

# Why "school readiness" shouldn't be the goal for our five year olds <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Early Years Reviews

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 1 Mar 2025

## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpts

In early childhood education, the term "school readiness" is often used as a benchmark for success. The idea is simple: ensure that children develop the skills needed to seamlessly transition into formal schooling. But while I believe it is well intentioned from government around school readiness is positive about the best start in life, its execution can be problematic especially for our youngest learners.

Rather than focusing on preparing children to fit into the structures of school, we should be shaping schools to meet the needs of young children. We are now seeing a push for 2 year olds to conform to some of this rhetoric too. Five year olds are not miniature 8 year olds; they are curious explorers, natural problem solvers, and deeply social beings who thrive in environments that honour their developmental stage.

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At the age of five, children are still in a crucial phase of development where play, exploration, and social interaction are the most effective learning tools. Research consistently shows that play focused learning fosters creativity, problem-solving skills, and emotional resilience, all of which are fundamental to later academic success. A rigid focus on "readiness" risks pushing young children into a structured, formal learning environment too early, potentially leading to anxiety and disengagement rather than fostering a love for learning.

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**Related link:** School readiness and the tyranny of merit <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Europe <sup>[4]</sup>

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## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/25/03/why-school-readiness-shouldn%E2%80%99t-be-goal-our-five-year-olds> <sup>[2]</sup>

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