



What does "readiness to learn at school" mean?

School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools and communities.

Children are not innately ready or not ready for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families, and through their

interactions with other people and environments before coming to school (Maxwell and Clifford 2004, 42).

When we hear the term readiness what often comes to mind is a child's ability to learn to read, write and do math.

These things are important, but readiness to learn means much more.

Readiness is a child's ...

- ✓ Physical health and well being;
- ✓ Emotional health and maturity;
- ✓ Ability to get along with others and learn new skills;
- ✓ Language development and thinking skills;
- ✓ Ability to communicate with others and to understand the world

around them.

Children who enter school "ready to learn" ...

- ✓ Have developed the ability to get along with others;
- ✓ Have developed ways to cope with disappointment and challenges and;
- ✓ Are eager to try new experiences.

Helping Children Get Ready for Kindergarten

Getting a child ready to go to kindergarten is a big step in the life of any family, and we want all of our children to be active, curious and confident as they enter school.

We all know that starting school can be stressful for any child, but think of **the additional challenges that many of our families face** as they adjust to a new language, community and country. Starting school can be an overwhelming event!

Every child develops in different ways and at different times, and there is no simple list of accomplishments that will guarantee a child's success in kindergarten. However, research tells us that **as a child enters kindergarten three individual variables predict their educational achievement** in the third grade: good

health, cognitive and literacy skills, and motivation to learn and participate comfortably in classrooms.

Because of our knowledge and experience in working with newcomer families, **we in LINC childminding have a unique opportunity** to help both parents and children make the transition to 'big' school in a positive and supportive way. Seeing parents on a daily basis, discussing their child's day and sharing anecdotes and information are important advantages. We can talk about what to expect in kindergarten, we can provide factual information, and more importantly we can provide encouragement.

Here are some things that caregivers and parents can do to help children make an easier transition to kindergarten.

How Can We Help?

Practical Information Parents Need to Know

It is really helpful for parents to know as much as possible about the school before their child begins.

- ✓ *Learn the name of the school and the principal.*
- ✓ *Find out when to register and what forms are needed.*
- ✓ *What immunizations are required for school entry?*

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***In kindergarten,
we share. We
share everything.***
Robert Munsch

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- ✓ *When is the **first day of school** and what are the **hours each day**?*
- ✓ *What happens at **lunch time**?*
- ✓ *Who is **the child's teacher**?*
- ✓ *How will their child get to **school and back**?*
- ✓ *Suggest that parents **visit the school with their child** before the first day so they will feel familiar.*

Parents and childminders play a very important role in helping children participate more easily and confidently in school by **helping children learn to take care of themselves**: getting dressed, tying shoes, pulling up zippers, hanging up jackets, using the washroom, cleaning up on their own and putting toys away.

Childminders can **encourage parents to be positive and talk to their children** about the new school. And parents can help their children learn to count and **help children learn their entire name, address and phone number**.

We can also **encourage parents to spend time looking at books, reading to their children in their own language or English, and visiting the public library**. It's exciting to hear that many of you have already set up a book lending library for the families at your site!

As caregivers, we can give children experience with writing and drawing materials, scissors, playdough, and other art activities that help to develop fine motor skills and we can help them recognize their own

name. We can read one on one, and in a larger group. We can encourage the children to listen to stories, and ask and answer questions. **We can create an environment rich in words, books and activities where all language is valued and the children learn through play.**

What do you do to help the children in your LINC program get ready for school?

Share your ideas with us and we will be happy to pass the information along to everyone.

To find your local school board and a listing of schools, go to <http://esip.edu.gov.on.ca> and search for school boards

UPDATES

THE CMAS ADVISORY MEETING was held in Toronto on February 7th, 2005. Along with the Advisory Committee members, we invited representatives from programs that met full compliance with the 2004 National LINC Childminding Requirements (NLCR) at assessment. We discussed the 'best practices' that these sites had put in place, the challenges they faced, and creative ideas for improving the standard of care in childminding programs in the future. Thanks to all who attended for their enthusiasm, vision, and commitment. We are acting on as many of the recommendations as we can and will share your ideas with CIC.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING for LINC programs has been cancelled for this fiscal year. This includes two CIC initiatives that have recognized and supported LINC childminding programs across the province. One of the events we will sadly miss is the LINC Childminders' Conference, held annually in Toronto for the last 4 years. The other is the recently announced Training Assistance Project (TAP), developed to allow childminders to be reimbursed for successfully completed workshops, courses and training to enhance skills. We look forward to enjoying these activities when the budget again becomes available.

May We Introduce ...

For this edition of KEEPING IN TOUCH we are thrilled to profile the "heart" of the CMAS office, Sue Fortner. A graduate of Sheridan College, Sue has over 20 years experience in administration for both the public and private sectors, including such organizations as the Ontario Society for Autism, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, and Ryerson University. Since start-up, we have had the benefit of Sue's understanding and commitment to quality childcare from her experience as a home daycare operator which she ran for three years while her two children were young.

Sue is the friendly voice on the phone when you call, the person who finds answers for you, and the one who keeps the rest of the team on track and the office running smoothly. What would we do without her!



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