



A Parent Guide to Starting School

Welcome to Kindergarten!

We are happy to welcome your child to kindergarten and share your desire that this first school experience is a happy and successful one.

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Getting Ready for School

Starting school is a big step towards independence for five and six year old children. For several hours a day, the child will be interacting with a larger group of children than they have known before. They will be in a new place with new adults who care about their success. Please help them look forward to this new experience by emphasizing that school is a friendly, happy place.

Help Prepare Your Child

Kindergarten teachers have found that children adjust more easily if they have had experiences:

- adjusting own clothing after using the restroom
- taking off and putting on outer clothing
- putting toys and personal possessions away
- meeting visitors in the home
- sharing in family conversations
- listening to stories
- going to interesting places, such as the beach, park, zoo, airport, farm or lake, and being encouraged to observe and talk about these experiences
- playing and sharing with other children
- recognizing own name, basic colors and shapes

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A Beginning for Parents, Too!

Children make a better adjustment to school during the first days if the parent is not present. We encourage you to participate after your child becomes comfortable at school. Please remember to schedule classroom visits with the teacher.

- Discuss ways in which you can help your child learn.
- Serve as a volunteer in the school or classroom.
- Join and work in the service club.
- Attend a school board meeting.
- Keep informed about educational resources.

Pre-Kindergarten Expectation

Skills that will make your kindergarten child successful at school!

Self-Care

Children should be able to zip, button, and snap their clothing; take off, put on, and tie shoes; hang up clothing; use the bathroom independently; be able to say first and last name. Extra rest may be needed; an earlier bedtime, and more help with daily routines until school has become a more comfortable part of your kindergartner's life. Children will have a good start for the day if they come in a happy frame of mind, rested, and well nourished.

Self Regulation

One of the most important areas in school readiness is self-regulation. Children who are able to pay attention or focus on a task for five minutes, follow simple directions, control impulses, handle frustration will have a smooth transition to kindergarten. These are skills that develop over time and take coaching, examples and practice. Kindergarten teachers often report these are the most difficult skills to change, yet they spend the most time on them in class.

Social and Emotional Skills

A child is likely to be more successful in kindergarten if he or she can show kindness and concern for others, express his or her needs and wants, relate well to adults, and is curious and eager to learn.

Academics Skills

Basic literacy, language, math and reasoning skills that will help children be on target upon entering kindergarten are:

- Enjoying being read to and can retell a story
- Recognizing and naming letters
- Repeating beginning and ending sounds in words
- Speaking in complete sentences
- Printing and recognizing his or her first name
- Counting in order to 20
- Recognizing numbers and quantities to 10
- Naming and sorting items by color, shape and size

To and From School

A kindergartner needs help in learning the safest route to and from school or to and from the bus stop. Besides accompanying them the first few days of school, we suggest that you teach them the following: rules of pedestrian safety, use of crosswalks, purpose of safety patrol, and good personal behavior, which promotes safety for everyone.

Clothing, Backpacks and Lunch Pails

Please select children's clothing, which is practical, durable, and can be managed by the children themselves. This includes tying own shoes, belt buckles, snaps, etc. All clothing taken off at school should be plainly labeled. Children cannot be responsible for articles, which they cannot identify easily, nor can the teacher always locate them. Indelible labels or sewn-in nametapes are the best and most lasting means of identification.

Breakfast and Lunch

Child Nutrition Services provides nutritious, hot breakfast and lunch for all students during the school year, which meet one third of a student's daily Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA). Breakfast and lunch menus are and prices are posted on the District Web site. Students can purchase lunch or breakfast credits at their school office.

Applications for free and reduced priced meals will be available at the end of June. Please contact Child Nutrition Services at 253.891.6450 for any information or visit their office at 19701 104th St. E. in Bonney Lake.



Attendance

Ordinarily, children have more absences from Kindergarten and first grade because of illness than any other level in school. If a child is ill, please telephone the school the first day of each illness.

We must report to the State Department of Health all communicable diseases. When the student returns to school, please send a note to the teacher explaining the reason for the absence. If you move, please notify the school that you are withdrawing your child.

Health Examinations

It is required that children have immunizations against certain childhood diseases before entering Kindergarten in September. A physical examination is advised and arrangements should be made with your family physician.

Students with significant or life-threatening medical conditions (diabetes, severe allergic reactions, etc.) must have an Emergency Care Plan in place before starting school. When teachers know the physical condition and/or limitations of their students, they can adapt their program to meet the physical needs of the child.

Medications

By state law, written permission from parent and physician must be provided before oral prescription and over the counter medications can be administered at school. Please contact your school's health technician if you have any questions or concerns.

Illness/Injury

A child who becomes ill or is injured at school is given care and parents are contacted. If a parent cannot be reached at home or at work, the emergency number on the enrollment information card is called. It is very important to have an emergency card filled out completely and updated when a change is made.

Parent Conferences

A fall conference will be scheduled for all Kindergarten parents in October. A spring conference will be held in March. Parent conferences are scheduled so that teachers can meet with parents to discuss the school program and your child's progress.

Additional individual conferences can be arranged with the teacher at anytime. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the school office to arrange a convenient time. You will receive three reports during the school year - December, March and at the end of the school year.

Measuring Success

School success is not narrowly limited to reading, writing, and arithmetic. It includes other aspects of life necessary to develop a well-integrated person. School success is achieving maturity to cope with a situation and gaining knowledge. Paper and pencil tests are only one way of evaluating what children are learning. Kindergarten teachers also measure children by observing such behaviors as: conversation, tone of voice, interests, and response to other children, individual growth, facial expression, body movement, and participation.

Self Concept

The way children see themselves determines their sense of worth. Self concept begins to form on the day of birth when parents show that they are thinking of each child as an important individual.

Parents are encouraged to:

- allow their child to develop in their own way
- assume responsibilities as he/she is able
- listen to their child with respect
- be confident in their child's capacity to learn

Remember, children need time to grow and mature in their own way and their own rate!

A Day in Kindergarten

Each day is somewhat different and no two Kindergartens are exactly alike; however, the major parts of the Kindergarten day include:

Time to Work

Students work in cooperative groups or individually. Skills are practiced to prepare for reading, writing, and computing. They paint, work with clay, build with blocks and experiment.

Time for a Story

Kindergarten students can expect to hear stories, poems, and chants. A good story, well told, is an excellent springboard for their imaginations.

Time to Talk

Talking together about what children have seen or done outside school; about what the class might do tomorrow or next week; about what the group has done and how they like it ...these are ways communication skills are built.

Time to Make Music

Singing, playing a rhythm instrument, hearing a melody, and moving with it using motion, adds meaning to all parts of the musical experience.

Time to Explore

Kindergarten children find solutions to their questions through thinking, observing, asking questions, experimenting, looking at pictures, and listening to interesting material read aloud.

Time to Play

Play is the work of children and encourages expression of ideas, cooperation, problem solving, communication and other academic and social skills.

www.sumnersd.org

The Sumner School District Web site provides families with a variety of resources to make it easier to be involved in your child's education.

A Web-based tool called Family Access allows parents to view student information anytime, anywhere online! Parents may view class schedules, grades, attendance, fines, fees, lunch account balances and other student information.

All families may sign up for School Messages, to get reminder e-mails about school closures, late arrivals, early dismissals and parent alerts. Notifications about attendance, general messages and emergency alerts can be sent by phone, e-mail or text messages. Families may choose the phone number to which general and emergency messages will be sent (home, work or cell phone), with additional options for the message to also be sent by e-mail or text.



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