



PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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WHEN IS A CHILD READY FOR SCHOOL?

By Jacqueline B. Sallade, Ed.D.

Determining whether your child is ready for school is a complicated matter. Many parents think that because their child knows the alphabet, counts, or even reads, he or she is ready for kindergarten or even first grade.

Nowadays, most pre-school children who watch educational television and whose parents read and play with them, already know a great deal about letters, numbers and words. It is not surprising to hear three-year olds sing the alphabet, or see them recognize letters; however, that type of skill will be well learned by any new student who is ready to learn.

“Ready to learn” in school means being socially and emotionally mature enough to sit still, pay attention, listen, follow directions in a group and independently make and maintain meaningful friendships, copy and draw comfortable with a pencil, use language easily to express ideas, and thinks through problems patiently.

All of these factors play an important role in early school success and can make the difference between a self-confident learner, and one who experiences too much stress to enjoy school.

Talk to someone who can help. If you would like the name of a qualified psychologist in your area, please call the Pennsylvania Psychological Association, 717-232-3817, or visit www.papsy.org.