KINDERGARTEN READINESS
TARBUT V'TORAH COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL

It's remarkable how two seemingly harmless words, *Kindergarten readiness*, can cause so much debate and confusion. Every year, educators and parents alike struggle to identify the qualities and skills that best determine success in Kindergarten. There are educators who support opinions as varied as holding children out of Kindergarten until they are six to researchers who claim social development is the best predictor of school readiness. As research abounds and convictions conflict, the philosophy at Tarbut remains the same: know your child, and the program you are considering, well.

As we are all aware, children's learning styles, personalities, abilities, and skills are extremely diverse. The same can be said for Kindergarten programs. There are some programs that consider themselves an extension of Preschool. Other schools regard Kindergarten as the entry into Elementary school. Still others regard the Kindergarten year as a separate entity. The reality is that one type of program is not inherently superior to the other on the basis of philosophy. What is important is finding the program best suited to your child and his/her needs.

The Kindergarten program at Tarbut V'Torah is regarded as the foundation of the Elementary school. Children in Kindergarten are exposed to the same subjects and educational opportunities as the rest of the elementary students (keeping in mind the developmental levels of the children). We firmly believe that a vast majority of children are ready, if not craving, the opportunity to explore a core curriculum that includes reading, writing, math, science and social studies. Given age-appropriate activities, children are naturally curious and determined in their quest for new knowledge. Music, art, technology and physical education are also a regular part of a Tarbut student's experience. Add to that the rich Judaic experience and the Hebrew language instruction and you have a very unique learning environment. The "readiness" of a child is important, but equally important is a child's individual learning behaviors. When assessing a child applying for Kindergarten, we look at a variety of factors. These include, but are not limited to:

<u>Learning Behaviors</u>
Focuses on an activity for at least 15 minutes
Follows two to three part directions
Follows task directions in large and small groups
After instruction, can begin and complete work without additional teacher assistance
Relates ideas and experiences
Asks peers or teachers for information or assistance when needed
Works and plays independently
Expresses emotions and affections appropriately
Respects others and their property

Gets along with peers
Can maintain an appropriate level of self-control

Learning Behaviors (cont.)
Respects authority
Communicates wants and needs
Uses a variety of writing tools and scissors

Academic Abilities A repertoire of basic skills can give your child the extra confidence they need to accept the challenges of school. These skills are not a prerequisite to Kindergarten admission at Tarbut, although students who demonstrate knowledge of the following tend to experience an easier transition.

Knows most letters of the alphabet
Understands the correspondence between letters/sounds
Understands simple relational concepts (big, little, over, under…)
Counts to 20
Counts objects
Recognizes primary colors
Recognizes basic shapes
Copies simple shapes

Kindergarten readiness is not synonymous with educational potential. Nor is it the same thing as intelligence. In fact, a five-year old may have superior intelligence but not be mature enough to thrive in the everyday demands of a full-day Kindergarten program. Sometimes we are fooled into thinking a youngster is ready for kindergarten because he or she is verbal and learns quickly. Knowing numbers, letters, colors, or even being able to read, do not alone indicate that a youngster is totally ready for school. We must be careful not to confuse intelligence with maturity as they are not the same. Intelligence is but a small part of kindergarten readiness.

Birthdate For entry to Kindergarten, we recommend that students be five years old by September 1 of the year they start TVT.

We hope that these guidelines inspire you to look upon your child's application to Tarbut V'Torah with confidence and excitement. Feel free to contact Wendy at (949) 509-9500 x1102 if you have any further questions.

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