

## **Kindergarten Readiness:**

### **What Does My Child Need To Know?**

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During Kindergarten Registration at Darcey School many parents inquire about what their child needs to know in order to be ready for kindergarten. Often they are concerned about the academic expectations of the public school. When describing a child “ready for kindergarten,” kindergarten teachers list the following characteristics:

- Excited about coming to school and eager to learn.
- Curious about the world around them and full of imagination.
- Aware of other people’s feelings- able to share, play, and take turns with others.
- Able to sit in a group and pay attention to the teacher for 10-15 minutes.
- Able to understand and participate in conversations with good command of the language the family speaks at home.
- Able to express feelings and needs in words.
- Able to follow routines and directions.
- Able and willing to listen to adults whether it is a teacher, instructional assistant or bus driver.
- Able to be a good community member- take care of their possessions and the materials in the classroom responsibly.

Children who can do all of this are ready for instruction and participation in the many fun, learning activities provided at Darcey School. It is wonderful if they can recognize and spell their own name. Having a love of books and stories, understanding that print has meaning, and making rhymes are helpful as they learn to read. However incoming kindergartners have no requirements to gain admission! The most important skills are listed above and are learned from parents and caregivers in nursery schools and daycare centers. They are learned through playing with others and exploring the natural world. Academics come naturally to children with these readiness skills because they are poised for learning, feel good about themselves as learners, and see school as an exciting place

to be. We look forward to welcoming all children and building on the foundation already established.

At Darcey we expect our kindergartners to have differing experiences with preschool settings and readiness for academics. Our students range in age from four years old to turning six years old, and there is a huge growth in development between four and six years of age. Our goal is for each child to make a year's worth of growth in a year's time, not to have them all at the same place at the beginning or the end of the year. Parents often think we are "evaluating" their children in the beginning of the year, but we are actually "assessing their understanding" in order to plan our instruction for them. We don't want children to be overwhelmed with information they aren't ready for or to be taught things they already know.

Please spend time with your children in the summer before kindergarten enjoying good books together, talking about their hopes and fears about beginning school, and reassuring them that they will do great work in kindergarten. It is our job to be "ready" for them and I promise you we will. So enjoy your last few months with your preschoolers before they are welcomed into the kindergarten community.

The following is a list of books that would be fun to read over the summer to help children talk about their feelings about beginning school:

**Do You Want to Be My Friend? By Eric Carle (Harper, 1987)**

**Will I Have a Friend? By Miriam Cohen (Macmillan, 1967)**

**Ruby the Copy Cat by Peggy Rathman (Scholastic 1991)**

**Welcome Roberto! Bienvenido, Roberto!by Mary Sefozo (Follett 1969)**

**Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner, by Amy Schwartz (Orchard Books, 1988)**

**Will Bear by Miriam Kantrowitz (Macmillan Child Group, 1989).**