

Is Your Child Ready for School?

The past year and a half of school have been such a tumultuous ride. From school closures to virtual classes to partial reopening, it seems as if our children have experienced every out-of-the-norm scenario we could come up with. And although the goal was to keep them safe, children's development took a significant hit. We've seen more significant emotional distress, poorer health choices, regression in cognitive momentum, and decreased social skills. So, as the new school year approaches, it is more important than ever to ensure that they are prepared for school in ways that cover all developmental areas.

The idea of "school readiness" has always been mostly referenced when related to cognitive skills needed for school. However, many studies have found that teachers aren't as concerned with these things and feel that it's more important that students function in the classroom by being confident, independent, and able to self-regulate. To prepare for this, it's crucial that parents implement strategies now to give their children a jump start before heading back to school.

Physical: While we have focused on handwashing and minimizing germs, many other healthy habits went out the door. Sleep, nutrition, and physical activity were all put on the back burner. But for children to be successful in school, parents need to begin implementing healthy habits again, such as early bedtimes, nutritious meals, and activities.

Intellectual: The combination of the summer slide and the COVID slide has been detrimental and contributed to even more learning loss. And although everyone feels a rush to make up for this, it's important to ease back into learning and avoid the "cognitive cram."

Emotional: With all the unsureness, children have experienced anything from anxiety to depression to lack of motivation, among many other emotions. The constant emotional shifts

have left everyone feeling uneasy, including parents. Therefore, it's so important for parents to role model appropriate reactions.

Social: In the beginning, social interactions came to a complete halt. And even when some social interactions began again, they were very different than before. It seems as if no one has been sure of what is and isn't appropriate, so social anxiety began setting in. Children need a refresher course on social skills to get them feeling more secure again.

Finding fun, creative ways to get children back on track and ready for school will help them feel more confident again. The **SKILLZ Child Development Centers'** approach is a whole-child focus through fun and developmentally appropriate classes. The goal is skill development physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. In this program, children are exposed to physical training, cutting-edge brain training, a supportive environment, and age-appropriate social interactions. All these things, combined in one class, provide the most benefit to children in their development. This is especially effective for reigniting the learning process and building relationships again.

Any new school year brings about some amount of anxiety. The start of this new school year will bring about mixed emotions, as well, and will be clouded by some insecurity. Students must be **prepared** when they enter the classroom this year and are excited and empowered. To do this, ample preparation is key, and we should approach our children's development with a flexible mindset to create a **safe** space for them to reclaim their skill level and feel confident again.