

kindergarten



Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

www.childrenshc.org

NICU Follow-Up Clinic

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Preparing for kindergarten

Going to kindergarten is a major turning point for every child. Even if your child has attended preschool, now she will be expected to be much more grown up, with more responsibilities and more independence. Make sure your child is emotionally ready to be one of the youngest members in a big school.

You can help your child prepare for school by talking to her about it. Explain how her routine will change. Show her the classroom, so she can see firsthand what to expect.

Before starting school, your child will need a physical exam done by her primary health care provider. Hearing, vision, and lab tests are done, and immunizations are updated. Developmental testing also helps determine whether your child has the skills to do well in kindergarten. Developmental rates vary so widely that some children are ready for school at age 4, others not until they are almost 6 years old.

Many public schools conduct readiness screenings for all kindergarten-age preschoolers. This usually is done the summer before the child is scheduled to enter kindergarten.

Is my former preemie ready for kindergarten?

Parents of former preemies often ask this question. The answer depends on the child's developmental readiness. A developmental evaluation – as we do at the 4 ½-year visit in the NICU Follow-Up Clinic – is designed to help answer this question. If your child is delayed in one or more areas, another year of preschool may help him overcome difficulties.

Kindergarten readiness guidelines

Before starting kindergarten, your child should:

- speak in complete sentences and express himself clearly.
- follow simple directions.
- sit for 15 minutes to work on a fun activity.
- like being read to and like looking at books alone.
- take turns with others and understand sharing.
- know how to express anger without hitting or biting.
- play well with other children most of the time.
- wash and dress with little help.