

# Preparing Young Children for School

## Practice Guide Introduction








What Works Clearinghouse™

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Recent research has identified practices that have the potential to prepare young children to benefit from the learning opportunities they will encounter in school. In collaboration with expert panelists, the **What Works Clearinghouse™** (WWC) distilled that research into practical recommendations for preschool educators to use to help prepare children for school. The *Preparing Young Children for School* Practice Guide details seven evidence-based practices designed to be used by teachers; center and program directors; district or state personnel involved in adopting curricula for preschool programs; and parents and caregivers.

### Recommendations in this practice guide:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Regularly provide intentional, engaging instruction and practice focused on social-emotional skills.             |  |
| 2. Strengthen children's executive function skills using specific games and activities.                             |  |
| 3. Provide intentional instruction to build children's understanding of mathematical ideas and skills.              |  |
| 4. Engage children in conversations about mathematical ideas and support them in using mathematical language.       |  |
| 5. Intentionally plan activities to build children's vocabulary and language.                                       |  |
| 6. Build children's knowledge of letters and sounds.  |  |
| 7. Use shared book reading to develop children's language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world. |  |

For each recommendation, the practice guide discusses:

#### The Recommendation

Includes an actionable recommendation, a summary of the research evidence that supports the recommendation, and a description of how the recommended practice supports student learning.



#### Guidance

Explains how to carry out the recommendation, informed by studies that support the recommendation, as well as the panel's expertise and knowledge of strategies available to help implement the recommendation.



#### Potential Obstacles

Includes obstacles and advice from the expert panel about how to overcome them.



#### Tools and Resources

Offers practical information and examples to help practitioners implement the recommendation.



Readers are encouraged to use the advice provided in ways that work best in their context. Users of this practice guide may decide to implement some or all of the recommendations.

The complete practice guide can be accessed on the What Works Clearinghouse website: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/30>.