



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ABCs of Kindergarten



www.pps.net/departments/kindergarten
(503) 916-2000

Notes

Series of horizontal blue lines for writing notes.



Dear Kindergarten Families,

Congratulations! You and your child are starting an exciting and important adventure: kindergarten.

This booklet will help you prepare for kindergarten in Portland Public Schools. If you have additional questions, please visit or call your neighborhood school.

To have a strong start to school, I encourage you and your child to read together every day and to help your child have great attendance in school. We look forward to welcoming your kindergartner—and to a great year.

Carole Smith

Carole Smith
Superintendent, Portland Public Schools

PPS Directory

Before and After School Care for information about on-site child care programs, 503-916-3230, www.pps.net and search for Child Care.

Early Learner programs for information about Head Start, preschools and pre-kindergarten go to www.pps.net and search for Early Learner programs.

Enrollment and Transfer Center for information about school choice and your neighborhood school, 503-916-3205, www.pps.net and search for Enrollment and Transfer Center.

English as a Second Language for support to children whose home language is not English, 503-916-6525, www.pps.net and search for ESL.

Funded Programs for information about home visiting programs, free pre-kindergarten programs, migrant education and homeless services, 503-916-3789, www.pps.net and search for Funded Programs.

Head Start for information about free preschool programs to support low-income families, 503-916-5724, www.pps.net and search for Head Start.

Nutrition Services for information about school meals, 503-916-3399, www.pps.net and search for Nutrition Services.

School and Family Partnerships for information about family resources, 503-916-5234, www.pps.net and search for School and Family Partnerships.

Special Education for evaluations and services, 503-916-3152, www.pps.net and search for Special Education.

SUN Community Schools for information about SUN services such as referrals, extended day programming and after school meals, 503-916-3086, www.pps.net and search for SUN.

Transportation Services for information about school bus services, 503-916-6901 or www.pps.net and search for Transportation. Routes are listed on the webpage.

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In kindergarten, your child will:

- Make new friends and learn about the world around them.
- Talk and write about their ideas.
- Learn about letters, sounds, words, and books.
- Learn about numbers, shapes, patterns and size.
- Explore reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

READINESS IDEA

To get ready for school, talk together about everything – feelings about school and friends, books, and things you see and do. Children are naturally curious and excited about learning.

The week before school starts

You will be invited to a family meeting with your child's teacher. Your child will also take a brief assessment. To make the most of this meeting:

- Discuss what you and your child should expect on the first day of school.
- Ask the teacher to point out your child's cubby and where he/she will sit.
- Ask the teacher the best way to communicate and how the teacher should communicate with you.
- Explain any health or developmental issues that the teacher should know about
- Encourage your child to ask the teacher questions.
- With your child, locate the bathroom and cafeteria, and don't forget to play on the playground. Students feel comfortable on the first day of kindergarten if they can see it beforehand.

Have a great first day of school!



Calendar of Kindergarten Events and Get-ready Tips

Mark your calendar with these reminders as you count down the days to kindergarten.

February/March

- Attend your school's Connect to Kindergarten
- School choice application process

April

- Get involved at your school now! Call the school to learn about volunteer opportunities, school events, and parent meetings such as the PTA.

May

- Register for before- or after-school child care. Contact your school or visit the child care website by going to www.pps.net and searching for "Child Care".
- Contact the school and ask when teacher assignments, supply lists, and other information will be sent out.

June

- Before schools close for the summer (in late June), make sure you have registered your child for school and submitted all the necessary paperwork.
- Check with the Transportation Department to see if your child is eligible for bus service: 503-916-6901. If your child will be walking to school, practice the route.

July

- Sign your child up for a park preschool activity and library story times.
- Create a "school space" at home where your child keeps her backpack, books and supplies.

August

- Practice the school routine in the morning a few times this month to insure good attendance once school starts.
- Later in the month you will receive information from the school about the teacher, supplies, and the date of the kindergarten assessment.

Connect to Kindergarten Events and Registration

Connect to Kindergarten is a great opportunity for you and your child to learn about your school and its kindergarten program. Connect events are scheduled in the winter and spring. You will meet staff and parents, learn about the curriculum and classroom routines, and register your child for school. To see the Connect schedule, go to www.pps.net and search for Kindergarten or call your school.

READINESS IDEA

Exercise and count together! Hop 5 times. Jump 10 times. Skip 6 times. Clap 8 times. March 7 times.

If you are unable to attend Connect, you should register at your school by June 1. When you register, ask about school events that you can attend to help you and your child become familiar with the new school.

Here are the documents you will need to register for school:

- **Proof of age for your child.** A birth certificate or similar document will work.
- **Proof of home address.** Two or more documents are required. Examples include utility bills, cell phone bills or other bills to the home address. These must be recent, and the name on the bill must be of a parent/guardian of the student.
- **Immunization records.** To determine vaccination requirements for your child go to www.mesd.k12.or.us, Programs and Immunizations or call 503-257-1642.

Age requirements

Your child is eligible for kindergarten if he/she is 5 years old on or before September 1 of the enrolling school year.

Neighborhood school

To find your neighborhood school, go to www.pps.net, Schools and Find a School. Enter your address in the box or call 503-916-3205.



Good Attendance in Kindergarten Matters

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in school and life. You can promote good attendance when you:

- Establish and stick to the basic routines such as going to bed early and waking up on time.
- Talk to your child about why going to school every day is important unless he or she is sick. If your child seems reluctant to go to school, find out why and work with the teacher or administrator to get her excited about going to school.
- Develop back-up plans with family members, a neighbor or other parents to help you get your child to school if something comes up.
- Reach out for help if you are experiencing tough times that make it difficult to get your child to school. Other parents, your child's teacher, principal, afterschool providers or community agencies can help you connect to a needed resource.

READINESS IDEA

Help your child be a scientist! Collect some rocks. How are they the same? Different? Line them up from smallest to largest.



Support for Children with Special Needs

The PPS Special Education department provides a variety of supports for families of children under the age of five. If you think your child may have developmental delays, call 503-916-3426 to schedule a free evaluation. The Transition Team helps make the move to kindergarten easier for children eligible for a wide range of special education services and can also be contacted at 503-916-3426.

Talented and Gifted services

Students may become eligible for Talented and Gifted services (TAG) when they enter kindergarten, or at any time in their school career. Parents or teachers or any school staff member may nominate a child. Call your school principal or the TAG Office for more information: 503-916-3358 or go to www.pps.net and search for "Talented and Gifted".

READINESS IDEA

While reading together, talk about favorite parts, characters and/or interesting facts. Enjoy retelling the story in order — from beginning to end. Re-read your favorite books again and again.



Early Start to Kindergarten

Oregon law allows early entry to kindergarten for eligible children. If you believe your child should start school early and was born on or before October 1 of the enrolling year, contact the Talented and Gifted Office for an application at 503-916-3358.

School bell times

Most elementary and K-8 schools begin at 8 a.m. or 8:45 a.m. and end at 2:15 or 3:00 p.m. Visit the PPS website at www.pps.net and search for bell times at your school.

School meals

Your child can participate in the district's breakfast and lunch program or bring a lunch to school. For information on PPS Nutrition Services, including free and reduced-price meals and the online meal payment program, go to www.nutrition.pps.net. To learn about the school district's Wellness, Farm to School and school garden programs, go to www.pps.net and click on "eat. think. grow."



Kindergarten Readiness Skills

We asked kindergarten teachers to list the skills that help children feel confident and ready for school. These are skills that parents and caregivers can practice with children during the pre-kindergarten year.

- Ability to sit and listen for a short period of time, and wait for a turn.
- An interest in books: being read to, talking about the pictures and characters, and retelling the story.
- Experience in playing and sharing with other children.
- Experience using scissors to cut paper and crayons and pencils to write, draw and trace.
- An interest in counting objects like toys or rocks, noticing patterns (red sock, blue sock, red sock, blue sock), and sorting objects by size shape or color.
- A broad vocabulary built through positive, meaningful conversations and experiences.
- Ability to recognize letters of the alphabet, especially the letters in their name. Practice in writing their name.
- Independently takes care of personal needs such as toileting, washing hands, zipping, and buttoning.
- Ability to respect other's personal space and keep their body to themselves.
- Enjoys playing imaginary games such as playing store or house.
- Experience running, hopping, kicking or catching a ball.

A Typical School Day

Kindergarten classrooms are scheduled differently at schools. All kindergarten classrooms are six-hour, full day programs.

Here is a sample schedule:

- Morning Message
- Calendar
- Shared Reading
- Math
- Writers Workshop/Reading Groups
- Lunch and Recess
- Read-Aloud
- Stations: individual and group activities in 3 or 4 areas including literacy, math, science and social studies
- Other enriching aspects of the curriculum such as library, PE, music and art that are scheduled on a weekly or bi-weekly basis

READINESS IDEA

Talk about your child's feelings during the day: happy (when hugged), sad (when friends can't play). Talk about other children's feelings, too. When reading together, ask your child what the character in the story is feeling.



Additional Family Resources

Before and After School Programs

Most PPS elementary schools have on-site child care, offered by nonprofit, state-licensed providers. Child Care is fee-based and space is limited. Contact the child care provider for your school in the spring before your child starts school. For more information, go to pps.net and search for "Child Care" or call 503-916-3230.

In addition, many schools are SUN Community Schools. SUN develops and provides educational, recreational, and social and health services, transforming schools into community learning centers. Visit www.sunschools.org/mission.shtml.

Bus Transportation

PPS provides bus transportation for kindergartners living within their neighborhood school attendance boundary and located more than a mile from their neighborhood school. In most cases, the district does not provide bus service to children attending a non-neighborhood school. PPS does not require students in grades K-12 to be met at the "home" school bus stop. PPS does require Pre-Kindergarten students to be met at the "home" school bus stop. For information about PPS Student Transportation Guidelines, go to www.pps.net and search for "Transportation Department." Or call 503-916-6901

READINESS IDEA

Play "Do the opposite!" When you say "touch your head" your child should do the opposite and touch her toes. When you say "step forward" your child has to step backwards. Take turns being the caller and the responder. This helps children pause and think before acting – a great skill to practice before school!

A Short List of Favorite Read-Alouds from Multnomah County Library



- Actual Size** by Steve Jenkins
- Don't let the Pigeon Drive the Bus** by Mo Willems
- The Hula-Hoopin' Queen** by Thelma Lynne Godin
- I Am Going!** by Mo Willems
- The Lion and the Mouse** by Robert Pinkney
- Lissy's Friends** by Grace Lin
- Mix it Up** by Herve Tullet
- Moonshot** by Brian Floca
- Niño Wrestles the World** by Yuyi Morales
- The Nonsense Show** by Eric Carle
- Pete the Cat Rocking in My School Shoes** by Eric Litwin
- Rainbow Stew** by Cathryn Falwell
- Shapes, Shapes, Shapes** by Tana Hoban
- Shark vs. Train** by Chris Barton
- Squeak, Rumble, Whomp! Whomp! Whomp!** by Wynton Marsalis
- SuperHero ABC** by Bob McLeod
- What can you do with a rebozo?/
Que puedes hacer con un rebozo?**

Special Education

In kindergarten, your child's love of learning will continue in a formal way.

Your child may need individualized supports to foster his or her learning. Our special educators take pride in providing the supports children need to enjoy academic success.

If you have concerns regarding your child's overall development, communication skills, or behavior, you can arrange for an evaluation (at no cost to families) by calling the Multnomah Early Childhood Program and asking for "intake" at 503-261 5535.

If you would like to check on your child's readiness skills and access an online version of a screening tool, you can go to asqoregon.com. This screening tool is also available in most pediatric offices.

We are here to welcome and support you and your kindergartner. Below is a list of resources you may find helpful as you make this important transition.

Resources

- PPS Special Education,
Family & Community Coordinator. 503-916-3723
- PPS Special Education. 503-916-3426
- MECP. 503-261-5535
- FACT Oregon PTI. 1-888-988-3228
- ORFirst. 503-232-0302

Get Involved

Becoming an active part of your child's learning is one of the best decisions that you can make as a parent. Here are some ways to help your child succeed in school.

- Review all materials your child brings home from school.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and school open houses, and share what you know about your child.
- Challenge your child to do well in school; set high but reasonable expectations. Remember, mistakes are part of the learning process!
- Read, talk, sing, write and play with your child. All of these activities build your child's vocabulary in a fun and engaging way.
- Send your child to school on time, rested, well-fed and appropriately dressed. Make time to eat together.
- Be aware of the amount of television your child watches, and support other activities like reading or coloring. Limit electronic games to a certain time of day or the weekend.
- If your child is struggling, talk with the teacher early on.
- Show your child that you value learning by attending classes, writing and reading. Make sure she has quiet time for reading.

For more helpful tips and information about becoming more involved, go to www.pps.net and search for "Family Engagement" or call (503) 916-2000, Ext. 74225.



Tips for Helping Your Child Become a Reader

Talking, singing, reading, writing and playing are all activities that help children get ready to read. Here are some suggestions to help your child become a reader.

- Read in whatever language you know best.
- Every time you read with your child you help your child get ready to read. Even after your child becomes a reader, read aloud time is very important. Children love stories that are more complex than they can read themselves.
- During or after a story, ask your child questions like "what did you like about the story?" and "what do you think might happen next?" You can talk about the pictures with questions like "what do you see?" and "what do you think is happening?"
- Talking together helps children become readers. Tell family stories and stories about your day. Encourage your child to tell stories, too.
- Learning to read and learning to write happen together. Let your child use crayons, pencils, and markers to draw and write - even though they're still learning how.
- Minimize exposure to electronic media by setting limits, being a good role model, and keeping screens out of bedrooms. Children learn better and sleep better when their screen time is limited.
- Have fun! When children have fun with books they are excited to learn how to read.

READINESS IDEA

Take your child to the library to get a library card, have fun at story time, and learn about the Summer Reading game. Let your child choose books they find interesting. For more information about Multnomah County Library go online to multcolib.org or call 503-988-5234.