

NEXT STOP KINDERGARTEN

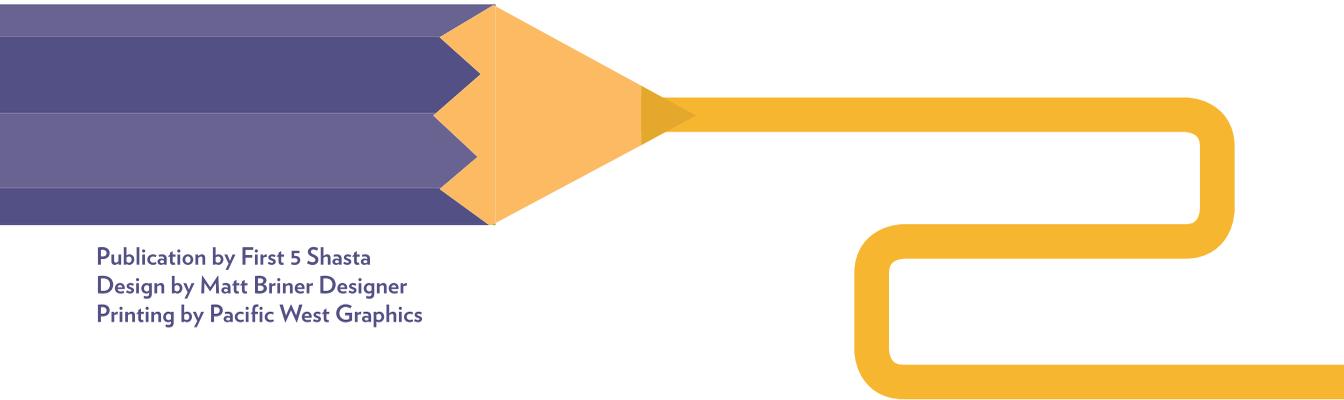




First 5 Shasta is building a pathway to success for young children. Together with our grantees and community partners, we're making smart investments in young children and that changes our community for generations to come.
first5shasta.org



Reach Higher Shasta works to create clear pathways from our children's first day in the cradle to their first day on the job. We ensure they're ready for kindergarten, motivated and supported through elementary, middle and high school, and assisted in the transition to career training or college.
www.reachhighershasta.com



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INTRODUCTION

Your child's early years are filled with proud moments and big milestones. But, the first day of school must be one of the biggest! The Next Stop: Kindergarten guide can help your family get ready for kindergarten. It maps out important things to do in your child's last year before kindergarten. It also includes information that will help you avoid surprises about enrolling in school.

School Readiness

School readiness is a balance of skills that help children start school ready to learn. These skills include:

- Literacy skills
- Numeracy skills
- Social-emotional skills
- Physical skills

Children build these skills a little at a time starting at birth. From infant to toddler to preschooler, your child's skills grow stronger. The stronger the "school readiness" skills, the more likely your child will do well in kindergarten. This can set the stage for success all the way through school and on to college or career training.



In This Guide

- Time to Start
- Determining Readiness
- School Choices
- Enroll in Kindergarten
- Smooth Transition
- Readiness Skills
- Kindergarten Prep Checklist



Time to Start
KINDERGARTEN

Children are eligible to start kindergarten at age 5.

California law sets the date that children can start public kindergarten. In California, a child must be 5 years old by September 1st to be eligible to start kindergarten.

Some 5-year-old children are totally ready for kindergarten. They have developed physical, social, emotional, and early academic skills. Their birthday is on or before September 1st. Does this sound like your child? Then, you're probably sure it's time to start kindergarten.

But, different children develop their skills at different rates. Your 5-year-old may need more time to mature and keep building skills. You may have a 4-year-old that will be turning 5 soon. If your child isn't ready or isn't eligible for kindergarten, get familiar with your education options. Parents can choose the best fit for their child.





EDUCATION OPTIONS

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is the traditional beginning of elementary school. It is a child's gentle shift from transitional kindergarten, preschool, child care, or home to an academic classroom.

ELIGIBILITY: Children age 5 on or before September 1st.

Transitional Kindergarten

"TK" is an optional two-year kindergarten program for children who are not age 5 by September 1st. Transitional Kindergarten uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate for children slightly younger than 5.

Parents with a child age 5 and eligible for kindergarten may also consider this option if their child needs to build more skills before starting kindergarten. In this case, parents must get permission from the school district.

ELIGIBILITY: Children age 5 between September 2nd and December 2nd.

Preschool

Preschool is an early education environment where young children learn and play. Preschool helps children build kindergarten readiness skills. Parents may check into continuing preschool if kindergarten or Transitional Kindergarten is not a good fit for their child.

ELIGIBILITY: Children age 3-4 (traditionally)

Determining **READINESS**



Parents - you know your child best! Your knowledge and understanding of your child's level of kindergarten readiness will help you choose the education option that meets his/her needs. Check all your options and get input from people that know your child and how his/her skills are growing.





TALK TO PEOPLE

It can be helpful to talk with other people as you make important decisions about your child's education. Some people you might want to talk to include:

- + YOUR CHILD'S PRESCHOOL TEACHER
- + YOUR PEDIATRICIAN OR FAMILY DOCTOR
- + OTHER PARENTS

VISIT THE CLASSROOM

It can also be helpful for you to talk to a kindergarten teacher and observe a local kindergarten class. As a parent, use your intuition and everything you know about your child when making this important education decision.

Children with Special Needs

Special health, developmental, and education needs can affect a child's learning. Try to identify any special needs as early as possible. School districts and community organizations can offer specialized interventions and support to help children with special needs do better in school.

INDIVIDUAL PLANS

A written plan, either an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504, outlines special requirements for a child with special needs. It is created by a team of professionals and the child's parents.

School CHOICES



As a parent, you now have many options when choosing a school for your child. Use the following information to help choose the best fit for your family.

Public Schools

Public schools are located in neighborhoods throughout your county. These schools are free. They are funded by tax dollars and are usually run by an elementary school district. Local public schools draw students from a defined area called an “attendance zone.” Many children go to their neighborhood public school.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are independent public schools. These schools are free. They run under a “charter” which gives them permission from a local or state education agency to operate. The charter outlines certain goals and operating procedures for the school. Charter school students must participate in statewide assessments.



It is a good idea to visit the school and classroom you are considering.

Private Schools

Private schools do not receive public tax dollars to operate. Tuition and other private funds support the school's operation. Families pay money to send their children to a private school. These schools have the right to select their students.

Homeschool

Homeschooling is an option in which parents take responsibility for their child being educated at home. Homeschooling may be structured using a variety of approaches from textbook-based learning to hands-on projects. All books and learning materials are provided by the family. Families will need to explore legal options for establishing homeschool status in California.

Choosing the best fit for your child

Many families send their children to their local neighborhood school. However, if you decide to look at another type of school, you will have many things to consider. It is a good idea to visit the school and classroom you are considering.

If districts in your county offer "open enrollment," it may be possible to send your child to a public school outside of your attendance zone. Open enrollment allows families to request an "interdistrict transfer." If you are thinking about requesting a transfer, check with the school in your neighborhood and the school of your choice. Both schools and/or districts are involved in an interdistrict transfer request.



FIND A SCHOOL

CONTACT
your local
County Office of
Education for a
directory of
local schools.



Enroll in **KINDERGARTEN**

Once you have decided which school your child will attend, you will need to enroll him/her in that school. School registration schedules vary. Call the school you have chosen or check online to find out when registration starts and what paperwork needs to be completed.





Kindergarten enrollment forms can be picked up at the school office. They may also be offered online. In general, the forms ask you for contact information for you and other adults you specify. They may also ask about your child's prior school experiences, languages spoken in the home, and any special issues your child may have. Forms to enroll in after school care or meal programs may be included. Be ready to provide the school with copies of important papers, like your child's birth certificate and proof of where you live.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Getting ready for kindergarten includes making sure you have addressed some specific health requirements. Your school will require these documents for enrollment:

- **Immunization Record** providing proof that child has received immunizations required by California law for enrollment in public or private schools.
- **Dental Check-up** due by May 31st of kindergarten year. Dental check-ups that have happened within the 12 months before kindergarten will meet this requirement.



Get Ready for a SMOOTH TRANSITION

Starting kindergarten will be a big change for your child. Just being on a school campus and in a classroom is going to be a big deal! There are things you can do to prepare for this change. The more you prepare, the smoother the transition will be for your child and your whole family.



Talk About Kindergarten

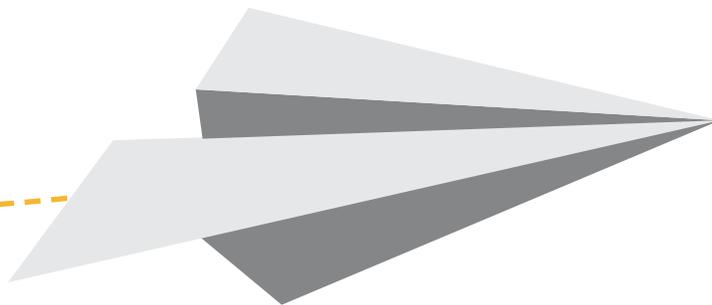
Children do better when they know what to expect. You can start building your toddler and preschooler's enthusiasm about going to school. Point out your child's school when you pass by. Talk about what your child will be doing during the school year. Share your excitement about this new beginning.

Ask your child how s/he is feeling and be ready to listen. Some children find it easier to talk about their feelings when they are creating something. Draw pictures of the school together or build a classroom out of blocks. After school begins, it's important to keep talking with your child about their feelings and how class is going.

Get Familiar with the School

Before kindergarten starts, visit the school your child will be attending. Be sure to check in at the school office. Walk around the campus on the weekend and stop by in the summer. It will help your child remember where to find the classroom, office, bathroom, and cafeteria. Visits like this will help your child feel comfortable on the first day of school.

Call the school or check online to see if it has a "Kindergarten Round-Up" or orientation day.



These events give you and your child time to meet the kindergarten teacher and visit classrooms. This can help ease any anxiety your child may be feeling. Meeting the teacher gives your child a “face and a name” to think about as you keep talking about the start of school. Bonus: Climb aboard the school bus!

Establish a Routine

School days and classroom activities follow a routine. Begin your child’s “school routine” a few weeks before school starts. Have your child start going to bed and waking up at school time. This helps your child get up and get ready more easily on the first day of school. With adequate sleep, your child will be more alert and ready to learn. This will help the first few days of school go more smoothly for child and parent.

First Backpack

Your child will need a backpack to carry things to and from school. Get your child a junior size backpack to carry supplies, snacks, lunch, homework, and other important papers. It should be big enough to fit a standard student folder. Let him/her practice wearing the backpack around the house. If you need help gearing up,

check with local churches or online groups offering free or discount supplies.

Know What to Expect

Don’t be surprised if your child is tired or more emotional the first few days or weeks of kindergarten. It’s a new experience and s/he will be working hard mentally, physically, and emotionally. Your child is adjusting to all the new parts of his/her school world. Your patience and understanding will help your child feel safe and secure. It helps with adapting to all the changes that come with kindergarten.

First Day of School

On the first day of school, wake up early and serve your child a healthy breakfast. Talk through the excitement or nervousness your child may be feeling. Be patient if your child cries. Lots of children cry on the first day of school. Take photos or ask your child to draw pictures to remember the first day. Remember to tell your child how proud you are of him or her!

Kindergarten

READINESS SKILLS



Literacy

lit·er·a·cy ('li-t(ə-)rə-sē) n. the ability to read and write

In kindergarten, children begin learning to read and write. From kindergarten through third grade, children continue learning to read. After that, they are reading to learn. Your child's literacy skills will help him/her learn in every subject in every grade.

Language skills, a healthy vocabulary, and learning to communicate are all part of learning to read. Your child has been developing these skills since birth. You help nurture these skills by reading, talking, and singing to your child.

LOOK WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO!

- Understand a book
- Recognize at least half of the alphabet
- Identify some letter sounds
- Write name and other words
- Identify words that rhyme
- Speak clearly and can be understood

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Read with your child at least 20 minutes throughout the day
- Talk with and listen to your child as you do daily activities
- Keep pencils, crayons, and paper where your child can use them
- Point out letters in everyday places
- Check out books from the library
- Sing songs and play rhyming games





Numeracy

nu·mer·a·cy (ˈn(y)üm-rə-sē) n. the ability to understand and work with numbers

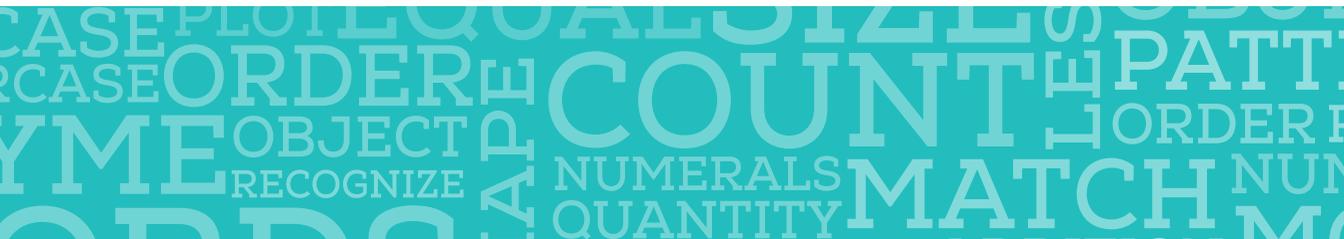
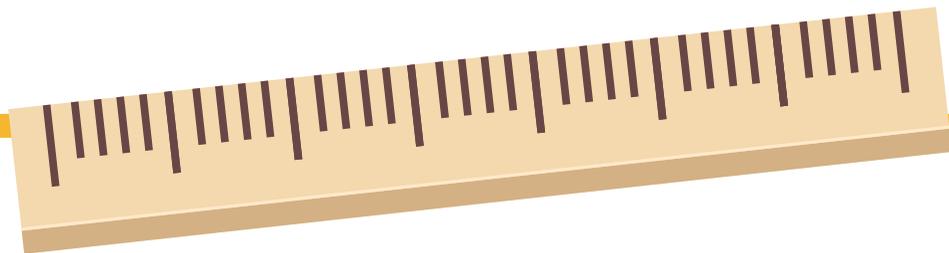
Early numeracy skills will help your child start learning math in kindergarten. Numeracy includes recognizing numbers, quantities, and patterns. It also involves sorting objects and putting them in order. Your child's natural curiosity leads to finding numeracy lessons in everyday experiences. Help numeracy skills grow by doing things together like baking cookies, doing puzzles, or building with blocks.

LOOK WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO!

- Count to 20
- Recognize numbers and quantities to 10
- Write some numbers
- Do simple addition and subtraction
- Understand more, less, and equal
- Sort objects by color, shape, and size

PARENTS: WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Count everything... stairs, cars, people
- Point out numbers seen in everyday places
- Talk about colors, textures, and sizes to help your child learn to sort, match, and compare
- Ask your child to help match socks while folding laundry
- Point out who has the most food at dinner; ask questions like "You have 4 bites. If you eat 1, how many do you have left?"



Social-Emotional

so-cial ('sō-shəl) adj. relating to or involving activities in which people spend time talking to each other or doing enjoyable things with each other

e-mo-tion-al (e-mo-shə-nəl) adj. likely to show or express emotion: easily upset, excited, etc.

In kindergarten, children depend on social-emotional skills to help them handle their feelings and behavior. This helps them focus on learning. Social-emotional skills include management of emotions, appropriate expression of feelings, and the ability to have rewarding relationships with others. Your child has been building social-emotional skills at home by engaging with family members and first friends.

LOOK WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO!

- Play well with others
- Focus on a task for at least 5 minutes and work independently
- Understand and follow instructions
- Recognize and manage emotions
- Show kindness to others

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Encourage your child to solve everyday problems
- Set up a neighborhood play group or play dates with other children
- Encourage your child to make decisions by offering choices
- Allow your child to do things for him/herself when appropriate
- Set realistic expectations and consistent rules for your child
- Develop regular routines at home
- Encourage your child to follow directions and take turns





Physical

phys-i-cal ('fi-zi-kəl) adj. relating to the body of a person instead of the mind

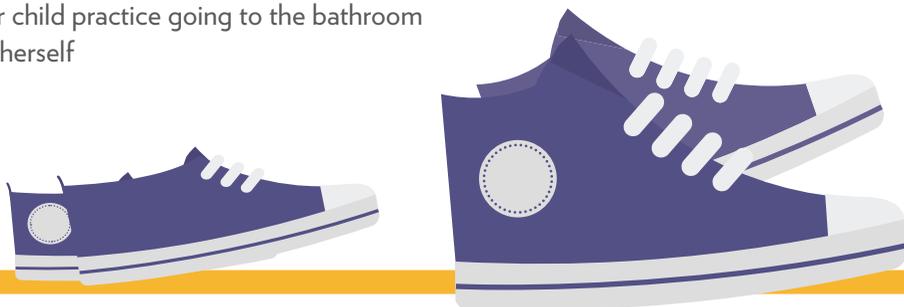
Your child will be in a new environment, both in the kindergarten classroom and on the playground. Physical skills children have been developing since birth help them do school work and enjoy physical activity and outdoor games at school. As a parent, it is important to check your child's level of physical skill development and keep introducing activities that give them a boost. Your child's ability to control his/her movements will contribute to his/her success in school.

LOOK WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO!

- Jump, hop, skip, and balance
- Bounce, kick, throw and catch a ball
- Dress him/herself even when clothes have zippers and buttons
- Use scissors, crayons, and pencils
- Wash hands, tie shoes, and zip pants or a jacket

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Play with your child using a ball; kick, throw, catch, roll
- Play with your child using a rope; jump, balance, hop
- Write a wiggly line on a piece of paper; have your child trace it, then cut along the line
- Let your child practice dressing and undressing him/herself, including tying shoes
- Let your child practice going to the bathroom by him/herself



Your child's enjoyment of learning will help him reach higher and higher!

Notes

Kindergarten PREP CHECKLIST

SELECT A SCHOOL

Type of school: Public Charter Private Home School

School name: _____

VISIT THE DOCTOR AND DENTIST

- Child's immunization record.
- Dental assessment certificate
- Well-child physical exam

ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOL

- Enrollment forms submitted
- Health documents submitted
- Proof of residence (or other documents requested by school) submitted
- Free or Reduced Lunch application submitted
- School bus schedule received

MEET THE TEACHER AND VISIT THE SCHOOL

- Kindergarten classroom
- School campus
- Cafeteria
- Playground and Bathroom
- Bus Stop

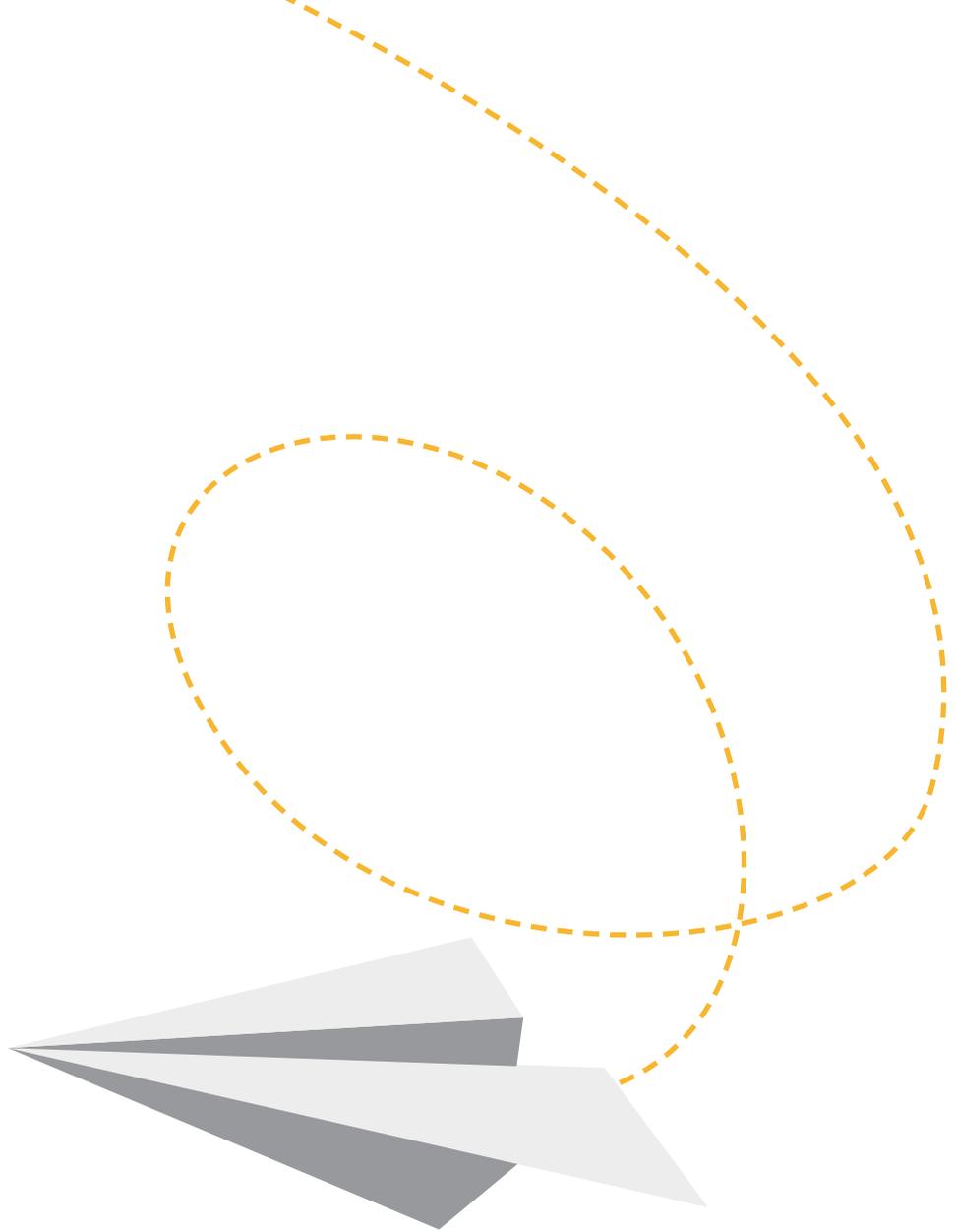
PREPARE FOR CLASS

- Read together 20-minutes a day
- Practice recognizing letters of the alphabet
- Practice writing
- Count, add and subtract
- Play with friends, take turns and share
- Practice tying shoes and zipping zippers

ESTABLISH A SCHOOL ROUTINE

- School bedtime (allow for a minimum of 8 hours sleep)
- School wake-up time
- Healthy breakfast
- Dressed appropriately
- Backpack ready

MY CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN START DATE _____



REACH HIGHER
shasta EVERY STUDENT EVERY OPTION

 **FIRST 5**
S H A S T A