



SCHOOL READINESS

Setting Your Child up for a Successful Transition to School

Preparing your child to transition to school can be overwhelming. While academic skills such as identifying colors and shapes can be important, there are practical skills that are critical for school readiness.

Here are some of the skills you may want to consider when determining if your child is ready to start school:

- ✖ **Sitting in a group for several minutes** – Your child should be able to sit for several minutes at a time near other children without getting upset or trying to leave the group.
- ✖ **Following simple directions** – Understanding simple directions like “stand up” and “come here” are important for classroom routines.
- ✖ **Communicating basic needs** – Communicating the need for bathroom, help, and hunger are important, especially when your child is in a group setting.
- ✖ **Showing safe behavior near others** – Your child should be able to be near others, including other children, without hurting them.
- ✖ **Switching between activities** – Many activities occur throughout the day at school! If you often avoid transitions because your child has a hard time, they may have trouble doing this at school.
- ✖ **Tolerating school-appropriate clothing** – Your child should be able to wear shoes, pants, and other types of clothes based on the weather and school requirements.
- ✖ **Using the bathroom** – Your child should have some independence with toileting and be able to use the bathroom in different environments. If your child is still in diapers, your child may have trouble toileting at school. Being toilet trained is a pre-requisite for most classroom settings.



Your child may not be able to do all of these things – that’s OK. Talk to your BCBA so that you can collaborate on goals to increase your child’s skills in these important areas. It is also important to note that depending on your child’s age, you may have the option to wait to send your child to kindergarten. The goal is that your child has some level of independence.

If you are considering putting your child in a Pre-K program, know that you have options.



Classroom Placement

First, talk to the school about the classroom options. Sometimes classrooms are made up of mostly peers without autism, whereas other times classrooms are assigned for only children with autism. You should be aware of the pros and cons of each placement and understand the level of support your child may need to participate in the selected classroom. Your child's classroom placement can positively or negatively impact their skills and behaviors.

ABA and School

ABA and the classroom are not synonymous. Your child's ABA program can complement their school program. If your child goes to school 2 days per week, ABA therapy can take place the other 3 days. Collaboration between ABA therapy and school is vital in maximizing your child's success in both settings.

Ask yourself:

Consider what the goal is for Pre-K? Is it exposure to new places? Is it to increase your child's social skills?

Consider your child's behaviors. Does your child engage in behaviors that are difficult and require 1 on 1 support to manage? This can also impact their ability to participate independently in a classroom. Talk to your BCBA to discuss how your child's therapy goals can help you prepare your child for the classroom.



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