The Get READY Guide

Get your child READY for success in school and in life!

Your child’s success starts with YOU!

www.greatstartberrien.org
Welcome!
As parents and guardians you and your young child are about to begin a wonderful adventure...preparing for success in school and in life! You have the ability to help your child get READY for his or her future right now (even if your child just a few hours old). By measuring your child’s development, using the School Readiness Indicators found in this book, you will be able to work with your child on areas that need extra support. You will also be able to see where your child is doing well.

Starting from Day One is Key.
Your child begins to learn from day one. All that they see, hear, feel (emotionally), touch, smell, and taste helps them get to know the world around them. Your interactions with your child shape those impressions. The interactions your child has with their families, their school and their community also shape what he or she learns. By providing healthy, safe and nurturing surroundings for your child, as well as interacting with your child in a positive way, you are helping them become successful. Additionally, by working with your child to reach certain learning goals before the start of school, you are helping him or her be better prepared to learn in the classroom.

Meeting Every Goal.
*Do not expect your child to meet every goal listed in the Get READY Guide.* The goals (called School Readiness Indicators) should be considered a measurement of your child’s progress. If he or she does not meet a few of the indicators by 36 months, continue to work on it. If you feel your child is not making progress, know that it is okay to ask for help. Seeking help does not mean there is anything wrong with you or your child.

Need support?
That is not a problem! Simply visit www.greatstartberrien.org for a listing of service agencies that will work with your child and family to help them become successful. Many of these programs will provide services in your home and often, they are FREE!
What are the School Readiness Indicators?

The Great Start Collaborative of Berrien County has created a list of goals they identify as being important “base skills.” These skills, once learned, lend themselves to more difficult skills, which are often taught in school. If children learn the base skills early, they will be more prepared to take on the harder tasks given to them in Kindergarten.

Being school ready does not just focus on the child. Parents, schools and communities must also be ready to provide support to the child so that they can be successful.

4 Components for Success:

1. **Ready Children.**
   A ready child has strong relationships, a strong mind, and a strong body. Within each of those areas, key skills are developed so that children begin Kindergarten ready to learn and be successful.

2. **Ready Families.**
   A ready family has adults who understand they are the most important people in their child’s life. They take responsibility for their child’s school readiness by playing and interacting with their child in a positive way every single day.

3. **Ready Schools.**
   A ready school accepts all children, has high expectations, and provides a welcoming transition to a high-quality classroom, where the child feels safe, comfortable and able to learn. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers, who recognize children’s strengths and who are respectful of cultural values and individual differences.

4. **Ready Communities.**
   A ready community plays an important role in supporting families as they help their child get ready for school. Ready communities work together to support a child’s school by providing families with affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning experiences.
By 36 months...

READY children have Strong Relationships

Concept: Understanding Self
- Independence/Confidence in one’s skill by starting a task/activity
- Shows resilience, optimism and confidence
- Knowing and saying how they feel and their likes/dislikes
- Takes pride in accomplishments by seeking recognition from others
- Shows a variety of emotions (happy, sad, mad)
- Knows his/her first and last name

□ Your child can tell first/last name when asked.
□ He or she will keep trying a difficult task.
□ Your child will pick out an activity and play by themselves.

Concept: Self-Control
- Understands and follows simple rules
- Self-control of thoughts/emotions
- Will follow directions given by adults
- Moves/changes smoothly between activities
- Adjusts to different places
- Controls their bodies

□ Your daughter or son can handle being in different places, such as home, restaurant, grocery store, etc.
□ She or he will follow safety rules, such as holding an adult’s hand in a parking lot or to cross the street.
□ Your child can calm themselves down after being upset.

Concept: Self Care
- Washes/Dries hands
- Cooperates and helps with daily care and routines
- Dresses/Undresses themselves with help for fastenings
- Uses utensils to eat (fork, spoon, chopsticks)
- Drinks from an open cup

□ He or she brushes teeth with help.
□ Your son or daughter gets dressed/undressed with help for zippers, buttons and snaps.
□ Give your child many opportunities to make appropriate choices for themselves. (Would you like to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt today?)

□ Help your child learn to use “feeling” words to express themselves.
□ Talk with your child about every day events and appropriate ways to interact with other people.
□ Help your child learn to share by giving them opportunities to take short turns in an activity or with a toy.

Concept: Interactions with Others
- Shares and takes turns with other children and adults
- Shows respect and cooperation
- Participates in pretend play
- Recognizes the emotions of others
- Interacts with people in different situations

□ Help your child learn to use “feeling” words to express themselves.
□ Talk with your child about every day events and appropriate ways to interact with other people.
□ Help your child learn to share by giving them opportunities to take short turns in an activity or with a toy.
By 36 months...

READY children have Strong Minds

Concept: Approaches to Learning
- Shows curiosity and explores their environment
- Maintains own interest while learning independently
- When learning becomes difficult, tries different solutions to complete activity

□ Allow your child to explore outdoors, with supervision.
□ Give your child the chance to solve problems.

Concept: Cognitive and General Knowledge
- Math: sorting, matching, categorizing, understanding concepts of puzzles and numbers
- Engages in pretend play with common objects to form a story/theme
- Identifies size and shapes (square, circle, triangle)
- Avoids common dangers

□ Children can group/identify objects by shape, color, use, etc.
□ Pretend play: tea parties, play-doh, boxes as houses, etc.

Concept: Language and Literacy
- Follows 1 and 2 step directions
- Names objects and pictures
- Answers “wh” questions (who, what, where)
- Speaks clearly, using sounds, such as p, m, h, n, w, b, k, g (as in goat) and d
- Communicates information, wants, and needs
- Naming actions in pictures
- Communicates feelings, such as happy, sad, mad
- Shows interest in books and listens to stories
- Participates and can imitate simple songs with motions and rhymes

□ Sing songs with your child that have motions like the “Itsy, Bitsy Spider” or “Wheels on the Bus.”
□ He or she looks at books on their own.
□ Your child enjoys looking at books with others.

get READY parents • ready schools • ready communities

READY KIDS!
READY children have Strong Bodies

Concept: Fine Motor Skills
- Uses tools and toys for feeding, playing, dressing, and drawing
- Dresses with help
- Uses both hands during an activity
- Holds a pencil (etc.) with thumb and fingers, copying lines and circles
- Drinks from an open cup
- Uses utensils (fork, spoons, chopsticks)

☐ Give your child opportunities to write using different tools.
☐ Allow your child to try two-handed tasks: opening a jar with a lid, cutting with safety scissors or stringing beads/cereal.

Concept: Self-Control
- Walks, runs, climbs, jumps, throws/catches, kicks a ball/balances on one foot
- Walks up/down stairs
- Moves independently throughout their environment

☐ Provide your child with opportunities to move at a playground or a park.
☐ Play ball activities with your child (such as catch or kick a ball to each other).

Do you think your child may have a problem?
Do you notice that your child is having trouble learning some of the tasks listed in the Get READY Guide? Remember, every child learns at a different rate. While in most cases there is no need to worry, it is always a good idea to get a second opinion. Please contact your child’s doctor to talk about your concern. You can also discuss learning delays with your child’s teacher. Additionally, you can visit www.greatstartberrien.org for information and resources that you may find helpful.

A Get READY Tip:
Expensive toys are not needed to have fun (or to learn)! Find old boxes and make a rocket ship. Use old dishes for a tea party. Draw a large square in sand and pretend it is a magic carpet. If your child sees you using your imagination, he or she will too!
By the start of Kindergarten...

READY children have Strong Relationships

Concept: Social and Emotional Engagement
- Controls own emotions and behaviors
- Manages feelings
- Follows limits and expectations
- Takes care of own needs appropriately

☐ Your child takes off own coat and hangs it up by himself or herself.

Concept:Makes and Continues Positive Relationships
- Forms friendships over time
- Shows knowledge about self

☐ Your child knows and can share his or her likes and dislikes.

Concept: Participates Positively in Group Situations
- Actively participates in class discussions and activities
- Balances needs and rights of self and others

☐ Your child will allow other children to talk without interrupting.
☐ Your son or daughter will wait in line behind others at the drinking fountain.

Concept: Show Positive Approaches to Learning
- Attends and engages in learning
- Persistent when solving problems
- Makes predictions

☐ Your son or daughter has an eagerness and curiosity to learn new things.
☐ Your child ignores interruptions and distractions.
☐ He or she practices an activity many times until successful.
☐ Your daughter or son can answer “what would happen if” questions.
By the start of Kindergarten...

**READY children have Strong Minds**
*Language and Literacy Skills*

**Concept: Understands and uses Language to Express Thoughts and Needs**
- Follows directions
- Uses a growing speaking vocabulary

- **□** He or she uses new, long, or unusual words appropriately.

**Concept: Uses Appropriate Communication Skills**
- Participates in appropriate conversations
- Recognizes and recalls experiences
- Makes connections with experiences

- **□** Your son or daughter stays on topic during conversations.
- **□** She or he can describe past experiences with details.

**Concept: Awareness of Sounds**
- Experiments and plays with sounds (phonics, rhyming, alliteration, etc)
- Hears and shows awareness of the sounds of language (phonemic awareness)

- **□** Your child joins in rhyming songs and games.
- **□** Your daughter or son shows awareness that some words begin with the same sound.

**Concept: Understanding of Print (Books, Street Signs, Grocery Lists, etc.) and its Uses**
- Uses print concepts
- Uses and appreciates books

- **□** Your child shows understanding that words are meaningful and can be read.
- **□** Your child knows some features of books, such as title, author, etc.
By the start of Kindergarten...

**READY children have Strong Minds**

*Language and Literacy Skills*

- Interacts during read-aloud and book conversations
- Uses beginning reading skills and strategies
- Retells stories

- Your child uses a puppet to retell a story they heard in the order that they heard it.
- He or she pretends to read using words that closely matches the story.

**Concept: Shows Beginning Writing Skills**

- Writes or draws to convey meaning
- Writes name
- Demonstrates hand and finger strength by having control of writing/drawing tools

- Your child writes some letters correctly.

**Concept: Knowledge of the Alphabet**

- Identifies and names 10 or more upper and lower case letters
- Uses letter-sound knowledge

- Your son or daughter can make the correct sound of 10 or more letters.

**A Get READY Tip:**

Did you know that membership to your community library is free? Not only will you and your family gain access to books, but you will also be the first to know about a number of fun activities and helpful community-based programs that are offered there. Go on a walk with your child to your local library and join today!
**READY children have Strong Minds**

*Mathematics, Science and Technology Skills*

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**Concept: Explores and Describes Spatial Relationships and Shapes**
- Understands spatial relationships, using words such as in, out, up, down, behind, between
- Understands shapes
- Uses classification skills (sorts)

- Your child can identify shapes even when turned in different directions.
- Your child can sort items by color, size and shape.

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**Concept: Demonstrates Understanding of Patterns**
- Creates and extends simple patterns

- Your son or daughter can finish a pattern when given the beginning of the patterns (red, blue, red, blue).

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**Concept: Compares and Measures**
- Compares and orders objects using a variety of tools

- Your daughter or son puts objects in order by weight, length and/or size from smallest to biggest.

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**Concept: Uses Number Concepts**
- Connects numbers (0-10) with their quantities
- Verbally counts to 20
- Counts objects to 20

- When an adult holds up a number, your child can say the number out loud and jump that number of times.

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**Concept: Uses Tools and Technology to Perform Tasks**
- Demonstrates the appropriate use of various tools and other technology

- Your child can use tools/technology at home such as a phone, calculator, ruler, magnets, computer, etc.
Throughout childhood...

**READY FAMILIES**

Concept: Strong Relationships
- Engage with children with joy, warmth, and comfort
- Help children learn to cooperate with others
- Encourage friendships with other children
- Work in partnership with schools
- Appreciate the child’s view of the world
- Teach children routines and how to respond to rules and structures
- Help children learn how to handle disappointment
- Speak to children respectfully
- Say it and following through

Concept: Strong Minds
- Read to children regularly
- Appreciate and accept the child’s view of the world
- Help children follow simple directions and complete basic tasks
- Speak with children regularly and use kind words
- Encourage children to explore the world in which they live
- Expose children to and helping them describe different people, places & things
- Understand the importance of the early years and the importance of their role
- Understand the importance of regular school attendance

Concept: Strong Bodies
- Complete all appropriate eye, ear, dental and other medical check ups
- Encourage children to explore the world in which they live
- Help children follow simple directions and complete tasks
- Limit screen time (TV, computer, phone, video games)
- Provide healthy diet and exercise opportunities
- Ensure children receive immunizations

**A get READY Tip:**
What is your Get READY routine for bedtime? For many families, bedtime can be rather challenging. A routine may help make the transition from the day’s activities to bedtime easier. Create a routine and talk about it with your child. Perhaps a bath, followed by brushing teeth and a story at the same time each night will provide your child with an understanding of what it means to get ready for bed. Knowing what to expect (and what is expected from them) will help your child feel comfortable.
Throughout childhood...

**READY SCHOOLS**

**Concept: Strong Relationships**
- Form relationships with parents and early childhood programs to share children’s pre-Kindergarten experiences and to assess their development
- Have Open Houses so family-school partnerships can be made
- Form relationships between parents and early childhood programs
- Provide before and after school care
- Regularly focus on and support the quality of teachers’ interactions with children at all kindergarten experiences

**Concept: Strong Minds**
- Hire highly qualified teachers
- Maintain appropriate class size and use best practices in the classroom (nutrition, physical, instruction)
- Expect teachers to support children’s individual needs
- Understand the value of imaginative play
- Design instruction based on child needs and regularly monitor progress
- Provide and encourage reading
- Regularly review the quality, appropriateness, and alignment of the curriculum across all grades and phases of development
- Focus on and support the quality of teachers’ interactions with children at all grade levels
- Share children’s pre-Kindergarten experiences and assess development
- Communicate with other early childhood education programs in the community
- Communicate kindergarten standards and other school information to families through activities such as home visits, telephone calls, questionnaires, and kindergarten visitation days

**Concept: Strong Bodies**
- Provide recreational and enrichment programs
- Understand and promoting the value of physical activity
- Provide balanced nutrition in their food programs
- Use best practices in the classroom (nutrition, physical, instruction)
Throughout childhood...

Concept: Strong Relationships
- Provide programs to support healthy families, such as mental health counseling programs, drug and alcohol counseling, family court services and child abuse prevention programs
- Value the early childhood experience and the need for it
- Provide families with access to early childhood services
- Provide service and supports that are coordinated and aligned
- Provide services and supports that are responsive to evolving needs of all children, youth and families
- Provide services and supports that are of high quality

Concept: Strong Minds
- Understand the value of imaginative play by children and have community activities that support it
- Provide access to family support programs to families
- Provide access to preschool for 4 year-olds
- Provide access to literacy, English language learning, parenting skills and adult education

Concept: Strong Bodies
- Insure access to basic health care and nutrition services including prenatal care
- Provide information for parents in hospitals at birth
- Work for early identification and treatment of children with disabilities and other special needs
- Fund before and after school care programs for working families
- Value the early childhood experience and need for it
- Fund for the development and upkeep of playgrounds and parks in the community

A get READY Tip:
Having the opportunity to be someone’s parent is a very special gift. Please use the Get READY Guide to help you during your journey through parenthood. By working together with your family, your school and your community, you will have the tools and resources you need to help your child become ready for school and life. If you need help (or simply have a question) please visit www.greatstartberrien.org for support.

Remember, your child’s success starts with YOU!
Record Your Child’s Accomplishments!
*Once your child achieves an indicator, write it down to create a list of milestones!*

![Image](getREADYlogo.png)

**By 36 Months...**

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**By the Start of Kindergarten...**

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www.greatstartberrien.org
What is the Great Start Collaborative of Berrien County?

The Great Start Collaborative of Berrien County is a partnership of community leaders, business owners, charitable and faith-based organizations, health and human service agencies, educators, and parents. Together, these groups work to provide a network of resources that help families obtain services that will allow their children to succeed in every facet of their lives. The Collaborative offers families a one-stop resource, where all of Berrien County’s programs and services have been researched and can be matched to your family’s needs.

The Collaborative would like for every child in Berrien County to be safe, healthy, and eager to succeed in school and in life by helping to make sure:

• Children are born healthy.
• Children are healthy, thriving, and developmentally on track from birth to third grade.
• Children are developmentally ready to succeed in school at the time of school entry.
• Children are prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

How can the Collaborative Help You and Your Family?

The Collaborative offers

• A resource directory to find quality childcare that matches your needs to available childcare providers
• A listing of services and resources about adult education, children/family health, employment, emergency assistance, entertainment for children, food assistance, home visiting services, housing, literacy, nutrition, special needs, domestic violence and transportation
• A Parent Coalition where parents can serve as a “voice” for their community
• Events such as a diaper drive, Back to School Spectacular, book drives and parenting classes

Learn more by visiting www.greatstartberrien.org!
get READY

ready parents • ready schools • ready communities

READY KIDS!

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This project is supported in part by the United Way of Southwest Michigan

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