

## Is Your Young Child On Track to Succeed in School?

Is your toddler or preschooler developing the skills that are most important to school success? How can you tell and what should you do if you have concerns? Here are Marti's suggestions:

### I. Underlying issues about school readiness

- “School readiness” encompasses much more than letters and numbers and includes all domains of development. Experience from birth to 5 matters a great deal.
- There are good resources to help parents know if their child is on track.
- If there are concerns, getting an evaluation and appropriate intervention is extremely important to later learning and development.

### II. Five tips for helping your child be ready to succeed in school

- 1) Provide a rich language environment from infancy on  
*Talk to your child long before he or she can talk back; have fun with stories, songs and rhymes; ask “why” and “how” and “what if...” questions that stretch your child’s mind and vocabulary; introduce your child from the earliest months of life to the rich, expansive world of books; act out favorite stories or have your child make up his or her own dramas.*
- 2) Nurture social and emotional skills  
*Give your baby a foundation of security by responding sensitively to his or her cues and signals; providing reliable support and comfort helps your child build confidence, motivation, self-regulation and empathy. Teach your child calming strategies, how to recognize and name feelings, how to share and see through another person’s eyes. Kindergarten teachers identify these social and emotional skills as most important to school success.*
- 3) Monitor your child’s developmental milestones  
*[Help Me Grow](#) is a great resource for Minnesota families, with information about typical development of language, fine and gross motor skills, cognitive ability and social and emotional skills.*
- 4) Take advantage of free early childhood screening  
*All young children should participate in free early childhood screening. If screening reveals concerns about any aspect of development, your child will get a more comprehensive evaluation and, if necessary, supportive services to ensure your child’s optimal learning and development. (See Help Me Grow.)*
- 5) Know that delaying school entrance may delay necessary help  
*If a preschool child is having difficulty in one or more areas of development, parents sometimes consider waiting a year before enrolling the child in kindergarten. However, delaying school entrance has not been shown to be an effective way to help a child who appears to have difficulties with learning or behavior. In fact, delaying entrance may prevent that child from getting necessary help and intervention.*