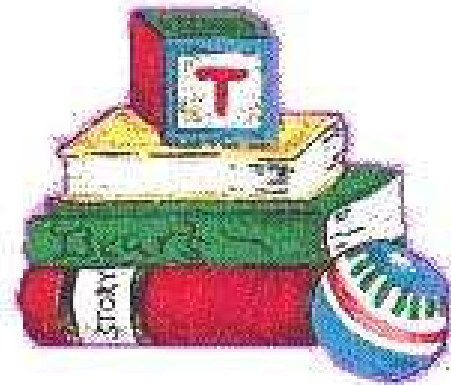


Kindergarten Readiness



Importance of school readiness

- 30% of children entering kindergarten are not ready to learn
- 80% of these children don't "catch up"
- Early experiences impact children's later achievement



Defining school readiness

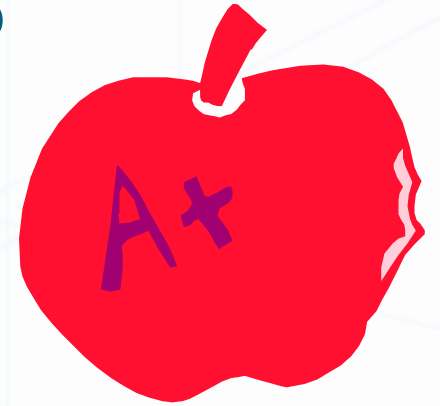
- Cut-off date for chronological age (**Elkin, 1989**).
- “The capacity to simultaneously learn and cope with the school environment.” (**The Gessell Institute, 1987, p.7**)
- A composition of 1) physical well-being and motor development, 2) social and emotional development, 3) approaches toward learning, 4) language usage, and 5) cognition and general knowledge. (**United States National Education Goals Panel , 1997**)

Defining School Readiness

- Language knowledge and skills, including oral language and listening comprehension; pre-reading knowledge and skills, including phonological awareness, print awareness, print skills, and alphabetic knowledge; pre-mathematics knowledge and skills, including aspects of classification, seriation, number, spatial relations, and time; cognitive abilities related to academic achievement; social and emotional development related to early learning, school success, and sustained academic gains; and, in the case of limited-English – proficient children, progress toward acquisition of the English language while making meaningful progress toward the knowledge, skills, and abilities expected for English-speaking children. (**Head Start as the School Readiness Act of 2005, S1107; H.R.2123**),

What do kindergarten teachers say is important for school readiness?

1. Social and emotional skills
 - Persistence, attention, strategy, flexibility, motivation, and attitudes toward learning
2. Regulatory skills
 - Attention
 - Self-regulation
3. Academic skills



Social-emotional skills and readiness

- Social, regulatory, and emotional impairments can influence normal early school entry adaptation (National Research Council, 2000).
- Emotional adjustment problems in preschool have been shown to impair learning processes and school preparation (Belsky & MacKinnon, 1994; Entwisle & Alexander, 1993).
- Emotional problems are likely to cross-over into other domains that impact a child's ability to approach learning in an adaptive manner (Olson & Hoza, 1993; Pianta, Nimetz, & Bennett, 1997).

Self-regulation and readiness

- Research links self-regulation to school achievement and social-emotional functioning (Blair, 2002).
- Kindergarten teachers
 - Self-regulation is a major component of school success (Lewit & Baker, 1995).
- Problems of self-regulation are related to later adjustment
 - Aggression, juvenile delinquency, dropping out (Schunk, 2005)

Good news!

- SEL integrates self-regulatory strategies in most activities, including activities with literacy or oral language as their primary focus.
- High levels of dramatic play improves self-regulation when children practice making the rules and then follow them by regulating their own and their playmates' behaviors (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Vygotsky, 1977).
- When using Play Plans, children progress from behaviors that are reactive and impulsive to behaviors that are deliberate and thoughtful.



Rethinking school readiness

- Non-cognitive characteristics, including persistence, social attractiveness, adaptability, and emotionality, are just as critical to school success (Carlton & Winsler, 1999).
- Children who can control themselves are more liked by peers and have more success in school.
- Approximately 20% of preschoolers from ethnically and economically diverse backgrounds display moderate to clinically significant social and emotional difficulties (Pianta & Caldwell, 1990).

References/Further reading

- Blair, C. (2002). School readiness: Integrating cognition and emotion in a neurobiological conceptualization of children's functioning at school entry. *American Psychologist*, 57(2), 111-127.
- Bronson, M. B. (2000). *Self-Regulation in Early Childhood*. New York: The Guilford Press.