

School Readiness Declaration

5-year-old Kindergarten

In South Carolina, the only requirement for starting kindergarten in public school is to be 5 years old on or before September 1st of that school year. However, there are many factors that help children be successful in their early school experiences.

Most early childhood experts agree that children have wide variations in their development until at least the age of seven. Children develop intellectual, social, emotional and physical skills at different times and at their own pace. So, while letter and number recognition and basic content knowledge are important, it is more important for your child to be socially, emotionally, and physically ready to tackle the expectations of school.

Children are most prepared for school if they:

- are nurtured with love, appropriate guidance, respect, and acceptance
- show respect for others
- are allowed to explore and manipulate items from the home and nature
- are healthy and well nourished
- come from homes and environments where they are read to daily
- are engaged in strong vocabulary-rich conversations
- have opportunities to become familiar with books through their own play
- are encouraged to talk about what they know and are learning

Social & Emotional Development

It is important that children have experiences with other children near their age before entering kindergarten. Being able to get along in a group is an important school readiness skill.

- Have experiences cooperating with other children; taking turns, working with others, sharing supplies, etc.
- Have a healthy feeling of self-worth and positive feelings of self and of others (can-do attitude)
- Be a good listener
- Play cooperatively with other children
- Remain engaged in an age-appropriate activity for up to 10 minutes
- Express their own feelings without being too aggressive
- Have respect for authority and respect for other children
- Complete a task – finish what they start
- Show self-confidence and a desire to learn
- Understand and follow limits and rules
- Respect property and use materials correctly

Healthy Development

If children are not healthy or if they are in pain, it is hard for them to concentrate or learn in school. Health concerns should be addressed as they are noticed.

- Have up-to-date immunizations and regular pediatric well visits
- Have vision, hearing and dental problems detected and addressed
- Be able to use the bathroom and wash their own hands
- Use silverware and eat unassisted
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Get adequate rest, daily opportunities for exercise, and have a regular bedtime
- Have limited screen time (including TV, movies, computers, hand-held games)

Motor Development

Motor development includes large muscle skills such as running and climbing and small muscle skills such as holding a pencil and cutting with scissors. Both are important for success in school.

- Be able to run, jump, skip, climb, swing, use balls
- Be able to tie own shoes; button, zip, and buckle clothes and coats
- Hold a crayon and draw pictures, lines, and scribbles
- Pick up a small item using their thumb and forefinger

Cognitive & Language Development

This is what many people think of when they think of school. These are important skills, but they are only part of what helps a child be well prepared for school success.

- Hold a book upright and turn pages from front to back
- Listen attentively to a story
- Tell and retell familiar stories
- Know some children's songs and rhymes
- Repeat sounds made by animals, people, or objects in their world
- Be able to speak clearly in full sentences so others can hear and understand what is being said
- Talk about personal experiences, describe items, and start conversations with others
- Listen and understand what others say
- Continue to add new words to their speaking vocabulary
- Identify what is different and the same between items
- Complete a simple pattern or puzzle
- Make simple decisions and choices
- Recognize what print is (words written on a page or on a cereal box, etc.)
- Read the pictures – tell a story by looking at the pictures

A single quality or skill does not determine whether children do well in school, but a combination of factors contribute to their school success. These include good health and physical well being, social and emotional maturity, language skills, the ability to solve problems and think creatively, and general knowledge about the world. As you help your child develop in each of these areas, remember that children develop at different rates and that most children are stronger in some areas than in others.

Resources

Richland One

- www.richlandone.org
- 231-7000 or InfoPhone: 231-7512

Richland Two

- www.richland2.org
- 738-3210

Lexington & Richland Five

- www.lex5.k12.sc.us
- 732-8000

Richland County First Steps

- www.rcfirststeps.org
- 256-7237

South Carolina First Steps

- www.scfirststeps.org
- 734-0479 or 877-621-0865

Parents As Teachers

- www.parentsteachers.org
- 1-866-PAT4YOU (1-866-728-4968)

NAEYC

- www.naeyc.org
- 1-800-424-2460

Zero to Three

- www.zerotothree.org

Parentwise

- www.scchildren.org
- www.scparentwise.org

United Way

- www.bornlearning.com
- 211 – telephone referral and information service

Nat'l/ Resource Ctr. For Health & Safety in Child Care

- www.nrc.uchsc.edu

Early childhood experts from the following organizations helped to shape this School Readiness Declaration:

- Richland County School District One
- Richland School District Two
- School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties
- Richland County First Steps
- Columbia College
- Benedict College
- Early Childhood Development at Midlands Technical College
- GLEAMNS Head Start
- Representatives from various quality child care programs throughout Richland County

RICHLAND COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

This Declaration supports
the ongoing mission of
Richland County First Steps
to School Readiness