

Getting-Ready Checklist

Things you can notice on normal days, at play, at meals, at story time. Tick what you see.
This is not a test, a milestone list or a diagnosis. It only helps you choose a gentle starting point.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NOTICE	NOT YET	SOMETIMES	MOST DAYS
TALKING & LISTENING			
Listens to a short picture book all the way to the end	☐	☐	☐
Answers a simple question about a story ("Who found the egg?")	☐	☐	☐
Follows a two-step direction ("Get your shoes, then sit by the door")	☐	☐	☐
Tells you about something that happened today	☐	☐	☐
BOOKS & LETTERS			
Holds a book the right way up and turns the pages	☐	☐	☐
Points out a few letters, for example the first letter of their name	☐	☐	☐
Joins in with songs, rhymes or the repeated lines of a story	☐	☐	☐
Asks you to read a favorite book again	☐	☐	☐
NUMBERS, SHAPES & COLORS			
Counts a small group of objects, touching each one	☐	☐	☐
Names some colors of things around the house	☐	☐	☐
Sorts toys by color, shape or size when you ask	☐	☐	☐
Spots or continues a simple pattern (red, blue, red, blue...)	☐	☐	☐
HANDS & BODY			
Holds a crayon between fingers and thumb	☐	☐	☐
Strings large beads, builds a tower, works play dough	☐	☐	☐
Runs, climbs and catches a large ball outside	☐	☐	☐
ROUTINES & GETTING ALONG			
Stays with a short table activity for a few minutes	☐	☐	☐
Takes turns in a simple game	☐	☐	☐
Helps tidy up and follows a short picture routine	☐	☐	☐

Mostly "not yet"

Start with play, read-alouds and outside time. A gentle, play-based guide fits best for now.

A mix

A low-pressure preschool program with short daily lessons and lots of hands-on play.

Mostly "most days"

Look at pre-K levels or a short kindergarten-prep course, still in small doses.

Every child grows at their own pace

If something worries you about your child's development, talk with your child's doctor. The CDC's free "Learn the Signs. Act Early." milestone checklists ([cdc.gov/actearly](https://www.cdc.gov/actearly/)) can help you start that conversation.

A Sample Preschool Week

About 20 to 45 minutes of "table time" a day for ages 3 to 5, split into short sittings.

Stop while it is still fun. Play, chores and outside time do the rest.

BLOCK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Read-aloud 10–15 min	A picture book about bears	Same book again; ask "what happens next?"	A book about bees or bugs	A nursery rhyme book	Your child picks the book
Letters & sounds 5–10 min	Letter B: trace it in sand or salt	Hunt for B things around the house	Find B in a book title	Sing a B song; clap the sounds	Make a B collage from magazines
Numbers & shapes 5–10 min	Count 5 buttons into a cup	Sort blocks by color	Find circles in the kitchen	Make a red-blue bead pattern	Count steps on a walk
Hands-on 10 min	Play dough letter B	Paint with a sponge	Bake simple muffins together	Scissors practice on straight lines	Build a block tower and count it
Outside & movement as long as you like	Look for birds	Playground	Nature walk: collect 3 leaves	Ball games	Library trip

Keep it short and steady

A few minutes of focused time every day works better at this age than one long lesson a week. If a sitting ends in tears, make the next one shorter, not longer.

Plan your own week

Theme or letter of the week _____

BLOCK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Read-aloud					
Letters & sounds					
Numbers & shapes					
Hands-on					
Outside					

WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

Compare Preschool Programs

Ten well-known options at a glance, then a grid to compare your own shortlist after a sample week.

PROGRAM	AGES	APPROACH	FAITH	PRICE SEEN OCT 2026
ALL-IN-ONE AND BOXED				
Sonlight Preschool	3–4	Books + Montessori-type activities, 3 days a week	Christian	\$466.73 list
My Father's World, Voyage of Discovery	4	Hands-on Pre-K, very low prep	Christian	\$370.25 list
Abeka K4	4	Traditional phonics, numbers; parent-led or video	Christian	Kits from \$106.25; check total
Timberdoodle Preschool Kit	2–4	Games, puzzles, hands-on, day-by-day scheduler	Classic or Nonreligious	From \$354.80
GENTLE, LITERATURE AND NATURE				
The Peaceful Preschool	2–5	A letter a week, books, baking, crafts, nature	No religious lessons (optional verse cards)	From \$49
Blossom and Root Early Years	2–4 4–5 (Vol. 2)	Charlotte Mason and Waldorf inspired, play-based	Secular	\$22 PDF (Vol. 1)
Torchlight Pre-K	4–5	Picture-book inquiry, art, science	Secular	\$32 PDF
The Good and the Beautiful Preschool LA	3+	90 open-and-go letter and number lessons	Faith-based	\$48.97 set
FREE				
Easy Peasy Preschool	4	180 online lessons + printables, reading readiness	Christian	Free
Khan Academy Kids	2–8	App: early literacy, math, games; no ads	Not religious	Free

Read on each publisher's own site on October 23, 2026. Prices and editions change often: always check the current price. Books for literature-based programs are usually extra.

Our shortlist

COMPARE	PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	PROGRAM 3
Program name			
Price for the year (+ books)			
Minutes a day for my child			
My prep time per week			
Screen time? Faith fits us?			
Sample lesson tried? How did it go?			
Our fit score (1–5)			

The cheapest start

A library card, a free app or free lessons, and one simple read-aloud plan cover a lot of preschool. Buy a program when you want the planning done for you.