

KINDERGARTEN

The kindergarten program provides young children with hands-on learning experiences in art, health and safety, language arts, mathematics, music, science, and social studies. Children develop reading and writing skills. They are encouraged to ask questions, seek answers and think critically. Through structured play, the children develop social skills.

THE KINDERGARTEN CHILD

The education of young children must be in keeping with their unique mode of learning. Children learn in different ways through their senses. Some children are strong visual learners. They are able to extract meaning from what is seen. Others learn more effectively through the sense of hearing. Still others, the tactile learners, need the sense of touch. **Every child has a personal learning style.** By understanding it, parents can help their child develop natural strengths.



THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

- Provides time for both quiet and active hands-on experiences
- Provides opportunities for child-selected and teacher-selected activities
- Allows for individual, small, and large group activities
- Is a half-day program

ATTENDANCE

Schedule for a normal kindergarten day: AM Session 9:10–11:45
PM Session 1:05–3:40

On **early dismissal** days the kindergarten program changes. To accommodate a balance approach to the program, the AM and PM sessions alternate attending school in the morning on **early dismissal** days. Please refer to the school calendar to determine on which **early dismissal** days your child will attend school. School hours on early dismissal days are 9:10-12:15.

On **early dismissal** days, your child will be transported home on the same bus in which he/she arrived to school. This is different from the regular school day transportation procedures.

Parents may drop off children between 8:50 and 9:10 AM or 12:50 and 1:10 PM. Remember to check for delays in school openings due to inclement weather.

TRANSPORTATION

- It is important that your child knows the rules of safety: how and where to walk coming to and from school, what to do when approached by a stranger, and the rules for riding on the bus.
- Transportation scheduling and parental request are factors in determining AM or PM class assignments.
- If there is a need to alter your child's normal dismissal or means of transportation, the request must be made, **in writing**, to your child's classroom teacher.
- Conditions sometimes warrant an **unscheduled early dismissal** from school. It is imperative that arrangements are made for your child's care when such occasions occur. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN KNOW WHERE TO GO WHEN PARENTS ARE NOT AT HOME.**

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

An important key to a child's success is good communication between the school and home. There are several occasions which are designed to facilitate communication between the parents and teacher: Back-to-School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and Report Cards.

For individual questions or concerns, parents are encouraged to contact their teacher. Because teachers are with their class during the day, it is often impossible for them to come to the telephone. A note will facilitate a timely response from the teacher.

Sometimes parents are asked to meet with the Instructional Support Team (IST) to discuss strategies to assist their child. Members of the Instructional Support Team are the parents, classroom teacher, and perhaps other staff members who can provide helpful suggestions.

THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

The use and organization of time, space, and materials in the kindergarten classroom address all areas of a child's development – intellectual, physical, and social.



KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

It is our firm belief that every child is entitled to a kindergarten experience and that this phase of education should be an integral part of the total educational program.

POSITION STATEMENT ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Typically, young children enter school eager to learn. In order to foster that enthusiasm, we believe that young students are ready for reading and writing experiences.

It is our philosophy that a large part of a child's school day should include immersion in a rich language-filled environment which promotes the sharing of real (or approximations of real) reading and writing. Children share orally and aurally when they are learning to speak and listen; they learn to read and write in much the same way – in a sharing atmosphere.

Books are the “hub” from which all other activities extend. Children learn that books are meaningful and pleasurable. In a relaxed “literate environment” the children utilize real literature. Many students “pretend” to read and some read by themselves. They experiment with writing.

The key to reading readiness is to allow children to “live” in an authentic, language-rich, flexible environment.



LANGUAGE ARTS

Children experience a language-rich environment that promotes positive attitudes regarding reading, listening, speaking, viewing, composing, and researching. The program emphasizes the sharing of children's literature and allows for all developmental levels of reading and writing behaviors. The environment also fosters the investigation of language patterns, letters, words, and sounds.



MATHEMATICS

Children develop basic mathematical skills and are encouraged to develop a curiosity and confidence working with mathematical concepts.

LIBRARY

Children learn to use the services provided by the library and gain an appreciation of the purpose of a library. They will learn to listen and respond to selections from quality children's literature.

SCIENCE

Through a multi-sensory approach, children develop an interest about the physical world around them. Exploration, observation, and classification of the physical world will be an integral part of the science program.



MUSIC

Children are introduced to the basic elements of music. Concepts of loud/soft, fast/slow, high/low, same/different, and the “heartbeat” of music are explored through singing, listening, movement, and playing instruments. Varied styles of music are incorporated into the curriculum to enhance a positive attitude towards learning.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Children develop an awareness for personal health and safety practices as they apply to daily life. Areas include personal hygiene, nutrition, and safety both at home and in school.

TECHNOLOGY

Children explore the parts of the computer and instructional software programs that will support and enrich their learning experiences.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Children learn to make new friends, work and play cooperatively with other children, develop independence and self-confidence, learn self-control and how to follow rules.



ART

Children work with basic shapes, line direction, and color identification. They are encouraged to use symbols to convey ideas while taking part in drawing and painting activities. Proficiency with using pencils, scissors, paste, and paints are encouraged.



SPECIAL SERVICES

The Council Rock School District provides special instruction classes for children who are gifted, learning disabled, socially and emotionally disturbed, multiply challenged and Intellectually Disabled. District wide programs are also available for learning disabled students with highly specialized needs. For children with low incidence or very severe handicapping conditions, referrals are made to programs operated by the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, or other educational facilities.

Once the child has started school, district psychologists, who are staffed in each school, provide evaluative services when needed. A board-certified psychiatrist can be called upon for consultations and evaluations. Screenings and evaluations by speech, hearing, and vision specialists are furnished by the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, which may also provide educational services in those areas. Please see your child's teacher or principal if you believe your child may be in need of special education programs or services.



PARENTS AS TEACHERS

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| K | Kindle excitement about kindergarten. Visit your school and meet your child's teacher. |
| I | Invite new school friends home to play and help your child build strong relationships. |
| N | Never forget safety. Teach your child safety rules about walking and taking the bus. |
| D | Discuss what your child will be learning in school: colors, shapes, letters, and numbers. |
| E | Explore your neighborhood together. Talk about the world in which you live. |
| R | Review the good behavior expected of your child such as following rules and taking turns. |
| G | Get involved at your child's school. Join the parent association. Volunteer in the classroom. |
| A | Answer your child's questions about school. Reassure your child that school is fun. |
| R | Read to your child daily. Visit the library together. |
| T | Turn every day into a learning experience. Let your child help with everyday chores. |
| E | Encourage your child to eat well, get enough sleep, bathe daily, and brush teeth. |
| N | Notice new things your child is learning to do. Reinforce your child's progress with praise. |

Preparing Your Child to Learn to Read – Learning to Read Begins with You!

- Be sure your child has the tools with which to begin to read. This includes early emergent books that are for very young children, alphabet books of all types, magnetic letters with which to make words, letter/sound games to use everywhere (even on the refrigerator), books of all types, soft-back books, hard-back books, cardboard books, books with flaps, books with just pictures, and photo books with captions of family events.
- Model life-long reading habits for your child. Show him that you read the newspaper to find out what is happening in the neighborhood, in the community, in the state you live in, in our country, and in the world. Let your child see you reading for pleasure: magazines, books, letters from friends, e-mail messages on the computer.

Teach Your Child His/Her Name First

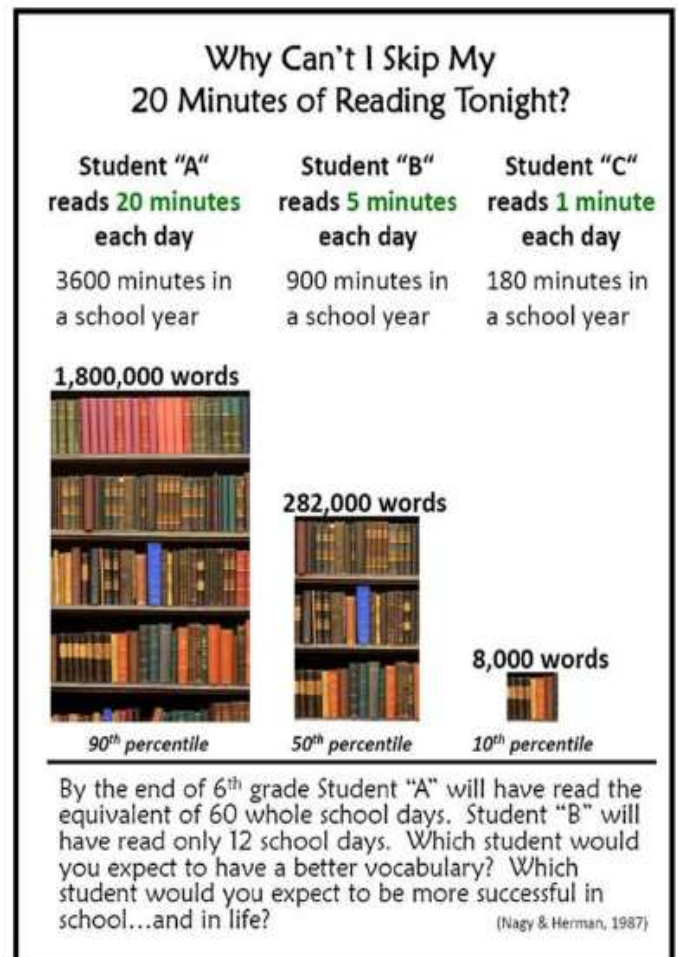
- The best place to begin is with teaching your child to recognize and then write the letters in his/her name.
- Start with letters in his/her first name, and then once he/she has mastered the names of those letters, teach him/her the letters in his/her last name.
- Provide your child with tools to use for writing: crayons, markers, paper, white boards, paintbrushes and watercolors.
- Make sand paper letters for your child to trace. Encourage your child to make letters from clay. Pour salt in a square baking pan and let your child practice tracing the letters of his/her name in the “salt pan.”
- Verbalize the movements as you model how to form a letter (for the letter “L,” say “Start at the top and go down and then over”). All directional movements when forming letters should **start at the top and go down**. Hold your child’s hand and/or arm as he/she tries to form letters and have him/her verbalize the movements you have taught him/her.

Talk to Your Child About Books

- It is important to read many different types of books to and with your child.
- Try to engage him/her in conversations about the story, the characters and the problems they may be facing.
- Ask your child what he/she would do in a similar situation. This will encourage your child to “think” about the story as you read it.

What Types of Books Should I Read to My Child?

- The children of today are fortunate to be able to hear wonderful literature at a very young age. The books of today have interesting stories and beautifully illustrated pictures.
- If you are not sure, ask the children’s librarian at your local library, or go to a local bookstore and ask for assistance.
- Alphabet books are an excellent choice for young children as well as rhyming books by Dr. Seuss. Authors such as Tomie DePaola, Patricia Polacco, Bill Martin, Eve Bunting, Leon Lionni, Lois Ehlert, Jane Yolen, Mem Fox, and Angela Johnson are very appealing to young children.
- Go the library and let your child choose books they are interested in both fiction and non-fiction.
- Not only should you read, but you should also recite old-fashioned “**nursery rhymes**” to your child. Learning nursery rhymes helps prepare a child for reading by hearing the “sing-song” pattern of songs, rhymes and poems. Children learn many skills by learning nursery rhymes. They develop a sense of rhyming, understand beginning sounds, and are able to begin to be able to blend and segment sounds in words. These skills are all necessary for beginning reading to take place.



What does the research say?

- Children who are read to at least three times a week by a family member are almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who are read to less than 3 times a week. *Denton, Kristen and Gerry West, Children's Reading and Mathematics Achievement in Kindergarten and First Grade (PDF file), U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Washington, DC, 2002.*
- Children who are “well-read-to” (at least five times a week), when asked to tell a story, used more literary language than unread to children, and they used more sophisticated syntactic forms, longer phrases, and relative clauses. They were also better able to understand the oral and written language of others – an important foundation for the comprehension skills that will develop in the coming years. Wolf, M. (2007). *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- The nurturing and one-on-one attention from parents during reading aloud encourages children to form a positive association with books and reading later in life. Reach Out and Read, *Archives of Disease in Childhood, Reading Aloud to Children: The Evidence*, 2008.
- When adults read to children, discussing story content, asking open-ended questions about story events, explaining the meaning of words, and pointing out features of print, they promote increased language development, comprehension of story content, knowledge of story structure, and a better understanding of language – all of which lead to literacy success. *Berk, L. E. (2009). Child Development (8th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.*

What can I do to prepare my child for success in mathematics?

Success in primary school mathematics is directly related to home math literacy experiences prior to kindergarten. Providing your child with number experiences, pattern recognition and measurement skills benefit your child long-term in other subject areas, such as reading and science (LeFevre, J. et. al. 2009).

- Do not pass on your negative feelings about math to your child. Avoid telling young children statements like "I can't help you, I was never any good at math," or "I hate math".
- Read and enjoy books with him/her that involve math concepts. Ask your librarian, a local bookstore, or search on-line for children's books with math concepts.
- Ask your child to sort everyday objects and discuss how he/she decided to sort the objects
- Practice counting objects in your home. Focus on saying only one number for each object and ensure your child knows the last number he/she says is the number of objects in the group
- Ask your child questions that require him/her to count and compare objects. For example, how many dinosaur books do you have? Who has more blocks, you or your friend? How many more cookies do you need to have three?
- Provide puzzles, blocks, and tangrams for your child to build spatial awareness skills.
- Name common shapes in your everyday life. Use clay and other materials to create shapes.
- Play card and dice games, which ask your child to count and keep score.
- Ask your child to measure objects with non-standard units. For example, how many steps to the door? How many of your juice boxes will fill a pitcher?
- Encourage your child to explain their thinking. Ex. How did you know you and your friend had 6 gummy bears altogether?
- Ask your child open-ended math questions such as: can we use these triangles to make a square? What do you notice? How do you make this work?

COUNCIL ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT
Skills Checklist

Child's Name: _____ **Last School Attended:** _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Parent Signature:** _____

The checklist has been developed to help you prepare and determine your child's readiness for school. If you have a question regarding your child's readiness, you may contact a kindergarten teacher at your elementary school.

Developing Social Skills	Yes	No	Not Sure
Can play well with others			
Listens to a story without disturbing others			
Completes activities independently (e.g., coloring, puzzle)			
Demonstrates adequate attention span for activities (8-10 minutes)			
Expresses needs in complete sentences			
Follows a simple two part direction			
Accepts limits set by an adult			
Developing Readiness Skills	Yes	No	Not Sure
Recognizes first name in print			
Recognizes uppercase letters out of sequence			
Recognizes lowercase letters out of sequence			
Is interested in books			
Asks and answers questions about a story			
Writes first name using upper and lowercase letters. Example: Tom			
Recognizes and can name numbers from 1 - 10			
Counts objects up to 10 accurately			
Identifies basic shapes			
Uses words to describe position of objects (ex:front/back, before/after, left/right)			
Self-help/Motor Skills	Yes	No	Not Sure
Put on jacket/sweater independently			
Can cut with scissors			
Open snack container (juice bag/box, etc.)			
Uses bathroom independently			