

Primary School Interview

Preparation and Evaluation

ME Education



What to Expect

Interviews are a critical part of the primary school admissions process, required by nearly every school. Some primary schools only conduct one interview, while others (highly selective schools) choose a number of students from the first round and invite them back for a smaller one-to-one or group interview. Some highly selective schools narrow down the pool of applicants and have a second round that is more likely to involve an individual interview with each child or an interview with a small group of children.

Standard questions for primary interviews focus on aspects of the child's everyday life. They may be asked to speak about their family (first names, birthdays and ages), where they live (including specifics of their address), the fun things they like to do or the last book they read.

During the interviews, children are evaluated on their ability to work alone and to complete an activity with minimal guidance. They are also assessed on how they interact with other children. English communication skills and vocabulary awareness play a big part too, with teachers looking to see if they can hold a conversation using extended sentences (four years old and above).

As part of group activities, students may be asked to complete puzzles, write their names, color or describe a picture, draw shapes, and identify colors or numbers. Some schools like to include story time, during which the teacher will ask questions to examine who is concentrating and who can completely understand what is happening. Some kids will be quiet, while some will be jumping up and down with their hands up, trying to get the first word in. Other kids will shout out an answer that they hear from another child. You can never predict what your child will do on the day.

Overall, the teachers are looking to form a picture of your child's gross motor skills (physical abilities such as running, walking and catching), fine motor skills (pencil grip, writing, cutting etc.), numeracy (recognizing numbers up to 20/ 30, counting forwards and backwards or identifying the number of sides on a shape) and their social and emotional development (whether they can separate from their parents easily, whether they share and take turns, how well they follow instructions and so on).

Preparation

Don't try teaching your child new skills in the run up to the big day. The last few weeks prior to an interview should be a time of revision, not a period of learning. Make learning a fun part of your daily routine instead. Point out the color of your clothing; count the number of steps you climb; sound words out phonetically.

More important than knowledge, however, is confidence. If your child comes across as confident and mature, he/ she is likely to be noticed. Encourage your child to speak to people in everyday situations, arrange play dates and sign him/ her up for group classes. Crucially, make sure that he/ she is familiar with the school.

On the morning of the interview, ensure that your child isn't sick, hungry, tired or needing the toilet. Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early and dress appropriately. Talk to your child about what will happen when the teacher calls him/ her into the room and explain that you will be waiting outside the door. You may even choose to mention a treat for after the interview. Remind your child to be polite and well-mannered at all times, then give a reassuring hug and smile before entering the classroom.

Remember that no matter how much prep you have done you cannot anticipate your child's behavior during a school interview or assume that he/ she will respond in the same way you have observed in the past. Whatever happens, just stay calm and go with the flow.

Our Evaluation

Our evaluation is based on development guidelines prepared by the Hong Kong Education Bureau. In their 2017 Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide Prepared by the Curriculum Development Council, The Education Bureau outlines the skills required for incoming primary school students aged five to six. We have carefully crafted materials and tasks that our educators will use to evaluate your child's level of primary school preparedness.

There are seven categories broken down into specific skills that directly correspond to tasks performed during the evaluation. Each skill will be marked as either capable, requires assistance, or incapable. Some of the skills cannot be evaluated in the classroom setting and should therefore be evaluated by a parent or guardian in an appropriate setting. Such skills include the child's ability to brush their own teeth or socialize properly with peers.

Key



Capable

Your child was able to complete the assigned task easily and on their own.



Required Assistance

Your child was able to complete the assigned task with the help of a teacher.



Incapable

Your child was unable to complete the assigned task.

Self Care

1. eat and pick up food with chopsticks



2. use toilet alone



3. clean up after themselves



4. know how to choose suitable clothes



5. comb hair



6. do simple housework like tidying up clothes



7. cross the road carefully



8. ask for help when losing their way and tell own address



Intellect

1. put things of different length, height, etc. in correct order



2. play simple puzzle games



3. name different colors and shapes of common objects



4. tell the general contents of pictures just seen



5. repeat three acts from a story just heard



6. count and write from one to twenty



7. tell the order and position of an object (1st, 2nd, etc.)



8. understand the difference between "half" and "whole"



9. do simple mathematical addition and subtraction



10. recall five numbers just seen or heard



11. tell the year, month, day and week



12. tell the time by looking at a clock



13. understand meaning of common words



14. tell ten common words



Social

1. play games which require cooperation



2. play competitive games



3. choose companions that they like



Fine Motor Skills

1. nail with a hammer



2. put small beans into a bottle



3. hold objects weighing over ten pounds



4. thread shoelaces



5. sharpen pencils with a sharpener



6. draw straight lines with a ruler



7. erase with an eraser without tearing the paper



8. fill color in an assigned area



9. draw a rhombus and a triangle



10. fold a piece of paper into half and then further half



11. cut irregular shapes



12. copy numbers and simple words



Language Comprehension

1. understand the difference between yesterday, today, and tomorrow



2. understand the concept of opposites



3. understand the content of a story



Gross Motor Skills

1. run well on their toes swiftly and take quick bends



2. fast run a distance of fifty feet, without feeling tired



3. walk up and down stairs alone with adults



4. hold a ball while running and kick a moving ball



5. climb a string-ladder



6. play on their own on a swing



Language Expression

1. give a logical account of what has happened recently



2. describe a picture



3. communicate with peers without difficulty



4. speak up in turn without digressing from the subject



5. grammar and structure of language is more or less that of an adult



6. use words like “although”, “however”, “but”



7. use different adjectives to describe a person or object



8. briefly describe the four seasons



9. tell their own date of birth



10. express feelings with appropriate words



11. talk back, protect, or even scold others when frustrated



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