NHC Ready to Read

Getting Ready to Read!

Skills that children need in order to get ready to read are separated into two different categories Constrained and Unconstrained skills.

Constrained skills are developed over a limited span of time and have an endpoint. Once a child understands these skills there is no further development. Constrained skills are Concepts of print, letter knowledge and phonological awareness. These three skills are the strongest predictors of early reading success. However, children require more than just these basic skills to really become successful readers.

- **Concepts of print** - Knowing how a book works, how to hold a book, knowing the parts of the book such as the Front, Back, Spine, Title, Author, Illustrator etc. It is important to remember that children must be taught this information.
- **Letter Knowledge** - Letter knowledge is knowing that letters are different from each other, knowing their names and sounds and recognizing letters everywhere. Younger children will begin to develop this skill by recognizing different shapes and colors.
- **Phonological awareness** - Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. The ability to hear rhyming words and distinguish beginning and ending sounds in words are an important predictor of reading ability later in life. Later on blending sounds and segmenting words will help with skills such as sounding out words and spelling respectively.

Unconstrained skills are skills that develop over a lifetime. These skills are vocabulary, comprehension and background knowledge. There is not a stopping point to the development of these skills, they are developed and advanced over the course of our lifetime. Children start out slowly with these skills and advance over time.

- **Vocabulary** - Vocabulary is knowing the name of things and the ability to use words effectively. There are two categories of vocabulary. Receptive language is what we can understand and Expressive language refers to the vocabulary that we can use.
- **Comprehension** - Comprehension is the ability to use skills including decoding and vocabulary knowledge in order to understand concepts and ideas from what they are reading.
- **Background knowledge** - Background knowledge is what children have learned before entering Kindergarten. It includes general knowledge about how their world works and knowledge about the structure of stories and books, content knowledge (factual thinking) and conceptual thought (abstract thinking).

Adapted from: Ghoting, Saroj, Every Child Ready to Read 2nd addition
And Legit Literacy (http://legitliteracy.weebly.com)
Getting Ready for Kindergarten

It is expected that children will develop at their own pace, however, most educators and developmental experts do agree upon a certain set of skills as essential tools for further development and achievement in school. Here’s a checklist from Leapfrog of the developmental skills children need exposure to and knowledge of before they enter kindergarten.

Kindergarten social skills readiness checklist

- Uses words to solve problems or conflicts
- Uses words like please, thank you and excuse me
- Adjusts to new situations
- Attempts new tasks knowing it’s okay to make mistakes
- Shows pride in accomplishments
- Follows a simple direction
- Stays with an activity to completion
- Asks for help
- Interacts appropriately with adults and peers
- Respects the rights, property and feelings of others
- Works cooperatively (listens to others, shares and takes turns)
- Demonstrates increasing self-control
- Participates in clean-up activities
- Takes responsibility for own belongings (lunch, coat, etc.)
- Is able to dress self
- Adheres to a routine and schedule for personal hygiene, eating meals and going to bed
- Uses good hygiene habits and table manners
- Uses appropriate bathroom skills
- Follows simple safety rules
- Offers to help peers and family
- Tries to regulate emotions properly and articulates feelings in words

Consider your classes schedule and take advantage of the time you have to allow the children in your care to develop their independence. As children master these skills they develop the confidence they will need to be successful in Kindergarten.