



What Does “Ready For School” Mean?

When is your young child “ready” to start school? It depends on many things. In Maryland, a child is considered ready for school when he has the abilities and the knowledge to be successful doing kindergarten work.

Maryland's method of determining if a child is ready to do kindergarten work is called the Maryland Model for School Readiness, or MMSR. The MMSR helps parents, teachers, and early childhood providers to understand what children need to know and be able to do when they start school. It looks at your child in seven areas:

1. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Does your child get along with other people, show concern for others, and participate in group activities?
- Is your child curious? When facing a problem, does he keep trying?

2. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY:

- Does your child speak clearly, and listen to and understand others?
- Does she know the difference between written and non-written information? Does she understand stories?

3. MATHEMATICAL THINKING:

- Is your child able to sort things by color or shape, see patterns, and understand such ideas as “top,” “bottom,” “first,” “second,” etc.?

4. SCIENTIFIC THINKING:

- Does your child explore, make guesses (predictions) based on things he observes? Does she understand “cause and effect?” Does she use all of his senses to gain information?

5. SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Does your child use the word “I” to express knowledge about herself? Does she understand her role and the roles of others in the family and the community?
- Is she aware of animal life, plant life, and technology (such as computers)?

6. THE ARTS:

- Does your child express himself by trying artistic activities? Does he understand different kinds of art (visual art, music, drama, etc.)?
- Does he use different kinds of materials to make art? Does he look for new ideas?

7. PHYSICAL WELL-BEING AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:

- Does your child have the physical basics (food, clothing, shelter, and regular health and dental care) so that she can focus and participate in school?
- Is she able to run, jump, play ball, and climb stairs? Use scissors? Draw with a pencil?

For more details, go to www.readyatfive.org

ParentTips is a monthly resource for parents with young children.
For more ParentTips, visit www.readyatfive.org or call 410-727-6290.

