



ready



SUCCESS

*Preschool Readiness Guide
for Parents*





AWESOME

preschool experience..

...will help your child lay the groundwork for all future learning. During these important years, students grow cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically as they prepare for the opportunities and challenges of kindergarten.

It is an exciting season, but most parents feel a little concerned about starting at the right time, finding the right school, and ensuring their child is set up for success. That's why this guide was created – to help parents and guardians foster readiness skills in their child and choose the best preschool program for their family.



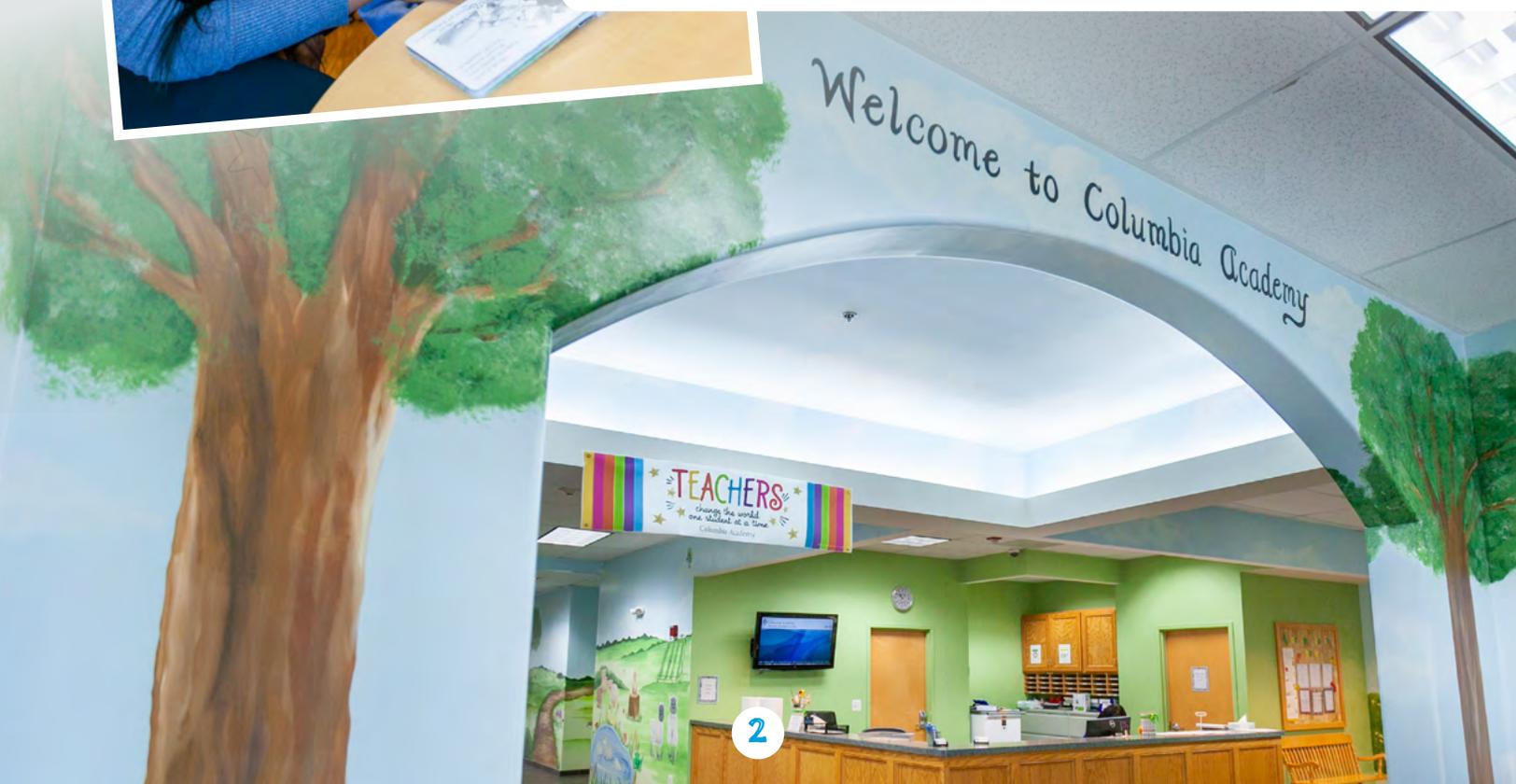
Is My Child Ready for Preschool?

All children are unique and develop at their own pace; however, the following benchmarks are indicative of readiness for most preschool programs.



Responsive, follows directions

Can your child follow simple, two-part directions? For example, "Please put your crayons in the box, then put the box on the kitchen counter." Or, "Please put your dirty clothes in the hamper, then pick out a bedtime story." This is a skill that children can practice at home to be ready for application in preschool.





Emotionally maturing

As children enter the preschool years, temper tantrums become less frequent and children are learning how to express their emotions in more socially acceptable ways. Is your child beginning to share and take turns? This indicates emotional maturity. Preschool provides plenty of opportunities to practice these critical life skills.

As your little one is able to do more independently, you will notice a growth in confidence. He or she may even begin to refuse your assistance! This is all a normal part of the transition to preschool.



Actively engaged

Between ages 2 and 3, children typically move from onlooker play (observing others playing but not playing with them), to parallel play (playing alongside peers without actually engaging with them), to engaged play (interacting with others). If your child possesses a growing interest in engaged play, he or she will thrive in a preschool classroom environment.



Developing social skills

Around age 3 or 4, young children are beginning to share toys and ideas. They are starting to work together to create guidelines and assign roles for their play. As children play cooperatively with one another, they learn and practice essential social skills, such as cooperating, being flexible, taking turns, and solving problems.

When a child enjoys an activity, he or she begins to focus for longer amounts of time. Preschool environments should be filled with exciting and stimulating activities that foster growing attention spans and critical thinking skills.



Years to learn

If your child is interested in exploring his or her world through play, your child is ready to delve into play centers and activities that have been crafted by skilled teachers to promote growth and development.





Fine motor skills

By age 3, most children can turn pages in a book, put on their shoes (without tying laces), build a block tower, and open and close lids that twist. In preschool, your child will continue to develop fine motor skills, which helps them write, draw, cut, and accomplish many other school-related tasks.



Open-minded and flexible

These may not be the first words that come to mind when you describe your 3-year-old; however, at this age young children are beginning to demonstrate more flexibility. While they voice their preferred activities, they are open to a wider range of tasks and experiences, seek out new challenges, and ask a multitude of questions.



Respectful of self and others

Does your child demonstrate care for others and their feelings? In preschool, respect looks like following instructions from teachers, responding to conflict in a healthy way (avoiding hitting or name-calling), and being kind to those who look different or have different ideas. Preschool students can be impulsive by nature, so instilling respect is an important ongoing process.





Stamina to finish the day

Each child's stamina and experience prior to preschool is unique. Therefore, it is important to choose a schedule that your child can maintain with success. Will this be your child's first time away from you? Would your child do best with a consistent schedule five days a week? You may want to look for a preschool with multiple schedule options.



Utilizes Gross Motor Skills

Is your child capable of performing more complex motor skills such as balancing on one foot, alternating feet on stairs, walking on tiptoes, pedaling a tricycle, or climbing age-appropriate playground equipment? These significant improvements in gross motor skills will help your child engage in the classroom, on the playground, and in physical education.



Confident

From entering a new social environment to problem-solving during interactive lessons, preschool requires self-esteem. You can build your child's confidence by giving him or her tasks to help around the house (followed by praise), focusing on strengths, and creating opportunities for participation in daily decision-making.



Concentrates throughout short activities

Most 3-year-olds are capable of concentrating on a task for eight or nine minutes. The ability to focus is foundational for school success. Can your child remain engaged through distractions or interruptions? Does he or she work to complete tasks that present a moderate challenge? These skills will continue to grow and develop throughout the preschool years.



Early literacy

Does your child enjoy listening to you read books at home? He or she may be beginning to understand that the text of a book tells the reader what to say, or noticing print in everyday environments and pointing out familiar letters. These are the foundations for early literacy training in preschool, which include:

- Listens and responds to stories and poems
- Recognizes and names many upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- Makes letter-sound associations
- Writes letters with proper formations, creates class books, and identifies some words that rhyme or start with the same sound



Self-care and independence

Common self-care milestones for 3-year olds include established bladder and bowel control, dressing and undressing (with assistance for buttons and laces), feeding oneself with utensils, washing and drying hands, and walking up stairs. In preschool, they will need to carry out self-care independently, but will be encouraged and supported along the way.



Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most adults

At age 3, there is much variance in speech and language skills; however, their comfort level and academic success in preschool are dependent on how well they can be understood by adults. Three-year-olds can typically use all vowels correctly, as well as several consonants.

A Schedule That Works

FOR YOUR FAMILY

There are several different schedule options available for preschoolers at Columbia Academy. These allow families to select a program that works best for them based on the child's overall readiness and daytime care needs.



Full-Day Program

6:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Working parents appreciate our full-day program, which allows children to arrive as early as 6:30 a.m. and be picked up as late as 6:30 p.m. During COVID-19, our full day program is operating from 7:00am-6:00pm.

Academic Day Program

9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Half-Day Program

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Multiple Programs for

GROWING MINDS AND BODIES

Infant and Toddler Program

Columbia Academy also offers care for infants and toddlers from 6 weeks to 24 months of age at all preschool locations. These rooms have a staff-to-child ratio of 1-to-3. For continuity, an important factor in development, infants remain with the same caregivers for the first two years through many developmental milestones until they are ready for the K-Prep 2 program.

Our infant and toddler staff make communication with parents a priority. Parents can view information about their child's daily care routines through an app. At the end of each day, a daily report is available electronically for parents. Caregivers will also upload pictures for parents to see throughout the day.



K-Prep 2

Introduces young learners to the classroom setting and structured activities. Nurturing teachers help ensure this is a smooth transition for students and an experience that fosters a love for learning.



K-Prep 3

Emphasizes exploration and play, as well as socio-emotional skill development. Students enjoy many hands-on activities daily and are introduced to the basics of foundational subject areas.



K-Prep 4

Provides students with the tools and knowledge for success in kindergarten. Students grow cognitively, emotionally, and physically as they prepare for the next step in their education.

FAQ's About Columbia Academy

What is your teacher-to-student ratio?

K-Prep 2

We have a maximum class size of 12 with a ratio of 1 teacher to 6 students.

K-Prep 3 and K-Prep 4

We have a maximum class size of 20 with a ratio of 1 teacher to 10 students.

Are snacks/lunch provided?

Nutritious snacks are provided each day. For our preschool and toddler rooms, a hot lunch is available for purchase. Lunches are catered from Columbia Academy's state-of-the-art kitchen. Students may also bring their own lunch.

How can parents be involved in the classroom?

At Columbia Academy, we have an open-door policy when it comes to parents. We also welcome parents to volunteer on field trips and attend school events. *During COVID-19, we are not doing any in-person field trips, presentations or large group events. All field trips will be virtual.*

What types of training and certifications do your teachers hold?

Many of our preschool teachers hold a degree in early education or child development. All teachers are required to have state child-care certification with 90 hours of training and at least one year of experience working with children in a licensed child care setting.

Why do parents choose Columbia Academy?

Preschoolers at Columbia Academy thrive as they develop confidence, creativity, social-emotional competence, and academic foundational skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond. Our preschool program includes:

Play-based learning with hands-on experiences using The Creative Curriculum

A peacemaking program for character education

Special subjects: Spanish, computer science, music, the arts, and recreational physical education



Learning activities for each age and stage that are research based, challenging, and achievable

Facilities designed for maximum security, with locked doors, PIN access, and a stringent drop-off and pick-up process

Experience our Preschool with a Virtual Tour

Choosing a preschool is a big decision! We invite you to schedule a virtual tour at one of our four preschool locations to experience the learning community firsthand. During your tour, you'll get to see our facilities and have your questions answered.

Schedule Your Virtual Tour

Call [410.312.5233](tel:410.312.5233) or Email admissions@columbiaacademy.com

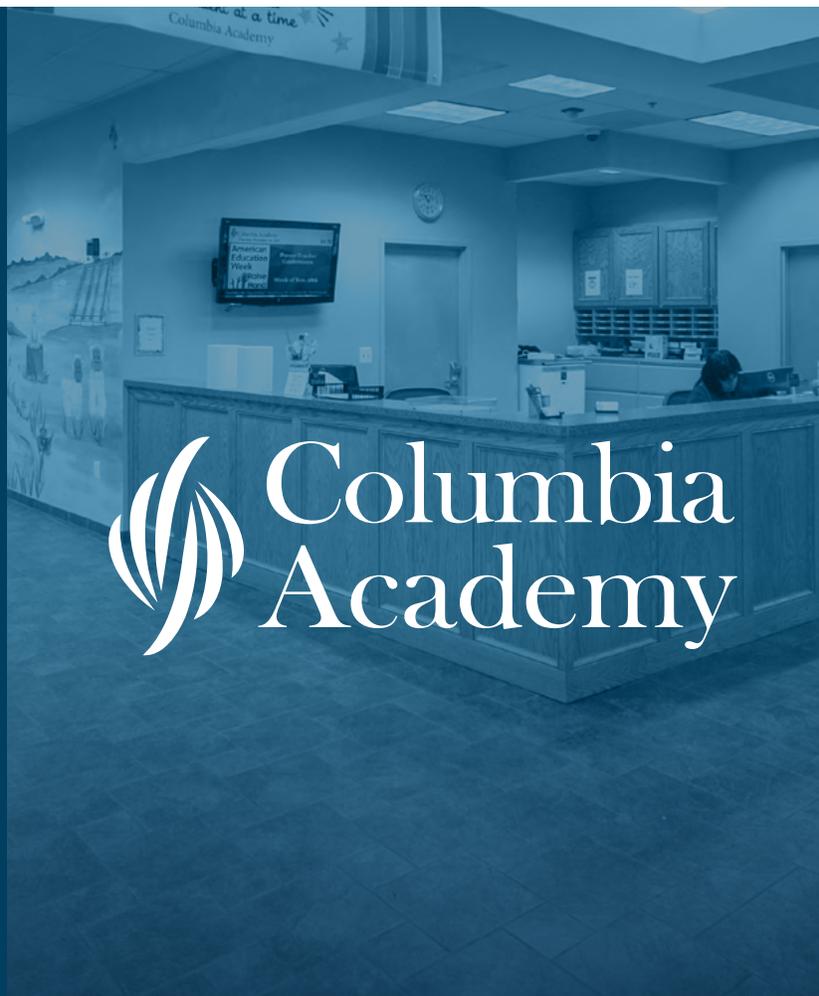
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Ellicott City, MD 21043

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