



Preschool Readiness Checklist

A Parent's Guide to Preparing Your Child for Classroom Success

Designed for families in Santa Clara and the surrounding Bay Area by EMC2 Kids Academy.

Introduction: What Does "School Readiness" Really Mean?

When parents think about preschool readiness, it is completely natural to focus on the ABCs and 123s. However, true school readiness goes far beyond early academics. For young children, being ready for school is about having the foundational skills needed to thrive in a group environment, navigate new routines, and engage joyfully with the world around them. School readiness encompasses a child's social and emotional well-being, their ability to communicate, their physical development, and their growing independence. It is also about **cognitive readiness**—the early stages of metacognition (thinking about thinking) where children learn *how* to learn, ask questions, and solve simple problems.

Every child develops at their own beautiful, unique pace. This checklist is not a "pass or fail" test, but rather a helpful tool to identify the skills your child is already mastering and the areas where they might need a little extra encouragement before stepping into the classroom.

The Preschool Readiness Checklist

Use this checklist to observe your child's current skills. If your child hasn't mastered every item, don't worry! Preschool is exactly where they will practice and refine these abilities.

Social & Emotional Skills

- Can separate from a parent or primary caregiver without extreme, prolonged distress.
- Shows interest in playing alongside or interacting with other children.
- Can express basic emotions (happy, sad, mad) and is beginning to learn how to calm down when upset.
- Willingly shares toys or takes turns, even if they need a gentle reminder.

- Shows empathy or concern when another child is hurt or upset.

Language & Communication

- Can communicate their basic needs (e.g., "I am hungry," "I need the potty," "I need help").
- Can follow simple, two-step instructions (e.g., "Please pick up the book and put it on the shelf.").
- Speaks in simple sentences (3 to 5 words) that can be understood by most adults.
- Enjoys listening to short stories and can sit attentively for a few minutes at a time.
- Asks "who," "what," and "why" questions to understand their environment.

Cognitive & Thinking Skills

- Shows curiosity about the world and a desire to explore new things.
- Can engage in an independent activity or play with a toy for 10–15 minutes.
- Recognizes basic colors and can identify simple shapes.
- Enjoys pretend play and uses imagination (e.g., pretending a block is a phone).
- Shows early metacognitive skills by trying a different approach if their first attempt at a task doesn't work.

Physical Development

- Has the gross motor skills to run, jump, and climb safely.
- Can walk up and down stairs (holding a rail or alternating feet).
- Shows developing fine motor skills, such as holding a chunky crayon, marker, or paintbrush.
- Can stack a few blocks or put together simple, age-appropriate puzzles.

Self-Help & Independence Skills

- Is fully potty-trained or actively communicating bathroom needs with minimal assistance.
- Can wash and dry their own hands.
- Is able to feed themselves using basic utensils and can drink from an open cup.
- Can help with simple tasks, like putting toys away in a bin.
- Can put on their own coat or shoes (even if they still need help with zippers or laces).

How to Use This Checklist at Home

- **Celebrate the "Yesses":** Look at all the boxes you can check off! Celebrate your child's growing independence and the incredible progress they've made.

- **Focus on Progress, Not Perfection:** If there are areas your child is still working on, gently incorporate practice into your daily routines. If they struggle to put on their shoes, build an extra five minutes into your morning schedule to let them try it themselves.
- **Play is the Work of the Child:** The best way to build these skills is through play. Board games teach turn-taking. Building blocks teach problem-solving. Reading together builds language.
- **Give Them Responsibilities:** Toddlers and preschoolers love to feel capable. Give them small, manageable chores like putting their plate in the sink or sorting socks. This builds immense confidence.

About EMC2 Kids Academy

At **EMC2 Kids Academy** in Santa Clara, California, our philosophy is centered on building independent, confident, and metacognitive thinkers. Our motto, "*Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow*," drives everything we do.

We understand that school readiness is a journey. That is why all of our educators are highly trained and **G.L.A.D. certified (Guided Language Acquisition Design)**. This specialized, research-based approach allows our teachers to create a vibrant, language-rich classroom environment that naturally supports vocabulary growth, critical thinking, and social-emotional development.

Whether your child is mastering their self-help skills, exploring multilingual learning, or engaging in cognitive development games, our G.L.A.D.-certified teachers are equipped to meet them exactly where they are and guide them to their highest potential.

Ready for the Next Step?

Finding the right preschool is a big decision, and we are here to support your family every step of the way. We would love to show you our classrooms in action!

Contact Us

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