

A Parent's Guide to Starting Kindergarten in 2010

Tips on Enrolling
and Preparing
Your Child for
Kindergarten in
San Francisco

Is your child ready?
Learn to ask the
right questions

How to choose a
school that's right
for your child

5 tips for
kindergarten
enrollment in
San Francisco

Enrollment
applications are
due January 8th





A Parent's Guide to Starting Kindergarten in 2010

Tips on Enrolling and Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten in San Francisco

Inside This Guide

Entering kindergarten is an important time in your child's life. This guide is designed to give you information and tips as you and your child start this exciting journey.

Kindergarten Readiness 2

Talks about important skills that help prepare your child for kindergarten and how you can help your child practice these skills at home.

Kindergarten Enrollment 14

Gives information about how to choose a school that's right for your child and how to sign up for San Francisco's public schools. **The deadline is January 8!**

Resources 24

Includes a list of places to find more information or get help with all your questions.

First 5 San Francisco and Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco (PPS-SF) are pleased to provide you with this guide to help you get your child ready for a great start in kindergarten!

Please refer to the end of the guide for a listing of references and research that supports the tips and recommendations found in this guide.

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

In order to do well in school, it helps for young children to have some important skills before entering kindergarten. Children get these skills by learning from their parents and caregivers, playing with other children, and watching the world around them.

All the skills are important, but they build upon one another like a pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid are the basic skills of movement and taking care of oneself (Self Care and Motor Skills). In the middle of the pyramid are skills related to self control (Self-Regulation) and how well children relate to other children and adults (Social Expression). Finally, at the top of the pyramid are the first, early steps toward reading, writing, and math (Kindergarten Academics).



Children who attend preschool are more likely to learn the Basic Building Blocks of Kindergarten Readiness.

4 Basic Building Blocks of Kindergarten Readiness

2 Self-Regulation

- » Comforts self
- » Pays attention
- » Controls impulses
- » Follows directions
- » Negotiates solutions
- » Plays cooperatively
- » Participates in circle time
- » Handles frustration well

1 Self Care & Motor Skills

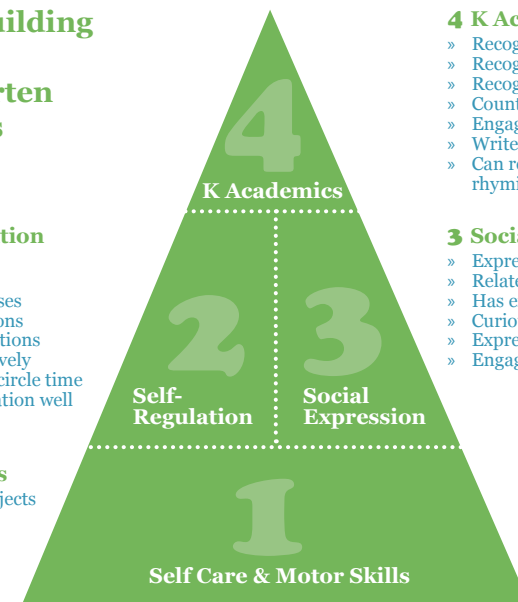
- » Use of small objects
- » Has general coordination
- » Performs basic self-help/self-care tasks

4 K Academics

- » Recognizes letters
- » Recognizes shapes
- » Recognizes colors
- » Counts 10 objects
- » Engages with books
- » Writes own first name
- » Can recognize rhyming words

3 Social Expression

- » Expresses empathy
- » Relates well to adults
- » Has expressive abilities
- » Curious & eager to learn
- » Expresses needs & wants
- » Engages in pretend play



Children who are most successful in school usually learn the skills within all four Building Blocks by the time they enter kindergarten. Children who enter school without any one of these four Building Blocks may have a harder time in school, even years later.

In the next few pages, we will walk you through these important skills and provide ideas for how you can help your child learn these skills.

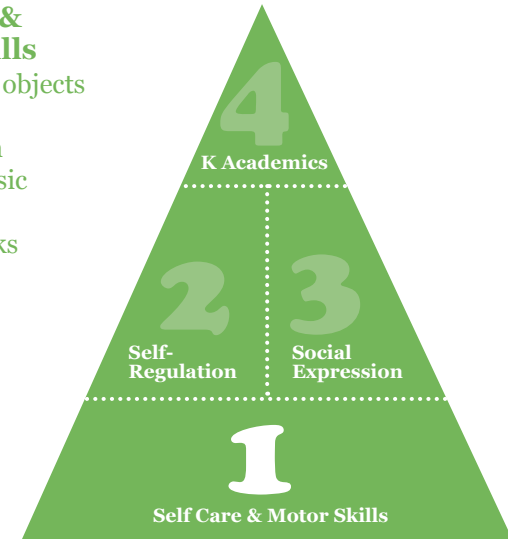


Make time for your child to enjoy active play and exercise.

Self Care and Motor Skills

1 Self Care & Motor Skills

- » Use of small objects
- » Has general coordination
- » Performs basic self-help/self-care tasks



Is your child able to:

- » Use crayons, pencils, and paint brushes?
- » Button, zip, and tie or velcro shoes?
- » Kick balls, hop on one foot, and climb a ladder at the park?
- » Use the toilet, wash hands, and blow nose all by him/herself?

Help your child get ready by:

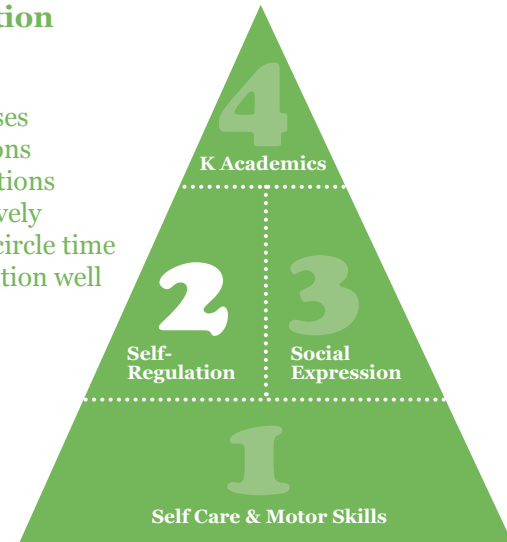
- » Giving your child healthy foods for breakfast and school lunches or snacks, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and milk.
- » Setting a schedule that includes early bedtime. A good night's sleep will help your child grow and be ready to pay attention during the school day.
- » Going outside with your child. Help your child walk on a straight line and climb on a jungle gym at the park.
- » Visiting your child's pediatrician and dentist at least once a year.

Self-Regulation

Being ready for school also means learning how to be part of a group and follow a set routine.

2 Self-Regulation

- » Comforts self
- » Pays attention
- » Controls impulses
- » Follows directions
- » Negotiates solutions
- » Plays cooperatively
- » Participates in circle time
- » Handles frustration well



Is your child able to:

- » Take turns, share, and help others?
- » Stay focused and pay attention for 10-15 minutes at a time?
- » Follow 1- and 2-step directions, such as, “Please put away your crayons and then bring me your paper”?
- » Listen to others when they are talking?
- » Work and play both by him/herself and in a group?
- » Express how he/she feels?

Help your child get ready by:

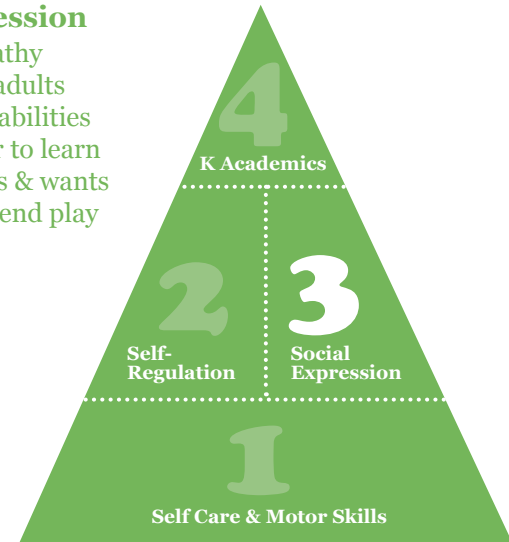
- » Being a good role model for your child. Your child will imitate what you do.
- » Setting limits for your child. Help your child understand the rules in your family.
- » Making time for playing with friends. When children play together, they learn to take turns, share, and respect each others’ feelings.
- » Setting expectations and being consistent. Children have an easier time cooperating when they know what to expect.
- » Helping your child learn from mistakes. Talk about what to do better next time.



**Children who
can share their
ideas and feelings
are able to solve
problems.**

3 Social Expression

- » Expresses empathy
- » Relates well to adults
- » Has expressive abilities
- » Curious & eager to learn
- » Expresses needs & wants
- » Engages in pretend play



Social Expression

Is your child able to:

- » Use words to talk about thoughts, wants, and needs?
- » Speak clearly enough so that other people understand?
- » Talk to adults and ask for help?
- » Try new activities and ask questions?
- » Use his/her imagination and pretend during play?

Help your child get ready by:

- » Asking your child to talk about his/her feelings and to imagine what others are feeling.
- » Being generous with your praise and complimenting his/her efforts.
- » Asking your child questions that make him/her describe things, events or feelings.
- » Listening carefully when your child is talking. Ask questions and show you care about what he/she is saying.



Kindergarten Academics

Is your child able to:

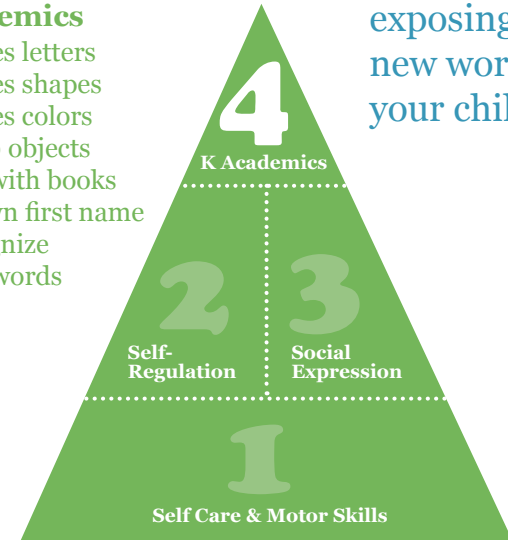
- » Recognize letters, numbers, and basic colors and shapes?
- » Write his/her own first name?
- » Count and understand the concept of how many?
- » Recognize rhyming words?
- » Use a book and understand that pictures and printed words tell the story?
- » Hear and understand the meaning of words, stories, and songs?
- » Use complete sentences and connect ideas together to make longer sentences?



No matter what language you speak at home, talking to your child and exposing him/her to new words will help your child learn.

4 K Academics

- » Recognizes letters
- » Recognizes shapes
- » Recognizes colors
- » Counts 10 objects
- » Engages with books
- » Writes own first name
- » Can recognize rhyming words



Help your child get ready by:

- » Reading to your child for 10-15 minutes every day.
- » Playing memory games.
- » Looking for shapes and patterns around you. The windows are rectangles, and tracing a penny makes a circle.
- » Singing songs and playing rhyming games.
- » Keeping pencils, crayons, and paper where he/she can get to them easily.
- » Pointing out letters and numbers in everyday places like cereal boxes, store signs, and books.
- » Helping your child learn how to sort, match, and compare. You can talk about colors, textures, and sizes.
- » Teaching your child to count. How many chairs at the table? How many steps to the bedroom?

What is the Right Age for Kindergarten?

If your child turns 5 on or before December 2nd of the school year, he/she is eligible to enroll in kindergarten.

Some parents wonder if they should wait an extra year before enrolling their child in kindergarten — especially if their child has a birthday that is in late summer or autumn. To help you decide what is right for your child:

- » Compare your child's skills with those outlined in the Building Blocks of Kindergarten Readiness found in this handbook.
- » Talk to your child's preschool teacher and your family pediatrician.
- » Visit kindergartens to see what the children are doing.
- » Contact Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco (415-861-7077) to talk to parents who have kindergarteners or children in elementary school.
- » Trust your instincts.

Remember that readiness looks different for each child, and you know your child better than anyone.

If you feel like your child's development is very different from other children the same age, make a list of your concerns and visit your child's pediatrician. Speak with your child's preschool teacher. The end of this guide also contains phone numbers and websites for organizations that can help you. There may be simple things that you can work on at home to help.

Enrolling in a San Francisco Public School for School Year 2010-11

If you would like your child to attend a public school in San Francisco, you must apply to the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). San Francisco is a choice district—you can apply for any school within San Francisco; students are not automatically assigned to a school in their neighborhood.

Because you have a choice of schools, we encourage you to think about what you want and need in a school so you can find schools that fit your needs. Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco (PPS-SF) can help you understand the enrollment process and find schools that work for your family.

5 Tips for Enrollment from PPS-SF

1 Turn in your application by January 8, 2010. Turning in your application on or before January 8, 2010 will give you the best chance of getting a school you want. Applications can be turned in to the Educational Placement Center at the address below or at certain neighborhood enrollment events. See the SFUSD Enrollment Guide or contact PPS-SF for a calendar of events.

Educational Placement Center
555 Franklin Street, Room 100 (cross street McAllister)
415-241-6085
Open Monday to Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

2 Enter up to seven schools on your application.

- » Only list schools you are willing to attend.
- » Listing up to 7 schools to increases your chance of getting a school of your choice.
- » If you have trouble finding 7 schools, contact PPS-SF for help.

3 Define what you need in a school.

What is good for your friend's child may not be good for your child. Some things to think about when choosing a school may include:

- » **Location**—SFUSD has a map that shows all of the schools in San Francisco. Maps and lists of schools that have school bus transportation are also in the SFUSD Enrollment Guide and on the SFUSD website.
- » **Language program**—Different programs (language immersion, biliteracy, Newcomer, English Plus) are available to support language learning. See the Language Programs section in this guide for more information about the different options.



More tips and resources on enrollment are available on www.ppsf.org or from the SFUSD Enrollment Guide.

- » **Before- and after-school care**—School start and end times vary by school, and before- and after-school care options are different for each school as well. A list of programs by school is available online at www.sfkids.org. We also recommend you contact the individual schools about their before- and after-care program availability.

4

Get to know the schools by seeing them for yourself.

- » **High demand for a school or high test scores does not necessarily reflect its overall quality.**
- » **Tour schools, attend Open Houses and school events**—Visit schools yourself; most schools have regularly scheduled tours. You can also get to know schools by attending school events such as Open Houses, Fall Festivals or Spring Carnivals with your child. Attending events helps you to get to know the school communities and the types of activities they do for fundraisers and community building. PPS-SF keeps a calendar of most school events at www.ppsf.org.
- » **Contact PPS-SF (415-861-7077) to speak with a Parent Ambassador from a school to learn about their experience with the school.**

5

Look for schools that reflect your values for community and academics.

- » **Consider factors such as School Leadership and Community Participation** —You should feel welcome to join the school community.
- » **Look beyond test scores** —Test scores are just one sign of school quality and not the best one.

Kindergarten Enrollment

What You Need to Apply for Kindergarten

1. Completed SFUSD Enrollment Application
2. One photo identification with parent/guardian name
3. Proof of birth with parent/guardian name
 - » Birth certificate, passport, or official hospital record
4. Two (2) original documents that prove San Francisco residency that include the name and address of the parent/guardian, dated within the last 45 days:
 - » One to two utility bill(s) from different agencies such as PG&E, water, cable, or garbage. No cell phone bills will be accepted.
 - » Both automobile registration and auto insurance (Count as one proof)
 - » Homeowner's or renters insurance policy
 - » Property tax statement
 - » Official letter from a social service/government agency
 - » Grant deed, title of property, or rental/lease agreement
5. Language Assessment is required if you list a language other than English on the Home Language Survey on your application.

About Language Assessments: If you list a language other than English on your application, the Educational Placement Center (EPC) will assess your child's English and native language skills to help you find the right program for your child.

Schedule an appointment for Language Assessment when you submit your application by January 8, 2010, or call the EPC at 415-241-6085. Plan to spend about 1-1/2 to 2 hours, which includes time for the assessments and to meet with a placement counselor about language programs that fit your child's needs.

When: Assessments held November 9, 2009 to February 6, 2010; Monday thru Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Limited Saturdays available.

Where: EPC Office at 555 Franklin, Room 100

Immunizations

Before your child starts school, you must show proof of the following required tests and immunizations:

- » Tuberculosis skin test
- » Up-to-date immunizations for Polio, DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis), MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), Hepatitis B, and Chicken Pox (Varicella)

Timeline

October	Tour schools, attend Open Houses and school events to learn about schools you might want to attend.
November	Attend SFUSD Enrollment Fair on November 7, 2009 to learn about public schools for your child and pick up an application and SFUSD Enrollment Guide.
December	Attend enrollment events and contact PPS-SF to learn about your school options.
January	Turn in your application by January 8, 2010. Keep a copy of your application.
February	Make reading to your child a priority.
March	Register at your child's assigned school to reserve your space; the district will send detailed instructions. If you are not satisfied with your assignment, contact PPS-SF to learn what you can do about it.
April	Attend school spring events with your child to get to know school communities. Practice basic skills such as holding crayons, using scissors, counting, etc.
May	Take your child to a playground.
June	Talk to your child about what a typical school day will look like.
July	Set a schedule at home including early bedtime and healthy meals.
August	Visit the school and meet the teacher.



Language Programs in SFUSD

SFUSD offers programs for students who are learning English as a second language and for English speakers to learn another language. For a list of schools with language programs, please refer to the SFUSD Enrollment Guide or visit www.sfusd.edu.

For English Speakers

- » **Dual Language Immersion Programs**—See description on next page.
- » **One-Way Immersion Program**—Alice Fong Yu is the only One-Way Immersion Program in SFUSD. The goal of the program is to teach fluent English speakers Cantonese. All applicants whose native language is not English must be tested for proficiency in English.
- » **Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES)** — This program is designed for all students – it is not limited based on their language ability. Students receive their primary education in English with additional instruction in either Italian, Japanese, or Russian. The goal is to give students proficiency in a language other than English.

For English Learners

- » **Newcomer Programs**—A one- to two-year program to help recently arrived immigrant students to adjust to learning English and understand their new culture.
- » **Biliteracy Programs**—Designed to support native speakers of Spanish, Cantonese, or Filipino who are learning English. Students are taught primarily in their native language, with increasing instruction in English each year. The goal is to develop a high level of English proficiency while maintaining native language.
- » **Dual Language Immersion Programs**—Designed for 1) native or bilingual speakers of Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, or Spanish; and 2) native English speakers. Students in the Dual Language Immersion program are educated in both English and the target language. The goal is for students to read, write, speak, and understand in both languages. Enrollment in Dual Language Immersion programs is balanced between students whose native language is English and students whose native language is the target language.
- » **English Plus**—Designed to support students whose native language is not English. English Plus is used in General Education programs. The goal is to develop English proficiency.

Tips for Parents

- » Learning to speak English does not mean you have to give up your home language. Speaking more than one language is an important skill.
- » Children will learn new languages quickly—especially if they already have strong speaking and listening skills in their home language.
- » Learning a new language in kindergarten can be fun but it can also be tiring. Allow your child time each day to relax, think, and talk in your home language.
- » Don't be surprised if your child mixes and matches words from the two languages. It is part of the learning process.



Special Education in SFUSD

There are four types of special education programs in the school district for children with disabilities. Students are assigned to these programs based on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

1. **Designated Instructional Services (DIS) Only**—Students are enrolled in general education classrooms and are provided with additional instruction by qualified teachers. These services are offered at every K-12 school.
2. **Resource Specialist Programs (RSP)**—Students are enrolled in general education classrooms. These services are provided to students who have mild disabilities. These services are offered at every K-12 school.
3. **Inclusion Services**—Students are enrolled in general education classrooms. These services are provided to students who are non-severe to severely impaired. Inclusion services are NOT offered at every school site.
4. **Special Day Class Services (SDC)**—Students are enrolled in self-contained special education classes. Special Day Classes are NOT offered at every site.

Application Process for Special Education Students

1. Students with disabilities must submit an IEP or similar assessment document with their SFUSD Enrollment Application, proofs of residency, and proof of birth date. Indicate special needs for transportation (for example, users of wheelchairs) on the application form for priority placement in General Education.
2. Schools listed on the application form must meet the applicant's needs as described in his/her IEP.
3. Whenever possible, students are assigned to their highest ranked choice on their application form.
4. If there are more requests than openings available at a site, SDC and inclusion students are selected by random lottery. The random lottery process does not use the Diversity Index.
5. Inclusion students only compete with inclusion students for inclusion openings.
6. SDC students only compete with SDC students for SDC openings.

For more information about Special Education Services in SFUSD, please contact the Special Education services department at 415-355-7735 or visit the SFUSD website at www.sfusd.edu.



Resources

The following resources may be helpful to you as you enroll your child in kindergarten and help him/her prepare to enter school for the first time.

Kindergarten Enrollment

SFUSD Educational Placement Center (EPC)

EPC has counselors to help you with the enrollment process. Language testing is also provided.
415-241-6085
www.sfusd.edu

Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco (PPS-SF)

Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco is a network of parents working together to build and ensure quality schools for all San Francisco children. PPS-SF sponsors enrollment events and provides help in English, Spanish, and Chinese.
415-861-7077
www.ppsf.org

Parent Resources

2-1-1

The 2-1-1 phone service connects you with community services near you—child care, family resource centers, counseling, food, shelter, job services, and much more. The service is free, confidential and available in over 150 languages.
Dial 2-1-1
www.uwba.org/211/

Parents Place

Parents Place offers many services related to all aspects of parenting for families with children of all ages.
415-359-2454
<http://www.jfcs.org>

SFKids.org

The City's online family resource site features an event calendar and suggestions of afterschool programs, activities, classes, camps, community contacts, child care referrals, and stories written by San Francisco parents.
www.sfkids.org

San Francisco Public Library

The San Francisco Public Library serves as a main resource and support for parents and caregivers with the goal of helping the City's children learn to read.
415-557-4400 (Main branch)
www.sfpl.org

TALK Line Family Support Center

The TALK Line Family Support Center provides families with many services to ease parental stress, foster healthy family dynamics, and assist families so they can support, nurture, and care for their children more effectively.
415-441-5437
www.sfcapc.org

Child Care and Early Education

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

San Francisco has two resource and referral agencies, Children's Council of San Francisco and Wu Yee Children's Services, to help parents understand different child care options, find child care for their children through information and referrals, and apply for child care subsidies.

Children's Council of San Francisco

415-343-3300
www.childrenscouncil.org

Wu Yee Children's Services

415-391-4956
www.wuyee.org

Preschool for All

Preschool for All provides four-year-old children who live in San Francisco with high-quality preschool programs, free of charge and regardless of family income. Families have a choice of different providers throughout the city.
415-354-3873
www.first5sf.org

San Francisco Head Start and Early Head Start

San Francisco Head Start/Early Head Start provides early childhood education and other services to low-income children and families in San Francisco through its center-based and home-based programs.
415-405-0500
www.sfheadstart.org

SFUSD Child Development Program

The SFUSD Child Development Program, established in 1943, is the largest provider of early child care and educational services for young children in San Francisco. The district operates more than 50 child care programs located throughout the city.
415-750-8507
www.sfusd.edu

Special Education

SFUSD Special Education Services

The Special Education Services department is responsible for providing children with disabilities with instruction to meet their unique needs.
415-355-7735
www.sfusd.edu

Community Alliance for Special Education

Community Alliance for Special Education will provide low-cost legal representation in special education disputes, as well as advocates who will attend IEP meetings with families.
415-431-2285
www.caseadvocacy.org

Support for Families

Support for Families and its resource center, Open Gate, are an invaluable local resource for families of children with disabilities.
415-920-5040 (Open Gate help line)
www.supportforfamilies.org



References for This Guide

Applied Survey Research
Children's Readiness for Kindergarten in San Francisco: Results of
the Fall 2007 Assessment in San Francisco Unified School District

Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco
Various publications

San Francisco Unified School District
SFUSD Enrollment Guide 2009-10

Special thanks to FIRST 5 Santa Clara County for allowing us to
use ideas and translations from their publication, "I'm Ready for
Kindergarten: A Parent Handbook"



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