

# What Kindergarteners Need to Know to Succeed

We asked more than 100 teachers what children need to know on the first day of kindergarten:  
Here are 20 skills that help them get off to a good start:

## SOCIAL SKILLS

- Express feelings or wants verbally—that is, use words rather than hitting another child.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic conversational rules, such as taking turns talking without interrupting.
- Speak clearly and in full sentences, both one-to-one with an adult and in class discussions.
- Share and take turns when playing with other children and use good manners—saying please and thank you, for example.
- Follow class routines with only occasional reminders.

## READING, WRITING & LISTENING

- Enjoy looking at books and imitate reading behaviors such as turning pages one by one.
- Recognize most of the letters of the alphabet by sight, both upper and lower case.
- Can hold a pencil using the correct grip.
- Can write first name using capital and lower case letters; can form letters from the top down.
- Can sit still long enough to listen to a story.

## EVERYDAY SKILLS

- Use the bathroom by themselves and wash their hands.
- Take their coats off and hang them up; and put their coats on, including fasteners (zippers, buttons).
- Know and respond to their proper names, rather than just nicknames.
- Have self-help skills, such as opening their own snacks.
- Use scissors, pencils and crayons.
- Understand two or three-step instructions—e.g., “Get your jackets, put them on, and then get into line.”

## NUMBERS AND COLORS

- Identify and describe squares, circles, triangles and rectangles.
- Name common colors.
- Recognize one-digit numerals and count up to ten objects.
- Sort common objects into groups—e.g., they can “put all the cars together.”

THE KINDERGARTEN SKILLS SURVEY included more than 100 kindergarten teachers and was conducted in the spring of 2014. The teachers came from the following ten school districts: Amityville, Franklin Square, Harborfields, Levittown, Long Beach, Middle Country, North Merrick, Valley Stream #13, Uniondale and Wyandanch. Some survey questions were based on an earlier survey of teachers in Westbury done by The Early Years Institute.

THE LONG ISLAND PRE-K INITIATIVE is a grant-funded project that seeks to strengthen relationships between school districts and community-based organizations and to share information about research, policy and best practices for early learning.

## LONG ISLAND PRE-K INITIATIVE



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