop his fine motor skills as well as giving him an outlet for his creativity and imagination which are important cognitive skills.

It's likely he'll still love snuggling up for a story and will be following the words and pictures with his eyes. He may even be able to recognize letters or numbers. **He'll be** able to name more colors correctly.

Now is a good time to play games such as I Spy with colors, rhyming songs with numbers or letters or any games that involve him identifying different objects. **This will help him learn the basic counting and alphabet he'll need when he starts school as well as improving his vocabulary. It's important** that he has the opportunity to play with other children, this will give him the social skills he needs to make friends when he starts school as well as teaching

him the concepts of sharing, taking turns and winning and losing. He'll need these skills throughout his life.

This is perhaps the last opportunity you have as a parent to make sure your child has the skills and confidence to start school. A child who is comfortable in his new environment will be happier and do better than one who is struggling with a huge learning curve. As a parent you're well placed to support your child and give him the best start possible.

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