Is my Child Ready for Kindergarten? January 2018

Often families ask for guidance in determining the readiness of their children for Kindergarten. We know as early childhood professionals that children develop in different ways and at different rates. One child may develop language skills faster than they develop social skills. NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) states that, “Readiness is more than basic knowledge of language and math, important as these are. Readiness expectations should include all areas: physical, cognitive, social and emotional competence as well as a positive attitude toward learning.” Here at Towsley, we work hard to provide children with the experiences and guidance to develop the skills needed to be prepared for the range of Kindergarten classrooms they will encounter when they leave us.

“I’m Going Tomorrow!?!?”

The concept of time can be difficult for young children to understand because it is so abstract. Many Kindergarten roundups and open houses begin in February but children do not start Kindergarten until September. Children may think after visiting their “future” Kindergarten classroom that they will begin Kindergarten the next day and that they are done with preschool.

Children process the idea of going to Kindergarten in different ways. For some children, big changes can cause anxiety. We strongly recommend that you wait to talk in-depth with your child about the transition to Kindergarten until a few weeks before they attend. When children bring up the subject, one response may be, “You sound nervous/excited about Kindergarten. It is not happening for a long time. Right now you will still go to Towsley. I will let you know when it is time to get ready for Kindergarten.” We want to respect the child’s feelings but provide reassurance that things aren’t immediately changing.

Please remember that children often overhear conversations between adults (parent/parent or teacher/parent). They may pick up on your feelings and anxieties. It is best to save conversations about the topic when children are not present. We will provide more information about preparing for the Kindergarten transition during the summer.
### Language
Can speak in simple sentences  
Can use a normal speaking voice  
Knows how to whisper, speak softly, speak loudly and shout  
Can express needs, feelings, and opinions  
Can answer questions and give information about self  
Knows their own phone number and parents/guardians names  
Can relate experiences  
Can ask questions and ask for help

### Manners and Social Skills
Does not interrupt conversations, stories, and lessons  
Is aware that other children deserve attention too  
Is learning the concepts of fairness  
Is learning that rules and procedures are important for the safety and well being of all  
Is learning that rules and expected behaviors might vary from place to place  
Is learning to take turns, raise hand, and share  
Says positive phrases such as: “please, thank you, I’m sorry, excuse me,” etc.  
Takes care of personal belongings, materials/equipment  
Knows it is OK to make mistakes  
Knows it is NOT OK to be mean or disruptive

### Fine Motor Skills
Has engaged in many experiences using crayons, paints, clay, books, puzzles, beads, blocks, zippers, laces, water, sand, markers, Legos, scissors, pencils, etc.

### Health and Safety Habits
Covers mouth when coughing or sneezing  
Can blow nose and disposes of tissues appropriately  
Uses the bathroom independently and washes his/her hands  
Dresses self independently  
Attempts to put on own coat, boots, mittens, etc.  
Washes hands before eating and when they get dirty  
Can wash face  
Does not put objects in mouth  
Knows sharp objects are dangerous and leaves them alone

### Listening
Listens attentively to a story for 5 minutes or more  
Can recall some details of a story or video  
Can follow directions, especially those involving spatial concepts (under, behind, over, next to, etc.)  
Can recognize common sounds (household, animals, street, classrooms, etc.)

### Academics
Recognizes first name in print  
Recites some rhymes and poems  
Sings simple songs  
Can tell about pictures  
Enjoys books and stories  
Knows most of the alphabet  
Counts to ten  
Notices shapes and forms
Kindergarten
Universal all-day kindergarten for AAPS students

The All Day Kindergarten program consists of daily literacy, mathematics, science and social studies instruction delivered in developmentally appropriate and exciting ways. Students can expect to engage in daily whole group, small group and individual activities as well as center-based explorations. AAPS Kindergarteners will have many opportunities to engage socially with peers. Rest assured that the highly qualified, nurturing teachers will love, teach and believe in your child and his/her success.

In addition to the academic benefits, All Day Kindergarten programs positively impact students’ self-confidence and the development of social/emotional skills such as playing fairly with others, sharing, and managing one’s emotions. The all day program helps to integrate children into the school culture early on. An added perk is seen in the attendance rates, which are significantly higher than those of half-day programs.

To enroll in kindergarten for the 2015-16 school year, a child must turn 5 no later than September 1st. Parents may apply for admission of children who turn 5 by December 1st.

Young Fives Program

Free program for students residing within the AAPS attendance boundaries

The Ann Arbor Public Schools is proud to offer our families excellent choices in early childhood education. In addition to incredible preschools, our expanded Young Fives programs provide students with early kindergarten birthdays a full year of preparation that sets the stage for success in kindergarten and in life. This ‘gift of time’ makes all the difference for young children just setting out on their educational journeys.

Developmentally designed for young kindergarten students, our Young Fives programs prepare students with a solid foundation of early literacy and math skills while providing a positive, structured environment perfect for strengthening social skills such as kindness, cooperation, and building positive peer relationships. Students learn to see themselves as capable, creative, successful learners with a positive self-image and a track record of success. AAPS Young Five students enter kindergarten prepared to learn and to lead.

A key to the success of this program lies in its exploration-based design, providing space for self directed learning, fostering independence within a language rich, nurturing environment. Our highly qualified teachers support the growth of each student through intentional lesson and activity design.

Young Fives is perfect for children turning five between May 1st and December 1st. With thirteen programs across the district, you’ll find a Young Fives program in every corner of our community.
Alongside a play-based curriculum, UM Towsley Children’s House incorporates The Project Approach to guide learning and development. The Project Approach refers to a set of teaching strategies that enable teachers to guide children through in-depth studies of real-world topics. Projects have a complex but flexible framework where teaching and learning are seen as an interactive process. When teachers implement the Approach successfully, children can feel highly motivated and actively involved in their own learning and produce work of high quality.

The teachers create lesson plans in a manner that is ever evolving and adapting to meet the needs and interests of the children. Attention is given to social, cognitive and physical development. Children take part in a variety of activities throughout the day that prepares them socially and academically for their next phase of early education. Below are snapshots of children and teachers interacting throughout the day and some of the readiness indicators/skills the children are gaining through the activity.

The children in the classroom began showing interest in drawing and different techniques. The teachers supported an investigation through a variety of hands on experiences. They gained information on lines, shapes, shade, observational drawing and drawing tools. They read books, explored hands-on activities, and experts came in to share their knowledge and engage in activities with the children.

**Readiness Indicators:**

**Language**
- Can speak in simple sentences
- Can use a normal speaking voice
- Can express needs, feelings, and opinions
- Can ask questions

**Manners and Social Skills**
- Does not interrupt conversations, stories, and lessons
- Is aware that other children deserve attention too
- Is learning to take turns, raise hand, and share
- Knows it is OK to make mistakes
- Knows its not okay to be disruptive

**Fine Motor Skills**
- Has engaged in many experiences using crayons, paint, pencils etc.

**Listening**
- Listens attentively to “a story” for 5 minutes or more

**Academic**
- Notices shapes and forms
One part of the children’s early morning routine is “signing in”. Children might sign in by finding their name, writing their name on a variety of materials, circling their name etc.

**Readiness Indicator:**
**Fine Motor Skills**
Has engaged in many experiences using crayons, paints, clay, books, puzzles, beads, blocks, zippers, laces, water, sand, markers, Legos, scissors, pencils, etc.

**Academics**
Recognizing first name in print

In the classroom, the children have access to a variety of manipulatives. The child in the photo took frogs and lined them up sorting by color along the way. The frogs can be used to count, sort, add, subtract, and recognize colors.

**Readiness Indicator:**
**Academics**
Counts to ten
Notices shapes and forms

Children have many opportunities during the day to listen to and interact with books independently and with an adult.

**Readiness Indicator:**
**Language**
Can speak in simple sentences
Can use a normal speaking voice
Can relate experiences
Can ask questions

**Manners and Social Skills**
Does not interrupt conversations, stories, and lessons

**Listening**
Listens attentively to a story for 5 minutes or more
Can recall some details of a story

**Academics**
Enjoys books and stories
Twice a day children go outdoors for fresh air, unstructured play, and physical activity. In preparation for outdoor time, the children must get dressed. During the winter, this involves taking off their shoes and putting on snow pants, boots, coats, hat, gloves and mittens. Teachers spend time teaching children how to independently get dressed and what order to put on items.

*Readiness Indicator:*

*Health and Safety Habits*
- Dresses self independently
- Attempts to put on own coat, boots, mittens etc.

*Listening*
- Can follow directions, especially those involving spatial concepts

Throughout the year, classrooms take a variety of fieldtrips and/or site visits.

*Readiness Indicator:*

*Language*
- Can speak in simple sentences
- Can relate experiences

*Manners and Social Skills*
- Does not interrupt conversations, stories and lessons
- Is learning that rules and procedures are important for the safety and well-being of all
- Is learning that rules and expected behaviors might vary from place to place
Kindergarten Round-Up

An Exceptional Education Begins with Ann Arbor Public Schools.

Join us for our upcoming Kindergarten and Young Fives open houses. Let children experience the fun that awaits them in September. Meet the staff, learn about the programs, the enrollment process and get answers to your questions.

You are welcome to attend any of our open houses. If you are unable to attend your school's open house simply call the school to schedule a visit. We look forward to seeing you there!

Wondering if your child is ready for Kindergarten? Contact your school or dates/times for readiness screening or attend the district screening event on 2/24/18. (See schedule on right).

Exceptional
ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
www.aa.sps.org

Lead. Care. Inspire.

Kindergarten & Young Fives* Round-Up

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<th>School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abbot Elementary*</td>
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<td>Allen Elementary*</td>
<td>2/9/18</td>
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<td>Angell Elementary*</td>
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<td>A2 STEAM*</td>
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<td>Wines Elementary*</td>
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*Indicates Young Fives Program. To be eligible for Young Fives, children must turn five years old between May 1 and December 1, 2018.

W. Scott Westerman Preschool & Family Center
Saturday 2/24/18 10am - 2pm

Considering Young Fives? Come for a kindergarten screening at the Early Childhood Expo (no appointment necessary).
Chelsea School District
**Getting Parents Ready for Kindergarten**
When: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 6:30pm
Location: North Creek Elementary—Cafeteria

Dexter Community Schools
**Young Five and Kindergarten Information Night**
When: Wednesday, March 7
Where: Cornerstone Elementary School & Bates Elementary, Dexter, MI

Description: The Bates and Cornerstone principals host registration night in March. Families can tour both buildings from 6:00pm to 7:00pm, then gather at Creekside cafeteria at 7:00pm for an informational session. **This year's Young Five & Kindergarten Registration Meeting will be Wednesday, March 7, 2018.** This event is for adults. Parents and guardians will have ideally completed online pre-registration prior to this meeting. Bring the student's original birth certificate and proof of residence with you to this meeting.

Saline Area Schools
**Kindergarten Round Up**
When: Tuesday, March 20, 2018 6:00pm-7:30pm
Location: Saline Middle School (7190 N. Maple Road)

FREE childcare provided through Saline Community Education. If you would like to use this option, please begin arriving at 5:30 to ensure we start on time.

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 - 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Informational Meeting in the Cafeteria</td>
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<td>6:30 - 6:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Question &amp; Answer Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30 - 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Registration in the Gym</td>
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In order to be eligible for Young 5's, your student's birthdate must fall between August 1, 2013 and December 1, 2013.

Ypsilanti Community Schools

Lincoln Consolidated Schools
[https://www.lincoln12.org/enrollment/kindergarten-roundup/](https://www.lincoln12.org/enrollment/kindergarten-roundup/)
Additional Resources

Ann Arbor Public School Kindergarten Parent Information

Kindergarten Enrollment –State of Michigan

Top 10 Signs of a Good Kindergarten Classroom—NAEYC

Is my Child Ready for Kindergarten?—NAEYC

School Websites
Ann Arbor Public
http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/aaps/home

Chelsea School District
http://www.chelsea.k12.mi.us/

Dexter Community Schools
http://dexterschools.org/

Saline Area Schools
http://www.salineschools.org/pages/Saline_Area_Schools

Ypsilanti Community Schools
http://www.ycschools.us/

Lincoln Consolidated Schools
https://www.lincolnk12.org/
Preparing for Kindergarten with Picture Books

A few weeks before kindergarten is a great time to begin preparing for the transition. Picture books provide a fun, interactive way to discuss the kindergarten transition.