

SCHOOL READINESS

A Primary Challenge

“It is way more stressful to send your child to Grade 1 than to university.”



This is a quote often heard from frustrated parents at my psychology practice.

Reaching readiness for learning at Grade 1 level involves a variety of complex systems and processes, which seemed a much more natural process to achieve a few decades ago. Today, early learning is hampered by an artificial lifestyle of sedentary electronically entertained preschoolers living on a diet of ultra-processed packaged foods. These children are then expected to process abstract information at a challenging speed at school... and then we wonder why they struggle.

It would seem that we need to get back to a natural process of preparing our children for the challenges ahead. Preschoolers need to develop an awareness of where they are in space (proprioception) in order to be agile, coordinated in movement, and having a good sense of direction. They need to develop their sense of balance (vestibular function) in order to control and strengthen their core muscles to keep them upright for extended periods of time and to control the fine muscles in their eyes and hands for reading and writing. They also need to fine-tune crossing their midline in order to use their whole brain for learning, especially when it comes to whole-brain subjects such as mathematics. Rolling, jumping, climbing, catching, throwing, kicking and dancing are thus of the utmost importance when our children are getting ready to learn on an abstract level in Grade 1 and beyond.

As their physical system is maturing, our children's brain can have the opportunity to develop to its full potential,

• understanding and remembering visual and auditory information and being able to represent it verbally and on paper with confidence and enjoyment. All people, and especially our young ones with ultra-fast brains, need to enjoy and be excited about learning as part of the ever-evolving nature of being human.

• We, including our children, need to go back to the basics of eating natural food, moving until we are too tired to keep our eyes open and then dozing off into a deep restful sleep, getting us ready to move, learn and think again the next day.

• Being excited about every new learning at hand and then having the energy to explore other interesting avenues is the ultimate gift we can offer to our learners of the future! Provide them with the necessary fuel and opportunities to move – physically and cognitively. 🌀

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