School readiness means that a child has the physical, social, and emotional skills necessary to successfully participate in an educational setting, usually kindergarten. The child is ready to start learning how to do things independently. He or she will also become comfortable learning and playing with groups of children their own age and respond to adult authority figures other than parents.

Parents can help prepare their children for school by being a role model and teaching their children to interact socially with others and follow directions. Some important skills to work on include:

- wait your turn
- wait in line
- put toys away
- pick up your clothes
- do simple chores
- listen and learn language through story telling (read to them)
- exhibit positive social behaviors when interacting with other children their age
- know basic shapes and colors
- recognize relationships between letters and sounds
- be able to tolerate separation from parents for several hours in a day

For more information about getting your child ready for school, you can order the free publication below:

“Helping Your Preschool Child”

ED Pubs
Education Publications Center
U.S. Department of Education
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794-1398

Or call toll free 1-877-433-7827
READY-FOR-SCHOOL CHECKLIST

The following checklist, although not exhaustive, can help to guide you as you prepare your child for school. It’s best to look at the items on the list as goals toward which to aim. They should be accomplished, as much as possible, through everyday routines or by enjoyable activities that you’ve planned with your child. If your child lags behind in some areas, don’t worry. Remember that children grow and develop at different rates.

Good Health and Physical Well-Being

My child:
___ Eats a balanced diet
___ Gets plenty of rest
___ Receives regular medical and dental care
___ Has had all the necessary immunizations
___ Runs, jumps, plays outdoors and does other activities that help develop his large muscles and provide exercise
___ Works puzzles, scribbles, colors, paints and does other activities that help develop her small muscles

Social and Emotional Preparation

My child:
___ Is learning to explore and try new things
___ Is learning to work well alone and to do many tasks for himself
___ Has many opportunities to be with other children and is learning to cooperate with them
___ Is curious and is motivated to learn
___ Is learning to finish tasks
___ Is learning to use self-control
___ Can follow simple instructions
___ Helps with family chores

Language and General Knowledge

My child:
___ Has many opportunities to talk and listen
___ Is read to every day
___ Has access to books and other reading materials
___ Is learning about print and books
___ Has his television viewing monitored by an adult
___ Is encouraged to ask questions
___ Is encouraged to solve problems
___ Has opportunities to notice similarities and differences
___ Is encouraged to sort and classify things
___ Is learning to write her name and address
___ Is learning to count and plays counting games
___ Is learning to identify and name shapes and colors
___ Has opportunities to draw, listen to and make music and to dance
___ Has opportunities to get first-hand experiences to do things in the world-to see and touch objects, hear new sounds, smell and taste foods and watch things move