



## Understanding Young 5s at Milan Area Schools

Dear Families,

At Milan Area Schools, we understand that every child develops at their own pace. As families prepare for their child's first school experience, one common question we receive is about Young 5s and how it differs from traditional Kindergarten. This letter is designed to help explain the purpose, eligibility, and placement process for our Young 5s program.

### What is Young 5s?

Young 5s (sometimes called Transitional Kindergarten) is a developmentally focused program designed for children who meet age eligibility for Kindergarten but may benefit from an additional year of growth before entering a traditional Kindergarten classroom due to various factors such as age, developmental progress, social skills, or academic readiness.

The Young 5s program provides:

- A smaller class environment
- A strong emphasis on social-emotional development
- Play-based and hands-on learning experiences
- Focused support in early literacy and math readiness skills
- Opportunities to build independence, confidence, and school stamina

Young 5s is not "extra preschool," and it is not remediation. It is a purposeful bridge year designed to set students up for long-term success.

### Eligibility and Placement

Placement in the Young 5s program is determined using multiple factors, including a child's age, developmental readiness, social-emotional skills, and prior school experiences. Our goal is to thoughtfully place students in the environment where they will feel confident and successful.

The Young 5s program is offered at no cost to qualifying students. Transportation is available for families residing within the Milan Area Schools district boundaries. The program follows the elementary school's full-day schedule and district calendar.

Screening takes place during our Kindergarten Orientation in August. This program is primarily designed for children who turn five between June 1 and December 1.

Class sizes are intentionally kept small, typically no more than 17 students, to provide a supportive and developmentally responsive environment.

## Young 5s vs. Kindergarten at Milan Area Schools

Below is a side-by-side comparison to help clarify the differences:

Young 5s	Kindergarten
Developmentally focused bridge year	Traditional Kindergarten curriculum aligned to grade-level standards
Strong emphasis on social-emotional growth	Continued social-emotional development within a more academic structure
Play-based and hands-on learning with gradual introduction of academic skills	Structured literacy and math instruction aligned to state standards
Additional time to build independence and school stamina	Expectation of greater independence and sustained attention
Designed for children who may benefit from extra time before entering Kindergarten	Designed for children ready for full Kindergarten expectations

Both programs provide a nurturing, engaging learning environment with highly qualified teachers committed to student success.

If you have questions about which placement may be best for your child, we encourage you to reach out. We are happy to partner with you in making this important decision.

We look forward to welcoming your family to Milan Area Schools!