



# Parenting Playground

brought to you by  
Child Development Council  
609 West Clinton Street, Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 273-0259  
[www.ChildDevelopmentCouncil.org](http://www.ChildDevelopmentCouncil.org)  
July/August/September 2011



## Ready for Kindergarten? Sure!

Is your child going to “big” school in September? After attending nursery school, pre-school, child care center, church school, music class, the neighborhood play group, family day care, gymnastics class, library story hour, and/or Universal Pre-K, many families are old hands at “school” and kindergarten is just the next step - no big deal. For others, it truly is the first time the five-year old will be away from her family for most of the day, every day, five days a week - a monumental lifestyle transition.

In New York State the designated birthday that determines minimum age for entry into public school kindergarten is turning 5 by December 1<sup>st</sup>. It happens in every class - a child just meets the cutoff, and another child is almost 6 when school starts in September. Kindergarten attendance is optional at age 5, but the law states that by age 6 a child must start attending school the following September.

In addition to the child’s birth certificate, local school districts also require documentation of other data. Parents will be asked to provide proof of the family’s address (driver’s license, utility bill, etc.) and the child’s medical history, including required immunizations. The school district office will give you the forms or list of things to gather and bring in for registration; some may offer forms online as well.

Schools often hold a series of events to introduce families to the public school system, starting in May and ending at the first day of school in September. It can involve several short, informal trips to the school building to get familiar with the layout, meet teachers and other new kindergartners. Screenings are short sessions which focus on each individual child – to see where his development is physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially. This is not a pass or fail situation, just a way for teachers to meet each child and see what the range of resources are among the incoming class.

Families who move into the area during summer need to contact their school district for kindergarten registration. All six school districts in Tompkins County (Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Lansing, Newfield, Trumansburg) have websites and phone numbers. Find them at [www.tstboces.org](http://www.tstboces.org). It’s best to call early in the day since schools have shorter summer hours. If families arrive in late August, the process is adjusted; registration documents are provided, and screenings can be done after school starts.

Teachers want parents to know that readiness is a broad concept, not an intense summer project to memorize the alphabet for example. An article from [Scholastic Parent & Child](#) states that the following skills are helpful, and experienced kindergarten teachers say they show readiness for school - enthusiasm toward learning, solid oral language skills, the ability to listen, the desire to be independent, the ability to play well with others, strong fine-motor skills, and basic letter and number recognition. Teachers do not expect accomplished 5 year old readers, but will appreciate a kindergartener who can get her own snowsuit and boots on.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC - see p. 1 article) has developed position statements on many topics, including Early Learning Standards, Learning to Read and Write, and School Readiness. All are available at [www.naeyc.org/positionstatements](http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements). The main points on School Readiness are:

- ⇒ School readiness requires access to opportunities
- ⇒ School readiness must be flexibly and broadly defined
- ⇒ Kindergarten entry should be based on age, not on mastery of skills
- ⇒ Schools must be ready to help children learn.

If kindergarten is in your immediate future, have fun this summer with your child. Relax, enjoy being together, read, play, go places and talk while you’re doing it - you’ll both be ready for kindergarten.

**If you are looking for child care or may be in the future - come to:**  
**Finding Child Care in the Tompkins County Area**

**Topics Include:**

Cost of care

Kinds of care for ages 0 - 12

What to look for and where

NYS child care regulations

Other Questions?

Free and Open to the Public

Tuesday, July 26 at 6:30 pm

Child Development Council 609 W. Clinton St. Ithaca

[www.ChildDevelopmentCouncil.org](http://www.ChildDevelopmentCouncil.org)

Do you need child care at the workshop? Call 273-0259 by July 20

**Why do you parent the way you do?**

***Parenting Styles Workshop Series***

**Many factors influence our children and how we parent.**

**Every family, every child is different and unique.**

**Why do we do what we do?**

**Why do we make the decisions we make?**

Come together with others to share information and discuss issues that directly influence parenting and family life in this \*FREE 6-week series, led by Travis Winter and Lisa Pate.

Workshop discussion topics include: parenting styles and discipline, child development, cultural influences, and environmental issues.

**Do you have a Spirited Child?**

***Thriving With Your Spirited Child!***

**Is your child: Sensitive? Energetic? Intense?**

**Perceptive? Cautious? Persistent?**

**Irregular? Serious?**

Learn about your child's temperament (and yours), how to develop effective strategies for dealing with temper tantrums, power struggles and other challenging behaviors in this \*FREE 7-week series, led by Stephanie Gumaer and Cathy Gee.

**\*Please note the number of weeks in each workshop**

Both Workshops will be held at Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave, Ithaca

Tuesday evenings, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., July 5, 12, 19, 26, August 2, 9, and \*16

Note: Registration closed after July 12.

Call 272-2292 or email [ams69@cornell.edu](mailto:ams69@cornell.edu) for questions or to register.