



Transition to Kindergarten

A Resource Guide for CLC Parents

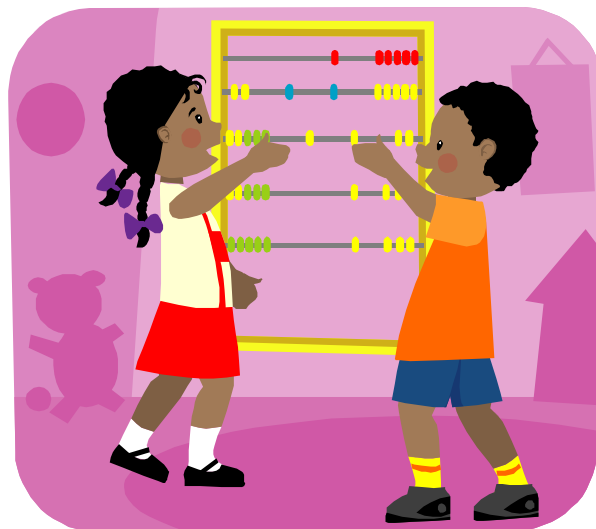


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Get Ready, Get Set ... Go To Kindergarten!

CLC preschool graduation will be here soon. Now is the time to start thinking about kindergarten and all that it entails for your child. It is important to prepare ahead of time to help alleviate any unnecessary anxieties in making this transition. Acquainting yourself and your child with the school he/she will be attending is a great way to get a jump start on the whole process. Many schools have orientation/open house which gives children a chance to become at ease with the new surroundings plus meet their teacher and classmates.

CLC preschool teachers talk with children about kindergarten expectations and how they may be different and/or similar to what we do at our Center. Oftentimes, children feel as though they are embarking on a whole new adventure, leaving everything known behind. This idea can be very unnerving for young children, leaving them anxious and frightened of what lies ahead. It is important to let children know that their feelings are understood and to point out that all children entering kindergarten for the first time are probably feeling some of the same things.

Our preschool teachers will spend time reading delightful and funny stories about kindergarten and build upon the excitement and enthusiasm the story characters bring home with them after their first day. Kindergarten is fun and something to look forward to.

The preschool curriculum facilitates this transition process early on by promoting school readiness skills. We hope that you find the information that follows to be helpful; we are here to assist you and your child at this special crossroad.

Thank you,

CLC Administrators and Preschool Teaching Staff

What CLC does to ensure school readiness skills are accomplished:

Preschool children are growing and developing in many ways every day. The preschool program at CLC is designed to meet the needs of all children by providing many experiences for them to practice and build upon the skills they already have while incorporating new knowledge. Our primary goal is to provide access to the opportunities that promote school success at the same time as recognizing and supporting each child's individual differences. As early childhood educators, CLC defines school readiness as a set of social, motor, and cognitive skills that enable children to be successful when entering kindergarten.

Assessment components are naturally integrated into the course of every day at CLC. Ongoing teacher observations of group patterns and individual development are used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. The following tools guide the CLC preschool program and curriculum so that children leave for kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful learners.

Learning Accomplishment Profile-Third Edition

The Preschool program uses the revised Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP3) as one assessment tool. It is designed to provide the teacher of the young child with a simple criterion-referenced tool for systematic assessment of the child's existing skills. This instrument is a valuable guide for observation of typically developing children as well as young children with disabilities.

Texas School Ready™

CLC participates in the *Texas Early Education Model* (TEEM) and is certified as Texas School Ready™. Readiness does not happen at the same time or in the same way for all children. Readiness expectations at CLC embrace all areas of learning including: language arts, math, science, computers/technology, creative expression/appreciation for the arts, social studies, social/emotional, self-help, health/safety, and physical development.

Children's Portfolios

Portfolios, containing samples collected over time, chronicle where children begin when they first entered the classroom, what their interests are, what their challenges are, how much they have grown, and who their friends are. Families have ongoing opportunities to share results of observations from home to contribute to the assessment process. Portfolios can be a wonderful bridge between home and school. Teachers document observations in their own unique ways such as recording anecdotes, taking photographs, and collecting samples of the children's work.

What to do before a child starts kindergarten:

- Find out as much as you can about the school your child will attend. Schools—even schools in the same district—can differ greatly. Don't rely only on information about a school from other parents—their child might have different needs and expectations from a school than yours.
- Ask the school principal for a school handbook. This will answer many questions that will arise over the year. If your school doesn't have a handbook, ask the principal and teachers questions such as the following:
 1. What teaching methods and materials are used? Are the methods used to teach reading and math based on scientific evidence about what works best? Are science and social studies materials up to date?
 2. How much time is spent on each subject such as reading, math, science and history?
 3. How does the school measure student progress? What tests does it use?
 4. Does the school meet state standards and guidelines?
 5. Are teachers highly qualified? Do they meet state certification requirements?
- Find out what areas are emphasized in the kindergarten program? How focused is it on academic instruction?
- Ask to look at the school's report card. These report cards show how your school compares to others in the district and indicate how well it is succeeding.
- Find out if the school has a website and, if so, get the address. School websites can provide you with ready access to all kinds of information—schedules of events, names of people to contact, rules and regulations, and so forth.
- Talk with your child about school.
- Let your child know that you think school and learning are important.

Children develop positive attitudes toward school when they see that their parents and families value education.

"Looking forward to kindergarten"
Suggested parent and child activities

- Read a book together about starting school.
- Share stories from your early school days with your child.
- Read something new together.
- Start a growth chart with your child's height.
- Practice saying your address and phone number with your child.
- Sing a song from your childhood or culture.
- Walk outside and look for numbers together.
- Find shapes in clouds.
- Practice crossing the street together.
- Practice snapping and zipping.
- Make patterns such as a shoe/sock/shoe or spoon, fork, fork, spoon.
- Play with your shadow: what makes a shadow?
- Count ten things outside together.
- Discover which is heavier, a spoon or a pan?
- Play outside: is the wind blowing?
- Read with a flashlight together.
- Draw pictures with squares and circles.
- Try skipping with your child and/or hopping on one foot together.

Getting School Ready!®

<http://www.gettingschoolready.org/>

Socially and Emotionally: A school ready child ...

- can get along with others
- can express feeling
- is confident in his or her abilities
- is excited about learning

Cognitively: A school ready child ...

- is familiar with books, letters, sounds, shapes, colors, and numbers
- is capable of tackling new and challenging tasks
- engages in problem solving
- is able to communicate with others

Physically: A school ready child ...

- has accessed comprehensive and preventative health care services
- can care for his or her personal needs
- completes small tasks like using scissors or drawing
- can make big movements like running, jumping and skipping

What will a kindergarten teacher expect of my child?

Although teachers' expectations vary, here are some social skills and behaviors generally expected of children entering kindergarten:

- Children should be able to follow school and classroom rules.
- Children should be able to listen attentively to and follow instructions.
- Children should be able to concentrate on and finish a task.
- Children should show self-control.
- Children should respect the property of others, share and take turns.
- Children should do as much for themselves as possible, such as taking care of their personal belongings, going to the toilet, washing their hands and taking care of and putting away materials.

The academic skills and knowledge expected of beginning kindergarten children will depend on the kind of curriculum offered by the school and on the standards that students are expected to meet by the end of the school year. Here are some achievements that are commonly expected of beginning kindergarten students:

- Children can recognize and name alphabet letters.
- Children can recognize print they often see such as their own name, various logos and signs.
- Children understand that words in books convey meaning, are able to recognize the parts of books, and know that words run from left to right across the page and from top to bottom.
- Children notice and can work with the sounds of spoken language, for example through rhyming, and can recognize when a series of words begin with the same sound.
- Children use spoken language to express their thoughts and ideas, tell a story about an experience and learn about themselves and their environment.
- Children produce circles, lines, scribbles and letters as part of their early writing.
- Children are able to recognize numbers and understand that numbers tell us about quantity, order and measurement.
- Children can recognize, name and manipulate basic shapes and understand that shapes can be transformed into other shapes.
- Children know how to hold and look at a book and are beginning to learn to read.

Kindergarten programs with clear expectations and goals are effective in helping children gain the knowledge and skills they need for future learning and school success.

Linking Children, Families and Schools

Children's Books:

- Aliki. (2000). *All by myself*. New York: Harper Collins
- Birdwell, N. (1999). *Clifford's first school day*. New York: Scholastic
- Cohen, M. (1989). *Will I have a friend?* New York: Aladdin Books.
- Freeman, D. (2002) *Corduroy goes to school*. New York: Penguin Putnam.
- Kilgras, H. (1997) *What will I do if I can't tie my shoe?* New York: Scholastic
- Rockwell, A. (2001) *Welcome to kindergarten*. New York: Scholastic.
- Rogers, F. (1996). *Making friends*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Slate, J. (2002). *Miss Bindergarten celebrates the 100th day of school*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Wells, R. (2000). *Timothy goes to school*. New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers.

Children's Music:

- Devareaux Institute. *Songs of resilience*. www.kaplanco.com
- Jenkins, E. *Sharing cultures with Ella Jenkins*. www.folkways.si.edu
- Putumayo Kids. *World playground: A musical adventure for kids*. www.putumayokids.com
- Region A, Partnership for Children. *Sparkle and shine sing-a-long readiness songs and Sparkle and Shine Sing-Along Songs for Getting Along*
www.sparkle-shine.com/sc_cd_readiness.php

Websites:

- Houston Independent School District Curriculum Department
<http://dept.houstonisd.org/curriculum>
- Texas Education Agency
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us>
- A Pediatrician's Guide to Health and Safety
<http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/preschool/preschoolquicktips/kindergarten.html>
- Useful Tips:
http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/schoolage/school/getting_ready_to_start.html
- School Readiness and Transition to Kindergarten
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/transition.html>