

# Kindergarten Bridge

## Ready for Kindergarten Skills and Activities

### Social and school skills

- Zip own coat, tie shoes, etc.
- Follow directions (2 or 3)
- Learning street address
- Pays attention for 10 -15 minutes
- Raise hand and wait to be called on
- Knows about people of different backgrounds
- Asks for help
- Takes turns
- Solves problems

### Developing an understanding of own and other's emotions

- Enjoys playing with other children
- Becoming more independent
- Uses more complex language to describe their feelings
- Has identified how to self-soothe when upset (while still needing guidance)
- Becoming aware that others have different feelings

### Parent's role in helping our children understand emotions

- Listen to the child
- Empathize with soothing words and affection
- Help the child name the emotion being felt
- Offer guidance on managing emotions
- Set limits and teach ways to express emotions
- Teach problem solving skills

### Reading

- Read every day together for fun and pleasure!
- Say the alphabet and match letters to objects
- Tell, read, and listen to stories
- Ask questions and listen to answers
- Sing songs and recite rhymes

### Writing

- Use a mature grasp to hold a pencil
- Copy or write letters or numbers
- Copy or write own name (*uppercase and lowercase*)
- Draw simple pictures
- Art and physical activities help to develop writing skills (*Shaving cream, play dough, using hands with blocks or tongs game*)

### Math

- Play board games
- Sort and classify (*silverware, buttons, socks, and matching games*)
- Count and read numbers
- Patterns and puzzles
- Name and draw common shapes

### Science

- Name categories in nature
- Discover properties of different materials (*play with water, mud, sand*)
- Sort groceries by size and weight
- Collections (*leaves, rocks, shells*)

### Encourage a love of learning

Develop child's interests and enthusiasm.  
Investigate and try new things.  
Don't quiz or use workbooks.  
Answer child's questions.  
Read books about their interests.

Teach the skills needed – don't do it for them.  
Getting ready by themselves.  
Taking care of materials.  
Organizing and cleaning up.

How to use pencil, scissors, paintbrushes, etc.  
Provide assistance and support.  
Help gather materials needed.  
Give just enough help, but not too much.

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## Building Kindergarten Skills with Board Games

Your child can learn many of the skills needed to do well in kindergarten by playing simple board games. It is an enjoyable way to spend fun, relaxing time together where your children have your undivided attention.

### Board games teach learning concepts

- Number and shape recognition, grouping, and counting
- Letter recognition and reading
- Visual perception and fine motor skills

### Board games teach social skills

- Verbal communication
- Sharing
- Waiting and taking turns
- Enjoying interaction with others

### Board games teach life messages

- Stay within the rules and boundaries
- Work out differences
- Focus your attention
- Stick with things that take a long time
- Lose and win gracefully

Game playing teaches children to stay with the boundaries (like not intruding on another's space) and listen to each other. This builds their maturity. The message inherent in board games is: never give up! Just when you think you are losing; it could change if you stay in the game for a few more moves. Applying these life lessons is crucial to leading a successful social and academic life.

### Keep game playing simple

- Teach games when everyone is relaxed
- Tailor the game to your child's ability level
- Let younger children shake the dice or older children count
- Comfort your child when they lose; it is hard to accept at their age

# Kindergarten Bridge

## Children Learn to Read and Write Through Play

### To learn to read and write kids need to:

- Look closely and listen carefully
- Remember what they see and hear
- Express themselves
- Build their muscles

**Children don't need to be forced to read and write. Fun activities help prepare a child to enjoy reading and writing until they are mature enough to have success with it.**

### Fun ways to help children get ready to read and write:

- Running, skipping, and catching balls helps to develop coordination and confidence. (Risk takers are more willing to try reading and children who move a lot feel more capable)
- Coloring, cutting, pasting, painting, blocks, and play dough develop hand and finger muscles. (Holding a pencil comes more easily to children who frequently use these muscles)
- Have your child put grocery items in order of size or separate silverware, buttons, or toy cars into categories. (This helps children see the small differences among items ~ letters)
- Use new words while describing what you are doing or while talking with your child. (Children who enter kindergarten with more words do better with reading and writing)
- Ask how the clock, refrigerator, and the heater sound different. Identify outside noises. (Children need to slow down to hear, notice, and remember differences in sounds)
- Sing songs and recite poems with your child, make up songs and poems together. (Rhyming is a fun way to notice how words and letters work and it builds memory skills)
- Make up or read a story and ask your child to draw it and tell it back to you. (Child who can tell stories may develop writing skills easier)

# Kindergarten Bridge

## Is My Child Ready For Kindergarten?

### Emotional/Social Skills

- Is my child comfortable being away from me?
- How do they seek and receive assurance? Criticism?
- How does my child get attention? Can s/he ask for help?
- Is my child afraid of making mistakes? How does s/he handle frustration?
- How does my child comfort, soothe themselves? Are they willing to try new things?
- How does my child play with other children? Can s/he share, wait for a turn, make friends?
- How does my child try to engage others around her/him?
- Can my child sit and pay attention for 10 -15 minutes? Can s/he follow simple directions?
- Can my child work independently? Does s/he have basic self-help skills?

### Temperament Considerations

- How persistent is my child when faced with a difficult task?
- Can they tolerate minor frustration?
- How long is their attention span?
- Is my child easily distracted?
- How do they approach new situations?
- How does my child adapt to changes and transitions?

### Thinking/Language Skills

- Can my child solve minor problems? What problem solving skills do I notice?
- How does my child use toys? Do they become involved in imaginative play?
- Can my child participate in give-and-take conversations?
- Is my child asking questions, telling stories, interested in books?
- Can my child rhyme words?
- Is my child showing an interest in numbers and letters?

### Motor Skills

- Can my child use a scissors and drawing materials?
- If using pencils or crayons, what is his/her grip like? Is it a mature grip?

### It is helpful for children entering kindergarten to have had experiences with:

1. Groups. Being in a group and playing as a group, waiting in a line, and taking turns.
2. Success. This leads to feelings of confidence and an 'I can do it' attitude.
3. Literacy activities. Being read to, noticing and identifying letters and words, retelling stories.
4. Math activities. Sorting, comparing objects, one-to-one counting, identifying numbers.
5. Structure and schedules.