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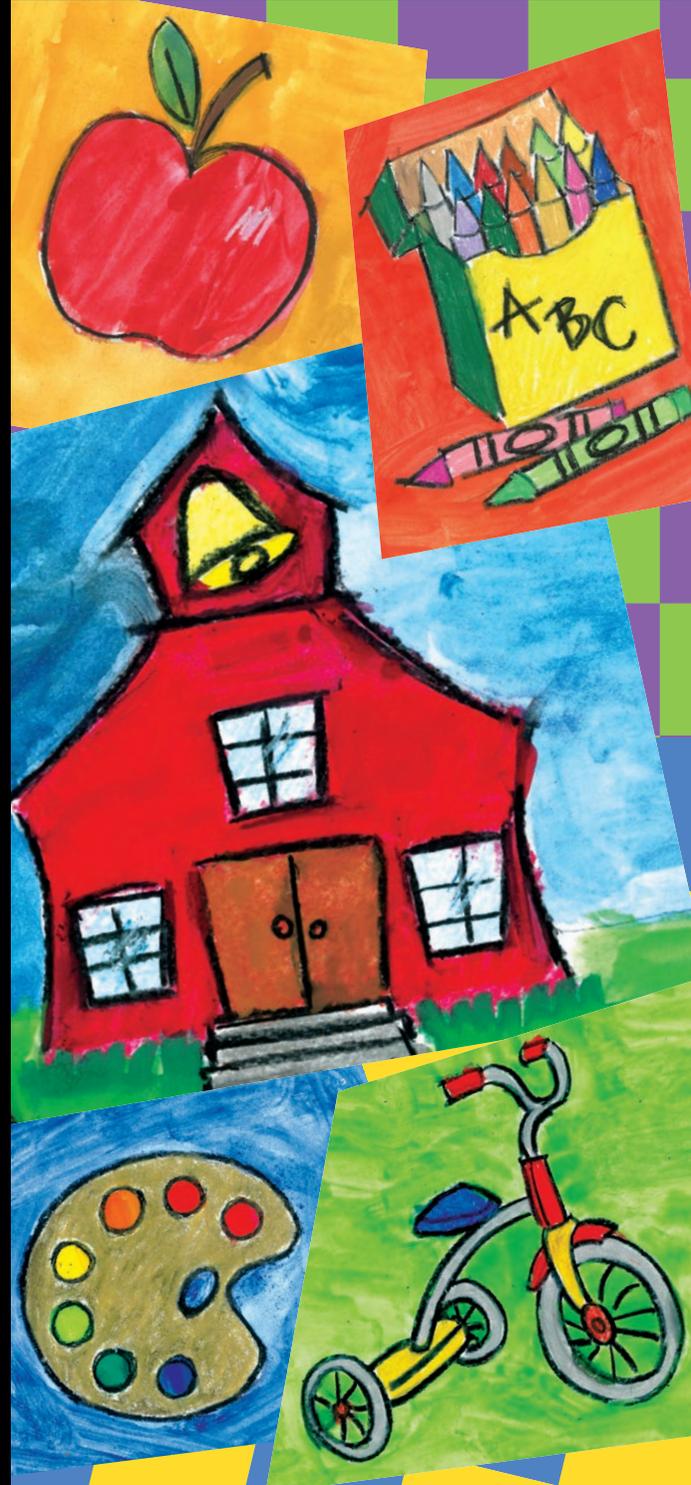
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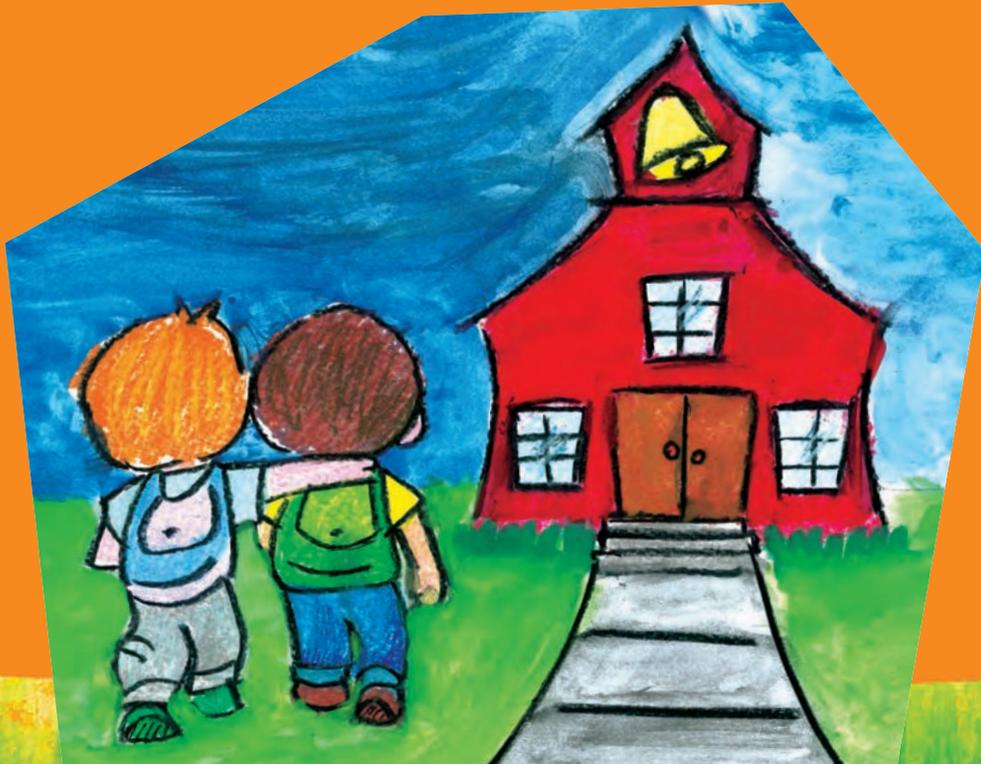
SCHOOL READINESS

GIVING EACH CHILD THE SKILLS TO SUCCEED



C H I L D R E N ' S H O M E S O C I E T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A

What does it mean for a child to be ready for school? School success is not only about academics, but children also need life skills so they can be ready and willing to learn. By understanding school readiness, we can help children achieve both school and lifelong success.



School Readiness is important for children from birth to approximately six years of age. However, the age when a child is ready is different for every child. School Readiness involves areas of development that work together to support the preschool child's full learning potential. It is a combination of Core Competencies (inner strengths) and Academic Competencies (knowledge and skills) which prepares a child for success.



★ CORE COMPETENCIES ★

The Core Competencies are an essential beginning for developing school readiness. These are often referred to as inner strengths. Core Competencies include: Resilience, Self-Regulation, Well-Being, Social Skills, and Critical Thinking.

★ RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to withstand stress and cope with challenges. Having resilience helps people adjust to new situations, keep a positive outlook, overcome risk and difficult situations, and take responsibility for their decisions. Tips to building resilience:

- Keep a consistent schedule so that children learn to trust that parents will return after school.
- Support self-control by playing games that require taking turns such as blowing bubbles, using swings, going down a slide, and playing soccer or basketball.
- Build self-esteem by drawing pictures of things you and the child are good at doing. Continue to draw more pictures or start a list as you discover more together.

★ SELF-REGULATION

Self-Regulation is the ability to control urges and behavior, identify emotions, and respond appropriately. Tips to building self-regulation:

- Help children learn to cope with stress and setbacks by teaching them how to slow down and remain calm. For example, create an "I Plan" they can use when confronted with a problem. "I stop. I breathe. I think. I act."
- Teach children to negotiate and talk out a problem.
- Set clear expectations that allow children to make choices. For example, "I see you are kicking the chair. If you need to kick something, we can go outside and you can kick the ball."

★ WELL-BEING

Well-Being is maintaining good mental, emotional, and physical health, developing a positive self-esteem, and having a sense of purpose. Tips to building well-being:

- Eat at least one family meal per day where you and children can share thoughts, feelings, and concerns.
- Make a weekly meal plan and grocery list together.
- Teach children to care for themselves (eat healthy, dress themselves, care for own belongings, take care of toilet needs independently, etc.).

★ SOCIAL SKILLS

Social Skills involve getting along with others, forming strong positive attachments, resolving conflicts, being honest, having integrity, and demonstrating sensitivity. Tips to nurture social skills:

- Help your children label and talk about their emotions.
- Provide opportunities for children to play together as a group. For example, board games, outdoor sports, music activities, and dramatic play.
- Invite children to help make a list of safety rules that everyone can follow.

★ CRITICAL THINKING

Critical Thinking is the ability to plan, set goals, apply reason and logic to situations, analyze information, and think creatively. Tips to promote critical thinking:

- Ask children open-ended questions: Why did your blocks tumble? Why did your milk spill? What do you think will happen next?
- Provide children with a variety of reusable objects such as cardboard boxes, paper, empty tissue boxes, crayons, scissors, and tape. Allow children to create figures, sculptures, vehicles, etc.
- Draw a map of the inside of your house and label the objects in each room.

Academic Competencies include Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Creative Arts, Science, and Social Studies.

★ LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Language and Literacy is the ability to listen, speak, read, and write in English, as well as the child's home language. Tips to building language and literacy skills:

- Sing songs and recite rhymes.
- Retell a story in order and backwards.
- Name pictures in a book with children.
- Help children learn to identify their first and last name. Begin to practice writing their first name.



Whenever possible, include children in daily activities that help build independence and learning: cooking, doing laundry, setting the table, weeding a garden, or taking a walk.

★ SCIENCE

Science skills include the ability to understand cause and effect, investigate nature, ask questions, and make predictions. Tips to building science skills:

- Write down different things that might affect your balance and try to do them (eyes closed vs. eyes open, standing on right foot vs. left foot, etc.).
- Ask questions about nature: What happened to the rain on the ground? Why are the leaves brown or green? What will happen if we don't water this plant?
- Explore and identify natural objects such as rocks, leaves, plants, flowers, trees, seashells, sand, water, and insects.

★ MATHEMATICS

Mathematics skills include identifying numbers, shapes, patterns, and sizes. Being able to count, estimate quantities, measure, and understand the concept of time. Tips to building mathematics skills:

- Count objects (10 or higher).
- Play memory or matching games. For example, sort laundry and match socks or put utensils away.
- Identify shapes and sizes: circle, square, rectangle, triangle, oval, diamond, star, cube, prism, cylinder, sphere, big, small, short, and long.

★ CREATIVE ARTS

Creative Arts include different methods of expressing creativity such as drawing, painting, sculpting, creating stories, singing, dancing, and making music. Tips to encourage creative arts:

- Tell a story with puppets or dolls.
- Make up a dance and song related to something children are interested in (trains, nature, animals, etc.).
- Provide watercolors, crayons, markers, or paint for children to explore and use in their own way.



★ SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies skills help children relate to others and understand their community. Tips to building social studies skills:

- Discover your community by visiting the police station, library, fire department, senior citizens center, bank, post office, etc. Talk about what you see.
- Experience other cultures and talk about similarities vs. differences – visit different restaurants, talk to neighbors about their traditions, or listen to the various languages in the community.
- Make cards to mail to the local senior center or friends who live in other cities or countries.

The best gift a child can receive is your time. Time spent in good conversation, or enjoying shared interests, is time well spent. The gift of time shows a child that he is safe, loved, and capable of learning.