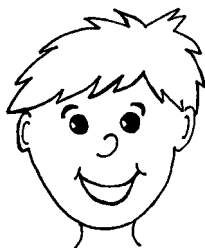


# Factors to Consider when Enrolling your Child in First Grade



## **DEVELOPMENTAL MATURITY**

Deciding whether your child is ready to start grade one is a very important decision. Developmental maturity is one of the largest factors of school success. It has nothing to do with how bright or intelligent a child is. Developmental maturity involves the ability to sit in a desk, work steadily, enjoy the workload, and sustain interest in the reading and writing process. It includes the emotional stability required to be away from home for five school days each week. The need and expectations for these skills increases significantly every year in school. It is better to start school later in age and find the workload easy than to struggle from the beginning and fall behind as the years progress. Students who find school difficult not only have increased frustration in the classroom, but bring home lots more homework than other children. Those turning six after September may lack this developmental maturation and the reading readiness which accompanies it. While these children are no less intelligent than the others, they may not be mature enough to sustain the pace begun in grade one and the increased pace which occurs as they move on from grade to grade.

Developmental maturity for first graders is also the window for learning in which a child becomes inwardly motivated to read and shows a marked interest/persistence in learning alphabet letter/sound correspondence. If your child meets these developmental maturity marks, there are several other factors involved in reading success. Prior to entering your child in grade one, it may be beneficial to reflect on how many of the skills listed below your child possesses. These are important indicators of your child's reading readiness.

## **FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS**

1. Knowing the letter names of alphabet letters.
2. Knowing the letter sounds of the alphabet letters. This is considered the highest predictor of reading success.
3. Able to match alphabet letters to their corresponding sounds.
4. Desires to read. This is demonstrated when a child frequently requests that you tell him what a word says and likes to *pretend read* books by looking at pictures and making up text.
5. Desires to write. This is demonstrated when a child independently makes letters/marks/scribbles on a paper and *reads* it to you.
6. Prints his/her name legibly.
7. Growing attention span shown in sustained length of play.