

ISD 192 KINDERGARTEN

Family Handbook

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter... 1

Kindergarten Philosophy... 2

Parent Involvement... 3

Kindergarten Readiness Skills... 4

Early Childhood Screening... 5

Small Motor Skills... 5

Language at Home... 6

Literacy... 7

Math... 8

Your Child and Kindergarten... 9

Frequently Asked Questions... 10

You're The ABC's of Helping Your Child by Carole Riggs... 11



WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

Dear Families,

This is a handbook written for kindergarten students and their families. The information and activities in this handbook will help prepare you and your child for this very exciting milestone in your child's life.

In this handbook you will find:

1. a checklist of general guidelines and important readiness skills;
2. activities that will help prepare your child for kindergarten;
3. a description of the kindergarten curriculum and some reasonable expectations for this year.

You will always be your child's most important teacher and we want to assist you in that role. We know that children learn more and thrive when we work together as a team. This handbook is designed to help you work with us at school. Together we can make sure your child gets off to a good start in school.

The Kindergarten Teachers

Kindergarten Philosophy

We believe...	Therefore we...
Children develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually with individual patterns of growth.	• value play because children use it to practice newly acquired skills. • provide opportunities where all children are actively learning. • assess, evaluate and report the growth of each child.
Children need to build a strong foundation of skills and knowledge to move from dependency to independence.	• provide meaningful opportunities for children to grow and learn. • help children apply prior knowledge to new experiences.
Children learn in different ways and have different ways of representing what they know.	• provide playtime that has a purpose or a lesson. • design hands-on activities. • incorporate curriculum into many areas. • allow time to read, write, speak, listen, play and share with each other. • assess students through daily observations and interactions.
Children should be actively engaged in their learning.	• provide opportunities for children to make choices about how they learn. • create learning activities that include curriculum.
Children learn best in a safe, nurturing and challenging environment.	• model and encourage the development of respect, responsibility, integrity, compassion and an appreciation of diversity in our schools. • create opportunities for children to contribute to their school and community. • adapt activities for all children to learn at their instructional level, whether it is faster or slower than other students.
Children are most successful when school, home and community work together.	• promote an atmosphere of mutual respect for everyone. • provide on-going communication between home and school. • support and encourage family involvement.

You Can Help!

Begin preparing your child for kindergarten by completing a free Early Childhood Screening. See Page 5 for more on this. There are also many helpful things you can do with your child at home and in your neighborhood. A few of them are listed here.

Helpful Skills:

- Say full name, address, and telephone number.
- Speak clearly and thoughtfully.
- Listen attentively when someone is speaking.
- Follow simple instructions and respect authority.
- Put on and take off cold weather clothing, including practice with zippers, buttons, coats, boots, and mittens.
- Place shoes on the correct feet and tie them.
- Care for personal health and toilet needs.
- Play with children of the same age.
- Eat well balanced meals.
- Dress appropriately for the weather.
- Write name using an upper case letter for the first letter of the name, and lower case letters for the rest.
- Hold pencil effectively.

Learning Experiences:

- Having conversations with your child.
- Reading aloud to your child daily, including a variety of books (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, rhymes, fairy tales, etc.).
- Taking family trips to such places as the zoo, a farm, the airport, a fire station, the library, grocery store, park, etc.
- Giving your child opportunities for self-expression.





Kindergarten Readiness Skills

Each child is unique. Different levels of ability, development and learning styles are expected, accepted and used to design what children learn and how they learn. Children are allowed to move at their own pace in acquiring skills for literacy, math, social studies, science, art, music, health, and physical activity.

You may help by reinforcing these skills with your child!

Listening, without interrupting, to stories and poems for five to ten minutes without restlessness.

Recognizing similarities and differences in pictures and designs; and, letters and words that match.

Understanding related words such as up and down, top and bottom, and big and little.

Speaking clearly by staying on one topic in a discussion, by retelling a story or poem in correct sequence, and by using complete sentences.

Thinking about books by identifying the main idea of a story, by giving an opinion, and by interpreting pictures.

Adjusting to changes in routine and new situations without becoming fearful, to opposition or defeat without crying or sulking, and to adult leadership without objection or resentment by following rules established by adults and by asking for help.

Playing cooperatively with other children by sharing, taking turns and assuming a share of group responsibility.

Working without being easily distracted and following directions by completing each task, including clean-up; by cutting, coloring and drawing accurately; by taking care of materials and clothing; and by keeping hands and body to self.





Early Childhood Screening

Farmington Area Public Schools' Early Childhood Screening is a free, simple check to measure your child's development in the areas of vision, hearing, growth, health, and developmental skills. All of this information is important for your child's learning and readiness for school success. After the screening you will be given a full report and if desired, a connection to community resources. Your child must be screened before kindergarten entrance. To make an appointment, call 651-460-3200.

Fine-tuning Small Motor Skills

Fine motor, or small movement coordination, involves the ability to use tools like pencils, scissors, etc., manipulate small objects with the hands and fingers, and write letters and numbers. There are many activities which promote the development of fine muscle, as well as eye-hand coordination. These activities can easily be done at home.

- Building with construction toys (Legos, blocks, Lincoln Logs, Tinker Toys, etc.)
- Playing with games and toys involving small pieces
- Doing stamp art
- Lacing or sewing cards
- Cutting coupons or pictures from magazines and catalogs
- Ripping paper to make confetti or shapes
- Making various craft activities
- Building models
- Painting by number
- Writing with sidewalk chalk
- Drawing and tracing activities
- Coloring activities
- Stringing beads
- Using office supplies (paper punches, staplers, paperclips) for projects
- Making paper chains
- Wrapping presents, including using a tape dispenser
- Blowing soap bubbles and trying to poke them with a finger
- Hitting a balloon up in the air repeatedly (counting or saying a letter with each hit is fun)
- Using tools with supervision (hammer, screwdriver, etc.)
- Screwing together an assortment of sizes of nuts and bolts
- Helping with household chores (drying dishes, folding clothes)





Language at Home

Language is the basis of communication. When students enter school, there is a wide range of vocabulary development. Good oral language (speaking) is necessary before your child can learn to use written language. The following are some simple ways you can easily get your child to use good speech habits and good listening habits:

Read to your child. One of the many benefits of reading to your child is building vocabulary. Vocabulary words are the building blocks of learning.

- If a child is read to for a yearly total of 50 hours or 2 minutes a day, a vocabulary of 4,000 words could be developed by the time they enter kindergarten.
- If a child is read to for a yearly total of 1800 hours or sixty minutes a day, a vocabulary of 8,000 words could be developed by the time they enter kindergarten.
- If a child is read to for a yearly total of 2,000 hours or sixty-six minutes a day, a vocabulary of 10,000 – 12,000 words could be developed by the time they enter kindergarten.

Listen to your child and try to answer questions. If you don't know an answer, be patient and explain that you'll try to find the answer. Make your child feel that questions and curiosity are important.

Ask your child questions that require more than an one-word answer. "Why did you like that TV show?" will get a better answer than "Did you like that TV show?" When asked the question, your child needs to think of an answer and speak in thoughts and sentences. When asked the second question, your child can get away with a simple "yes", "no", or even a shrug of the shoulders or a nod of the head. You may also say, "Tell me about the TV show." This allows your child to express feelings about the show.

Encourage your child to speak clearly for understanding. Your child will feel good about expressing thoughts well. Discourage your child from head nodding to answer you, pointing, mumbling, or talking with hands in front of their mouth. These habits are common for children who lack confidence in speech. They cover their mouths because they are unsure of themselves and they don't really want to be heard.

Talk with your child. Your child learns to listen to your voice and will learn to feel important because you are talking with and listening to him/her. Your child will feel good that you are sharing your thoughts too.

Be a good model - Children imitate what they see and hear in their daily environment. Children who are used to hearing good speech will speak that way. At the same time, children are quick to pick up the unacceptable words they hear at home–even when you think they can't hear you.

Literacy

Literacy is the ability to communicate in real-world situations and includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and thinking. Early literacy learning begins the moment a child is born. They encounter the symbols of literacy in signs for traffic and stores and restaurants. Prior to kindergarten, they need rich literacy experiences that will help them move from simple to more refined concepts of how print works. They need a variety of opportunities to read and write and connect the two processes.

Farmington Area Public Schools' literacy instruction includes all curriculum areas. It embraces a balanced approach where growth begins with direct teacher support and moves the children toward more independence as readers and writers. Your child will receive instruction in these areas:

Reading

- Match all consonant, long and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters
- Rhyme words
- Blend and segment words
- Identify word families (examples are at, bat, cat, sat)
- Recognize and identify environmental print, (examples are traffic signs, store signs, restaurant names, etc.) high frequency and word family
- Demonstrate comprehension of skills and strategies
- Demonstrate knowledge of concepts of print (title, author, top of page, bottom of page, reading left to right)
- Recognize 30 sight words
- Read grade level text

Speaking

- Share information
- Contribute appropriate ideas
- Recite poems, rhymes, and songs

Writing

- Write by moving left to right and top to bottom
- Write upper case and lower case letters independently
- Write independently using knowledge of letter names and sounds
- Use environmental print, high frequency and word family words when writing
- Use simple punctuation
- Write 2 or more sentences

Handwriting

- Be aware of correct letter formation for upper and lower case letters
- Understand headline, midline and baseline
- Print name using lower case letters, except for the first letter
- Demonstrate an appropriate pencil grip as shown

Math

We believe math learning for kindergarten students must be active, rich in natural and mathematical language, and filled with fun experiences that make them think. These include counting, graphing, describing and making patterns, measurement and geometry. Our goal is to provide children with a balance of experiences that will enable them to become lifelong problem-solvers. Your child will receive instruction in these areas:

Patterns

- Sort objects by color, shape and size
- Recognize and extend patterns
- Name 2D and 3D shapes

Number Sense

- Count to 100
- Understand same, more, and less
- Read, match and print numerals 0-31
- Count by 5's and 10's
- Use objects to add and subtract up to 10
- Count backward from 31

Graphing

- Create a simple graph as a class
- Collect and use information to make a simple graph
- Read a simple graph

Measurement

- Use calendar to identify months, days of the week and yesterday, today and tomorrow
- Understand clocks measure time
- Recognize penny, nickel, dime and quarter
- Compare objects in length, weight, position and size





Your Child and Kindergarten

Your child will have the opportunity to:

- Learn to work, play and share with others.
- Become more aware of the world.
- Grow in ability to think and plan.
- Learn to follow more complex directions.
- Develop better listening habits.
- Increase vocabulary.
- Learn and use letters, sounds, and application of those to become a reader and writer.
- Learn to count and use numbers across math concepts.
- Improve large and small muscular coordination.
- Participate in rhythmic activities.
- Learn to sing songs.
- Learn self-expression through music, art, dramatic play, and speech.
- Improve on the use of paints, scissors, crayons and, brushes.
- Improve on the use of a pencil for printing.
- Practice good health habits.



Frequently Asked Questions About Kindergarten

Which school will my child attend?
For help determining your neighborhood schools, use the school locator on the district web page (www.farmington.k12.mn.us > Enroll > Attendance Boundaries) or call 651-463-5052. If you have a new student entering Kindergarten, you will need to enroll your child through the district's online registration system located here.

Does the school offer before/after school care?
Kid Connection is a fee based, school age care program providing high quality care before and after school. All-day care is also offered on non-school days. Kid Connection activities incorporate learning opportunities in reading, math, science, physical education and music. Learn more by calling 651-460-3200.

Will my child ride a bus to school?
Kindergarten students who live more than one mile from school have the opportunity to ride a district provided school bus to and from school. To determine if your home falls within the transportation zone, contact the Transportation Office, Marschall Lines, at 651-463-8689.

Will my child eat breakfast and/or lunch at school?
Farmington Area Public Schools offers nutritious breakfasts and lunches at all elementary schools. Students enrolled in Kindergarten are eligible to participate in the school nutrition program. All Kindergarten students are provided free breakfast. To see menus, pricing, make deposits in your child's account or for more information, go to Chartwells' school nutrition program or call 651-463-5025.

Does my child qualify for Educational Benefits (Free/Reduced Lunch Program)?
Children may receive Free or Reduced price school meals if their household income is within a maximum amount listed on the Applications for Education Benefits. Applications must be filled out each school year. For additional information, a copy of the Application for Educational Benefits, or you have questions regarding benefits, please call 651-463-5051.

Who should I contact if I feel my child might have a disability?
Special Education services are provided to students with disabilities. Early intervention is available from birth and is effective in helping young children prepare for their early school years. If you suspect that your child has a disability, please contact the principal of the building your child will be attending or the Special Services office at 651-463-5020.

Who should I contact if my child is sick or needs to take medication while at school?
Health offices at each school are staffed by health care professionals committed to keeping students safe. We will work with you to address any medical concerns your child may have. Parents are called if a student is ill and needs to go home or has received an injury requiring transfer to a clinic or hospital.

If your child must be given medication during school hours, a licensed prescribed signature and medication order for both prescription and over-the-counter medicine are required. Parental permission is also needed. Medication permission forms are available online, in the school health office or at your clinic. For more information, please visit District Health Services web page or call our district nurse at 651-460-1965.

You're The ABC's of Helping Your Child
by Carole Riggs

Accept your child, unconditionally.
Believe in your child. Trust in his or her ability.
Communicate with your child. Share ideas.
Discuss things with your child.
Enjoy your child. When parents enjoy their children, children enjoy their parents.
Find things of interest to do together.
Give your child responsibility that can be handled. This can lead to a feeling of accomplishment.
Help your child with words of encouragement.
Impress upon your child the vision of what is all around.
Join your child in fun activities.
Keep from over-identifying with your child. Don't try to live your life again through your child.
Listen to your child. He or she needs someone with whom to share thoughts and ideas.
Model behavior you want to see in your child.
Name things for your child. Labels are important.
Observe the way your child goes about tasks. Provide help when needed.
Pace your child. Help your child do one thing at a time and do it well.
Question your child using question words such as who, what, where and when. Ask about stories or everyday things that happen.
Read to your child every day.
Spend time with your child.
Take your child to the library on a regular basis.
Understand that learning isn't always easy. Sometimes we all fail. We can learn from our mistakes.
Value your child's school and teachers. Your attitude will often be mirrored in your child.
Write with your child. Encourage the youngster to write; even scribbles are important.
X is often an unknown quantity. What else would you like to add to this list?
You are your child's most important teacher.
Zip it all up with love. Love gives zest to life.



