



Kindergarten Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Kindergarten! This year will be a milestone in your child's life. It is not only the beginning of his or her formal education, but also the first step towards life-long learning and social participation. New experiences and friends will make this year a special time for both you and your child. Many exciting activities are planned and I am anxious to share them with you and your Kindergarten.

I realize that you may have many questions about the Kindergarten program and hope that this handbook will answer most of them for you. Please don't hesitate to ask if you need further clarification.



The Beginning



The first week of school is a special time in your child's life. It may be the first major separation from the secure and familiar world of home and family. Your child will interact in a new environment filled with new friends, activities, and exciting learning adventures. It is a place that a child can never entirely share with his or her parents, but every effort will be made to involve you as often as possible. The greatest gift you can give your child at this time is your love, support, encouragement, and understanding.



Names

All clothing, backpacks, and lunch boxes should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Many children do not remember what they brought to school and often forget or misplace their things.

Please help your child, and the staff, by labeling everything and making sure that you print his/her name in the same style that we do at school!



Homework

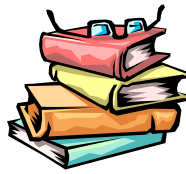
Homework will consist of many different activities that are meant to help you share your child's school experiences. It will usually consist of fun activities that are meant to be done with the supervision of an adult. Please enjoy this time of interaction with your child while encouraging neatness and accuracy. (Materials such as a pencil, scissors, crayons, and glue will be needed to complete the various assignments.)

Your child will also be involved in a book bag program in which your child will bring home a book on occasion to share with you. It is hoped that you will enjoy this special time together and help your child learn to become a life-long reader!

Various small books for your child to create or share with you will also be sent home at various times throughout the year. Please support his/her efforts with these books. Perhaps you could find a special "book box" that your child could use to save the many small books s/he will be creating. (It may be fun to decorate a cereal or detergent box together to use as a "book box.")

Literacy boxes and backpacks will be sent home that are meant to be shared with you and your child. Please make sure that all these materials are properly taken care of and returned to school on time.

Language



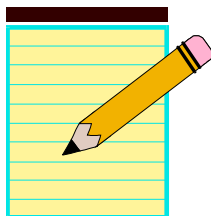
Language activities are one of the top two priorities in Kindergarten. Through the utilization of good literature, class-made books, big books, puppets, tapes, poems, and an array of other activities, each child will experience a language-rich environment daily. This setting will provide children with the foundation needed to eventually become emergent readers.



Reading and Phonics

Reading will be taught through the use of phonics and by actually reading books! The special language of the printed word is best introduced to children by reading aloud to them from a variety of sources. The desire to read will be nurtured and increased when the children see the necessity and joy of reading. Reading should be fun and I hope to make it both fun and exciting for your child.

In addition, all Kindergarten students will receive explicit instruction in phonemic awareness (the ability to hear and manipulate discrete units of sound) and phonics (letters and their sounds). Activities will be presented each day that will assist your child in understanding the relationship between alphabetic letters and sounds. Eventually, children will utilize reading strategies to decode and read new words.



Writing

The writing program will build on what each child already knows. Writing begins with scribbles, and proceeds to lines and circles, random strings of letters, words, and spaces, and eventually sentences. You may hear terms such as “pretend writing,” “inventive writing,” “phonetic writing,” or “book writing” this year. Please don’t be concerned: these terms simply describe the various levels of writing that children may go through. Please help your child by encouraging and applauding him/her for all attempts and accomplishments in his/her writing. Providing a risk-free environment at home as well as school will be paramount to your child’s progress in writing. Whenever possible, please provide your child with writing tools such as pencils, crayons, and paper at home.

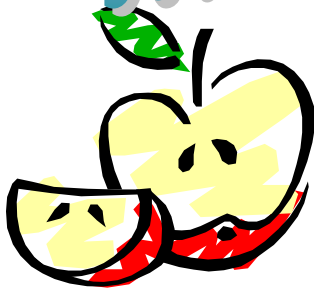
Mathematics



Mathematics will be the other priority of the Kindergarten curriculum this year. The Kindergarten Mathematics program will involve children in a variety of activities that create a solid foundation for mathematical understandings and patterns. Children will be given numerous opportunities to manipulate concrete materials such as unifix cubes, pattern blocks, geoboards, and everyday materials such as buttons and keys to form important mathematical concepts. Your child will discover the world of math through sorting, classifying, patterning, measuring, graphing, and estimating activities.

Literature selections will be used to focus instruction on specific mathematical concepts. Your child will also be exposed to important math concepts such as number recognition, number value, more and less, sequencing, and one-to-one correspondence through the use of various board and card games.

Social Studies, Science, and Health



In Social Studies, Science, and Health, your child will learn about him/herself, others, and the world around us. Real objects, pictures, films, books, graphs, experiments, and field trips will be utilized to provide information and opportunities for the children to explore, compare, and experiment.



Music, Drama, and Art

Kindergartners will listen to music, sing songs, participate in rhythmic activities and use rhythm instruments. They will learn to appreciate music in a variety of ways.

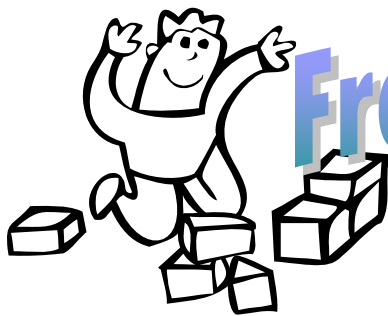
Selected stories and rhymes will be “brought to life” through dramatizations. These impromptu re-enactments help children to internalize the language contained in the stories.

Creative art activities will include drawing, painting, coloring, and cutting. Children will have many opportunities to manipulate a wide variety of materials to help stimulate creativity. Individual expression and imagination will also be encouraged throughout the school year.

Physical Education



Large and small muscle coordination will be developed through movement activities and games. Children will learn to throw, bounce, and catch a ball as well as practice skipping, hopping, and jumping rope.



Free Choice Center Play

During “Free Play” or “Choice Time” Kindergartners will be able to choose activities that are of interest to them. They will determine where they will spend their time and what they will be doing during this active time period. Your child will be given the opportunity to work both cooperatively and independently, share materials, demonstrate responsibility and decision-making skills, and expand his/her imagination and learn to think critically.

Some of the activities which your child will be able to choose from are: putting puzzles together, dramatic play opportunities, writing center activities, building with blocks, reading books, computer, and table games.



A Time for Children . . .

Your child is special, rare, and unique. It is a pleasure to have him/her in Kindergarten this year. My primary goal is that all students leave Kindergarten at the end of the year knowing the joy and value of learning as well as the power of knowledge. I want each of them to develop a love of books and a desire to read for entertainment and to acquire information. I want to create out of each child a mathematical problem solver able to function in our ever-changing society. I hope that each child will be happy, feel good about him/herself and school, and work together with others.

Your continuing support and understanding to achieve these goals is needed. I look forward to working together with you to create the best possible learning environment for your special child.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Meek