

The  
District 97  
Kindergarten  
Handbook

Dear Kindergarten Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to District 97 kindergarten. We are looking forward to working with you and your child/children.

We have prepared this handbook to answer some of the questions you may have about your child's entrance to kindergarten. We hope it will help you make a smooth transition to school.

Sincerely,

The Kindergarten Team  
of District 97

## KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY

Kindergarten offers the opportunity to lay the foundation for a love of learning, a sense of self worth, respect for others, and the development of critical thinking skills.

We recognize that a child's development of attitudes, habits, capabilities, and skills begins long before entering a formal educational program. The kindergarten curriculum builds upon this foundation and provides additional experiences that will enhance learning.

An effective kindergarten program involves parents and school personnel working cooperatively to build a partnership between home and school that will support the child throughout the school experience.

We hold these convictions:

- We believe each child is unique and we recognize the importance of individual differences.
- We believe in the dignity and worth of each person.
- We believe each child can become an independent, creative thinker.
- We believe a love of learning is basic to lifelong learning.

Kindergarten should provide a place where:

- Children experience a planned, child-centered environment that encourages learning through exploration and discovery.
- All the activities are planned to promote a positive self-image and attitude toward school and peers.
- The mental and physical well-being of each child is of paramount importance.
- Different levels of ability and development are expected, valued, and accepted - therefore, children have access to multi-level experiences and activities of varying degrees of complexity.
- Children learn there is often more than one right answer. Divergent thinking is developed and encouraged through the use of open-ended materials and many informal conversations among the children and with adults.
- Play is respected for its value as an appropriate way to learn for children of this age.
- The children's own language, experiences, and stages of development form the basis of reading and writing activities.
- Children learn to enjoy books and to appreciate literary language through a daily story time, creative dramatics, and repeated opportunities to hear and learn simple rhymes and other poems.
- Children develop mathematical understanding through the use of familiar manipulatives such as blocks, counters, and other concrete materials.
- Children's curiosity about natural, familiar elements form the basis of scientific observations, experimentation, and conclusions. Both planned and spontaneous interaction with real objects such as plants, animals, rocks, soil, water, etc. is considered to be essential.
- Children participate in daily, planned activities fostering both gross and fine-motor development, including such activities as running, jumping, bouncing balls, playing with clay, cutting with scissors, etc.
- Experimentation, enjoyment, and appreciation of varied forms of music are encouraged on a daily basis.
- Many forms of art expression are encouraged through the use of a wide assortment of media integrated within the daily curriculum. The final product is never as important as the process of creating.

Kindergarten readiness is...

A child who listens

- \* to a story
- \* to an adult
- \* to his or her peers
- \* to directions without interrupting

A child who speaks

- \* in complete sentences
- \* to ask for help
- \* to tell a story
- \* to express his or her needs
- \* and can be understood by others

A child who can

- \* work and play independently
- \* transition from one activity to another
- \* follow 2 or 3 step directions
- \* listen attentively to a 10-15 minute lesson
- \* give the main idea of a story

A child who shares

- \* with an adult
- \* with another child
- \* and waits for his or her turn
- \* and works in a small group

A child who can

- \* dress himself or herself
- \* use the toilet independently
- \* eat using proper manners
- \* clean up after himself or herself
- \* run, jump, skip, and bounce a ball

A child who has the following academic skills

- \* identifies body parts
- \* knows basic positional concepts  
(in/out, up/down, front/back, etc.)
- \* knows the basic colors and shapes
- \* holds pencil/crayon correctly
- \* can copy shapes
- \* communicates ideas through drawing and writing
- \* recognizes and writes his or her first name
- \* looks at books and pretends to read
- \* recognizes common environmental signs and sounds
- \* recognizes most uppercase letters
- \* recognizes some lowercase letters
- \* knows the difference between numbers and letters
- \* recognizes and can say the numbers 1-10

## QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL

### **What are the hours of attendance for kindergarten?**

8:00-2:55 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday  
8:00-1:55 Wednesday

Please make sure your child arrives at school on time. Please be prompt when picking your child up at dismissal time. Teachers will escort children to the door and make sure that all children are safely picked up by a parent or appointed caretaker.

Please inform your child's teacher about who will be picking your child up after school each day. Please send a note to school if your arrangements for pick up changes at any time during the school year.

### **What should I do if my child will be absent or tardy?**

If your child will be absent or tardy, you must notify the school office.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will send her/him to the office. You will be contacted at home or work if the illness or injury requires that your child go home. Please make sure that the office has current home and work phone numbers so that you can be reached in an emergency.

### **What kinds of clothing should my child wear to school?**

- Your child should wear comfortable clothing that allows him or her to move freely.
- Choose clothing that your child can manage easily on her/his own. Overalls and jumpsuits are not easily removed for the occasional bathroom emergency.
- Choose jackets and/or coats that your child can zip or fasten on

his/her own. Some practice time before winter arrives may be necessary.

- We will be painting, gluing, and playing outside so choose clothes that can be easily washed.

### **What kinds of shoes are best for kindergarten?**

- Sturdy shoes that slip on, tie, or fasten with zippers or Velcro are all appropriate for school. Sandals, clogs, or "Crocs" can be dangerous on the playground. If your child wears these to school, he or she should have gym shoes to change into for outdoor play.

- Boots may not be worn in the classroom, so when the weather outside requires boots, please send a pair of shoes for your child to wear in the classroom. A pair of shoes may be kept at school if that is more convenient.

- Gym shoes are required on days when the children have P.E.

### **What things can I do to help my child adjust to school?**

Bring your child to visit the school playground over the summer. Read books to your child about starting school. Have a positive, encouraging attitude about this upcoming change in your child's life. Listen to any worries or concerns that your child has, but reassure him or her that the teachers at school are there to help make sure everyone is safe and has fun. Focus on the positive things that will happen when kindergarten starts - the chance to make new friends and learn new things.

### **Will there be opportunities for parents to help at school?**

There are many ways that parents and guardians can help in the classroom. Often parents are invited to assist with learning activities (such as math stations or reading and writing centers). Parents can read books to the class or share a special hobby or interest. There are also things that parents can do from home to

help the teacher, such as putting together student books or cutting out shapes for math projects. Your child's teacher will give you more information on how you can be involved.

### **Are there report cards and parent-teacher conferences for kindergarten?**

Kindergarten students receive three report cards during the school year. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers at any time to discuss concerns or questions.

### **How does the lunch program work?**

A school lunch menu will be sent every month. Your child can purchase a school lunch every day or only when he or she chooses to do so. You can send a lunch from home, complete with a drink, or your child can bring a lunch and purchase only milk. More lunch information will be given out at each building before school starts.

### **What curriculum is used in kindergarten?**

Our district uses the Open Court reading series, the Everyday Math series, Delta science activities, and Handwriting Without Tears. More information will be provided at each school's curriculum night. Information on the curriculum can also be found on the District 97 website ([www.op97.org](http://www.op97.org)).

## **READING TO YOUR CHILD**

One of the most important gifts you can give a child is a love of reading and it is never too early to start. Interest in books is very important for success in school.

You can help by reading to your child as often as possible. When you read to your child, here are some tips to keep in mind.

- Show delight and enthusiasm as you read. Never turn reading into a chore.
- Try to read to your child every day.
- Find a time when you and your child are relaxed and interested in reading.
- Point to the pictures as you talk about them.
- Read or tell a familiar story and leave out words or parts of sentences for your child to fill in.
- Have your child dictate a story to you. Write it down and then read it to him or her.
- Let your child see you reading. This will help show that you think reading is important and fun.
- Your child will be bringing home small books from kindergarten to read to you. You might want to have a basket or box for these books so that your child can read them over and over again. Repeated reading builds confidence and improves fluency.
- Even when your child has learned to read, continue reading to him or her.

## KINDERGARTEN SUMMER READ-ALoud LIST - District 97

Anno, Mitsumasa  
Barrett, Judi

Brodecker, N.M.  
Burningham, John

Burton, Virginia

Cooney, Nancy Evans  
deBrunhoff, Jean  
dePaola, Tomie  
Ehlert, Lois  
Foreman, Michael  
Freeman, Don  
Grimm

Hague, Kathleen  
Hoban, Russell

Hutchins, Pat  
Hyman, Trina  
Johnson, Crockett  
Jonas, Ann  
Kellogg, Steven  
Kraus, Robert

Anno's Alphabet: An Adventure in Imagination  
Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing  
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs  
It's Raining said John Twainig  
Mr. Gumpy's Motor Car  
Mr. Gumpy's Outing  
The Little House  
Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel  
The Umbrella Day  
Babar  
Tomie dePaola's Mother Goose  
Planting a Rainbow  
Ben's Baby  
Corduroy  
The Shoemaker and the Elves  
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs  
Alphabears: an ABC book  
Bedtime for Frances  
Bread and Jam for Frances  
Don't Forget the Bacon  
Little Red Riding Hood  
Harold and the Purple Crayon  
Color Dance  
Can I Keep Him?  
The Carrot Seed

Marshall, James	Whose Mouse are You?
Mayer, Mercer	James Marshall's Mother Goose
McPhail, David	There's a Nightmare in my Closet
	The Bear's Toothache
	Pig Pig Rides
	Pig Pig Grows Up
Murphy, Jill	Five Minutes Peace
Peet, Bill	The Ant and the Elephant
Piper, Watty	The Little Engine that Could
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Peter Rabbit
Prelusky, Jack	Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young
Raffi	The Raffi Singable Songbook
Rey, H.A.	Curious George
Rice, Eve	Peter's Pockets
Rylant, Cynthia	The Relatives Came
Seuss, Dr.	If I Ran the Zoo
Udry, Janice	What Mary Jo Shared
Vipont, Elfrida	The Elephant and the Bad Baby
Waber, Bernard	The House on East 88 <sup>th</sup> Street
Watanabe, Shigeo	How Do I Put It On?
	I'm the King of the Castle
Wildsmith, Brian	Brian Wildsmith's Mother Goose
Williams, Vera	Cherries and Cherry Pits
Zion, Gene	Harry and the Dirty Dog
Zolotow, Charlotte	William's Doll

After hearing these books read aloud several times, many kindergartners will be able to "read" them on their own. Let them make up their own story for the wordless books.

Aliki	Hush Little Baby
Araugo, Jose	Look What I Can Do
Baer, Gene	Thump, Thump, Rat-a-Tat-Tat
Bang, Molly	Ten Nine Eight
Benjamin, Alan	Rat-a-Tat, Pitter Pat
Carle, Eric	Do You Want to be My Friend?
Crews, Donald	Freight Train
	School Bus
	Truck
Day, Alexandra	Carl Goes Shopping
dePaola, Tomie	Pancakes for Breakfast
Ehlert, Lois	Eating the Alphabet
	Growing Vegetable Soup
Gibbons, Gail	Tool Box
Ginsburg, Mirra	The Chick and the Duckling
Gloor, Ron and Nancy	Signs
Hamsa, Bobbie	Fast Draw Freddie
Hoban, Tana	Count and See
	I Read Signs
	I Read Symbols
Hutchins, Pat	Rosie's Walk
Jones, Carol	Old MacDonald Had a Farm

Kalin, Robert  
Keats, Ezra Jack  
Kredenser, Gail and  
Stanley Mack

Langstaff, John  
Lobel, Arnold  
MacKissack, Pat  
Maestro, B and G  
Martin, Bill, Jr.

Martin, Rafe  
Mayer, Mercer  
Quackenbush, R.  
Shaw, Nancy  
Spier, Peter

Tafari, Nancy

Turkle, Brinton  
Willoughby, Alana  
Zemach, Margot  
Zimmerman, H.W.

Jump, Frog, Jump!  
Dreams  
One Dancing Drum

Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go  
On Market Street  
Messy Bessy  
Busy Day: A Book of Action Words  
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?  
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom  
Will's Mammoth  
A Boy, A Dog, and a Frog  
She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain  
Sheep on a Jeep  
Crash! Bang! Boom!  
Rain  
Do Not Disturb  
Early Morning in the Barn  
Deep in the Forest  
Boots  
Little Red Hen  
Henny Penny