


Frequently Asked Questions

4



Waunakee

Four Year Old Kindergarten
Waunakee Community School District
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is 4K?

Four-year-old-kindergarten is commonly referred to as 4K. It provides an enrichment opportunity for children prior to kindergarten. It is a play-based program designed to nurture social, emotional and early academic skills of four-year-old children. It does not take the place of kindergarten.

Why offer 4K?

Four-year-old kindergarten provides children with quality early learning experiences that help provide a solid foundation for future success in school. Numerous research studies show long-term benefits for children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs, such as gains in cognition, knowledge, motor skills and language. Offering 4K through the school district ensures universal access to a quality pre-kindergarten program for all four-year-olds.

PROGRAM MODEL

What does the Waunakee 4K program look like?

The Waunakee 4K program is optional, but universal - open to **ALL** four-year-old children and their families within the Waunakee Community School District (WCSD). Waunakee offers 4K using the community-collaborative model, partnering the school district with preschools and child care facilities to implement the 4K program in their centers.

When will the program occur?

Children will attend 4K five-days-per-week for 2 hours and 40 minutes each day, generally following the school year calendar. A choice of morning or afternoon sessions is available. The approximate time for the AM session will be from 7:40-10:20 and the PM session will likely be from 11:35-2:15 to align with transportation at the elementary level. Starting and ending times may be altered, depending on where the center is located on the transportation route. Any additional time spent at the 4K center must be arranged by the family and the center.

PROGRAM MODEL, CONTINUED

Where will the program be held?

Classes are held at partner preschools/child care centers. These are the preschools we expect to partner with during the 2022-2023 school year, pending enrollment numbers.

- Adventures in Learning, 1036 Quinn Drive
- Brilliant Beginnings, 1008 Quinn Drive
- Inspire Early Childhood, 5821 Oncken Road
- Leap Academy, 101 Kearney Way
- Mary Lake Montessori, 5464 Mary Lake Road
- Moppet, 203 W. Main Street
- Peace Lutheran Preschool, 701 S. Century Avenue
- Saint John the Baptist Preschool, 114 East Third Street

Why is the district offering classes in preschools/child care centers? What are the benefits?

This approach, known as the community-collaborative model, builds on existing resources in our community. With district partnership, parents are guaranteed that their child's classroom will have a highly qualified, DPI-licensed teacher and will implement a consistent curriculum framework incorporating the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. Centers will also offer expanded family outreach activities, and certain sites will offer child care before or after 4K (wrap around care).

Can a provider charge a fee for the 4K program?

There is no cost to families for the regularly scheduled hours of the program. If parents elect to purchase child care services before and/or after the 4K day, the parents will pay the rate established by each individual program for the contracted services provided. The district has no role in establishing child care rates.

Is transportation available?

Yes, transportation is available during the hours of the 4K program. One-way or round-trip transportation is available, but families are not required to use district busing and may make their own arrangements. Busing is not available for the child care portion of a child's day. Busing is only available immediately before and after the 4K class times. If no transportation is needed, families may request any site, pending availability. If transportation is needed, site assignments will be made based on attendance area of the address the child will bus to/from. Arboretum sites include Mary Lake Montessori, Adventures in Learning, Brilliant Beginnings and Saint John's. Prairie sites include Leap Academy, Moppet, and Saint John's. Heritage sites include Inspire Early Childhood, Leap Academy, Peace Preschool and Saint John's. Please refer to the map on our website for clarification. Important: based on our transfer system, ONLY addresses within the attendance area boundary will be eligible for busing, including at mid-day. If you have busing questions about your specific situation, please call Amy Johnson or Ericka Hanson at 849-2000 x 8020 for assistance.

ENROLLMENT

When does the enrollment process begin?

Please complete the **District online registration** [Click here for directions](#) please.

After you complete the necessary online registration, you will be asked to complete a 4K Interest Form. Interest Forms will ask for information such as: site preference, time preference (a.m. or p.m.), need for wrap-around care, need for transportation, and need for special services. All forms received before April 15th will be processed together. Placement information and district enrollment forms will be mailed before the end of the school year, around **June 8, 2022**.

Who can participate?

Any child who is four years old on or before September 1st can participate. Children are enrolled in 4K for one year prior to kindergarten entrance.

Can non-resident students participate?

By state law, four-year-olds who reside outside of the district can apply for Open Enrollment if their resident district offers 4K. The open enrollment period for is typically February through April. More information can be found here: <https://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>

Is early entrance into the Waunakee 4K program possible?

No. Children must be four years old on or before September 1st to participate.

What about a child who has not attended a pre-k program in the past and is 5 years old on or before September 1st? If the parent elects not to send the child to regular kindergarten, will this child be eligible to be enrolled in 4K?

It is possible for students who are five years old and who have not attended a 4K program in the past to attend 4K. Children should only attend 4K for **one year**, the year immediately prior to kindergarten.

Can a child enroll in the Waunakee 4K program as a four-year-old and then repeat it as a five-year-old?

This is a decision that would need to be made on a case-by-case basis, following district retention policy, and would not be encouraged. Such practices are not routine and would be considered grade retention.

How are site assignments determined?

Families will be able to rank their site preferences. The WCSD will try to honor requests, but does not guarantee a spot will be available in one of those sites. Final site assignments are decided based on prior program enrollment, need for child care services, place of residence, special programming needs, transportation needs, and available openings at the site requested. Priority will be given to the Interest Forms received by April 15.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Will learning standards be addressed in the 4K program?

Yes, all sites will use the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS). These standards are based on current research and are developmentally appropriate practices. There are standards in each developmental domain:

1. Health and Physical Development (e.g. fine-motor and gross-motor skills)
2. Social and Emotional Development (e.g. social skills and self-esteem)
3. Language Development and Communication (e.g. listening, speaking and reading readiness)
4. Approaches to Learning (e.g. curiosity, persistence, and creativity)
5. Cognition and General Knowledge (e.g. mathematical and scientific thinking and problem solving)

What is the 4K curriculum?

All 4K sites use *Creative Curriculum, 5th edition* and *Get Set for School*, as their common resources. Along with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards mentioned above, sites will plan their interest areas and lesson plans using these materials. Staff from all 4K sites have attended training and share a common progress report and learning goals. In addition, all sites teach social-emotional skills through the *Second Step* curriculum

Do all partners have to meet Department of Public Instruction (DPI) regulations?

Yes. Classes are taught by a teacher who is licensed by DPI in early childhood education. Each partner will provide 437 hours of instruction and 87.5 hours of parent involvement offerings.

Can religious instruction take place?

No, not during the Waunakee 4K program, which complies with state and federal regulations that specify the separation of church and state. If centers elect to offer religious instruction before or after the 4K program, they may do so, but staff and parents must understand that this is not affiliated in any way with the 4K program.

What is “family outreach” and how are the annual hours (87.5) of outreach activities provided?

Family outreach is a support network for families to expand the child’s educational experience. The Waunakee 4K partners and the district will work cooperatively to offer 87.5 hours of parent education and involvement activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, family fun nights, potluck dinners, training workshops, and family newsletters.

For more information, please visit the Waunakee 4K website:
<http://www.waunakee.k12.wi.us/waunakee4k/index.cfm>