



## **Hey Mom Am I Ready For Kindergarten?** **Should I Choose Kindergarten Or A Young Fives Program For My Child?**

By Diane L. Henderson ©TeachWithMe.com

Here's a simple check list:

### **Social & Emotional Skills:**

- Am I responsible?
- Can I express my feelings?
- Do I know my actions have consequences?
- Do I show empathy for others?
- Can I listen without interrupting?
- Can I sit still?
- Can I follow simple directions?
- Do I help around the house?
- Do I get along with others?
- Can I be separated from you without clinging and crying?
- Do I show and practice good manners?
- Do I share?
- Am I polite?

Parents are you providing opportunities & experiences for your child to grow in these areas?

### **Coordination Skills:**

- Can I hop for a count of 10?
- Can I balance for a count of 10?
- Can I skip?
- Can I catch and toss a bean bag or ball?
- Can I walk in a straight line?
- Can I zip?
- Can I snap?

- Can I button?
- Can I tie my shoes?
- Can I open a door?
- Can I climb a tall step without a railing?
- Can I hold a writing utensil correctly?
- Do I hold a scissors correctly?
- Can I cut on a straight line?
- Can I get a marker and glue cap off and put it back on?
- Can I carry a backpack?
- Can I open an shut a backpack?

Parents are you providing opportunities & experiences for your child to grow in these areas?

**Safety Issue Knowledge & Self-Help Skills:**

- Do I know my full name?
- Do I know my parents name?
- Do I know my phone number?
- Do I know my address?
- Do I know where my parents work?
- Do I know what my parents do for a living?
- Do I know the names of my brothers and sisters?
- Do I know when I was born?
- Can I dress myself?
- Can I brush my own teeth?
- Can I express myself when I am ill or hungry or when someone has hurt me?
- Can I take care of my belongings?
- Do I know right from wrong?
- Do I know my body parts?
- Can I manage my own bathroom needs?
- Do I show responsibility and clean up after myself?
- Do I clean up when directed?
- Do I obey rules?

Parents are you providing opportunities & experiences for your child to grow in these areas?

### **Cognitive: Math Skills (Problem Solving):**

- Do I know the basic shapes circle, triangle, rectangle, square?
- Am I aware of things being part of a whole?
- Can I sort things by color, size, shape, category?
- Can I group things in a set of something?
- How far can I count?
- Am I aware of times of the day?
- Am I aware of parts on a clock?
- Am I aware of how to measure things?
- Am I aware that things have positions?
- Am I aware of spatial placement of objects and their terms?
- Am I aware of patterns?
- Can I guess-timate?

Parents are you providing opportunities and experiences for your child to put puzzles together, build things with blocks, color and make pictures with patterns and shapes, measure and cook in the kitchen, count and group objects, play “I spy” things in the home and when out and about? Guess how many things are in a jar etc. Ask them about time, day, month. Put up a calendar and refer to it etc.

### **Science Skills (Discovery)**

- Does your child explore?
- Do they create?
- Do they experiment?
- Do they collect something?
- Do they take nature walks?
- Do they go to the library?
- Do they go to the museum?
- Do they predict?
- Do they collect data?
- Do they compare?
- Can they pick out similarities and differences?
- Do they recognize basic colors?
- Have they weighed and measured things?
- Are they aware of the relationship between things?
- Can they identify living and non living things?
- Are they aware of the seasons?
- Are they aware of their 5 senses?
- Are they curious?

Parents are you providing opportunities and experiences for your child to explore, experiment and discover nature and the world around them. Do you take them to the museum and library? Do you go for nature walks? Do you encourage them to collect something?

### **Art (Creativity)**

- Can your child make choices?
- Can your child hold a scissors?
- Can they cut on a straight line?
- Can they glue?
- Can they color?
- Can they pretend and imagine?
- Do they ponder?
- Do they like to sing and dance?

Parents do you provide arts and crafts materials and opportunities? Do you give them musical instruments and music CD's to dance and sing to? Do you provide them with dress up clothes and puppets to create plays and imaginative moments to escape to different worlds? Do you encourage interests and opportunities to pretend and wonder? Have you taken them to the theatre to see a play or enrolled them in a dance course or musical group? Do you sing in the car?

And finally...

### **Language Skills (Reading Readiness)**

- Can your child sequence a story?
- Can they pick out the rhyming words?
- Can they give you another rhyming word?
- Do they know the letters in their name?
- Can they differentiate between numbers and letters?
- Do they know opposites?
- Can they describe things?
- Can they use their finger to "read" from left to right?
- Can they use picture clues to tell you what the story is about?
- Can they tell you what an author does?
- Can they tell you what an illustrator does?
- Can they make up a story?
- Can they retell the story once you've read it?

- Do they know what characters are?
- Do they know what a setting is?
- Can they pick these things out in a story?
- Is your child aware that there are upper and lowercase letters?
- Can they tell you the beginning, middle and end of the story is?
- Can they tell you the title of the story?

Parents are you reading to your child? Are you asking them things as you read? Are you summarizing after you read, and having them summarize after you read? Are you asking them to pick out letters or spy different things on the page? Are you giving them choices in what you read? Are you taking them to the library to pick out books? Are you letting them see you read for enjoyment? Are you striving to get “unplugged” to the TV more, and “Plugged” into reading more. Do you recite nursery rhymes and silly songs with them? Are you helping them learn the alphabet and how to spell their name? Are you spying letters when you are out and about? Do you praise their efforts?

- I hope this list helped you. If you checked a lot off, well then I guess your child is ready for kindergarten. A numeric birthday age is only part of the puzzle.
- Most schools have a screening program, a test they give to help you determine where to put your child. We have the Giselle. I always tell parents that the first year of school is THE most important.
- It is the basement, the ground floor of their educational skyscraper. If that is not a firm foundation they are building a leaning tower of Pisa.
- Educating a child is not a race. It is a journey that should be enjoyed, not just a destination to be achieved.
- I was very glad that my sons were both in the Young Five program. Jason has a November 13<sup>th</sup> birthday and Steven was born June 30<sup>th</sup>. They are “Leo-The-Late-Bloomers” and needed that “Gift Of Time” I was also glad that they were not driving at 16 nor in college at 17. They needed that extra year of maturity.
- My son Jason was in Young Fives, called Developmental Kindergarten 29 years ago when they first implemented that program and I think it was the best thing for him! He had the pleasure of subbing for his teacher Mrs. Price last month. How cool is that! ☺
- So, if you are given the choice between K or Y5's, and the testing shows your child is “on the fence”. I highly recommend choosing Young Fives or whatever your state calls your program.
- Both my sons were honor students and graduated from college and I think it had a lot to do with that extra year of grace!