

ABCs of Kindergarten

pps.net/departments/kindergarten

503-916-3230

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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.

We look forward to welcoming your kindergartner — and to a great year.



Carole Smith
Superintendent, Portland Public Schools



In kindergarten, your children 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.

To get ready for school, encourage your child to be excited and curious about learning. Look for the “light bulb” for activities and ideas. For more information about kindergarten readiness, go to www.pps.net, click on “Departments,” then on “Kindergarten.”



Connect to Kindergarten and Registration

Connect to Kindergarten is a great opportunity for you and your child to learn about your school and its kindergarten program. Schools hold Connect to Kindergarten events in the winter and spring to introduce families to their new school. At the event you'll tour the school, meet the staff, learn about the curriculum and register your child for school. To see the Connect to Kindergarten schedule, go online to the Kindergarten page or call your school.

If you are unable to attend your school's Connect to Kindergarten, you should still register for school by June 1. Here are the documents you will need to register:

- **Proof of age for your child.** A birth certificate or similar document will work.
- **Proof of home address.** We require two or more documents such as 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, click "Programs," then "Immunizations" or call 503-257-1642.

READINESS IDEAS

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



If your family's home language is not English, please call the school to schedule an appointment to register. The school will want to make sure an interpreter in your language is available.

When you register, ask about school events that you can attend to meet other parents and the staff, and to help your child become familiar with his or her new school environment.

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 determine your neighborhood school, go to www.pps.net. Click on "Schools" and then "Find a School." Enter your address in the box or call 503-916-3205.

READINESS IDEAS



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



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. At the top of the list was learning how to be independent and how to make friends and be a friend to others. Being familiar with and excited about books and counting objects also ranked high.

Kindergarten Readiness Skills

- 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 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 pretending or imaginary games such as playing store or playing house.
- Experience running, hopping, kicking or catching a ball.

Preparing for the First Day of School

In most schools, kindergartners start school a week after the school year begins. There are lots of ways to prepare your child for the first day of school. Here are just a few tips:



- Start your child's school-night routine at least two weeks before school starts to allow everyone time to adjust to an earlier bedtime and wake-up time.
- Have your child get plenty of rest the night before school starts.
- Make sure your child has time to eat a healthy breakfast, either at school or at home.
- Be calm and relaxed and positive about school. Your child will pick up on your mood!
- Stash a change of clothing in your child's backpack, just in case.
- When it's time for school to begin, give your child a happy, confident goodbye. Reassure your child that you will return. Don't linger.

Preparing for success in school

- Talk positively about kindergarten and school.
- Read aloud to your child for at least 20 minutes each day. Afterward, discuss the story with your child.
- Talk and listen to your child about his or her thoughts and feelings about school.
- Make paper and crayons available around the house to encourage writing and drawing.
- Point out numbers and letters everywhere — on the bus, at the store, at the doctor's office, on a walk.
- Help your child follow simple instructions: "Please get your coat and meet me in the car."

- Have a family plan for getting your child to school on time every day. Establish an early bed-time, set the alarm clock, post the bus schedule on the refrigerator, and allow time for the unexpected. Having great attendance in kindergarten will prepare your child to do well academically throughout the school year.

More readiness tips are posted online at www.pps.net/departments/kindergarten.

A typical school day for kindergarten

Kindergarten classrooms are scheduled differently at schools. Here's a sample:

- 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 IDEAS

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.



Special Education

Welcome to kindergarten! Your baby is a big kid now. It's time for your child's love of learning to continue in a formal way. All of the building blocks for lifelong learning and a productive future await your child.

Your little one 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.

Please reach out to your Portland Special Education PTA and your PPS family support person. We are here to welcome and support you and your kindergartner.

Resources

Contact: *PPS Family & Community Liaison*
Phone: 503-916-3723

Contact: *SEPTAP President*
Phone: 503-810-5192

Contact: *MECP*
Phone: 503-261-5535

Contact: *PPS Special Education*
Phone: 503-916-3426

Kindergarten Questions & Answers

What if my child was born after September 1 but seems ready for 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.

My child has or may have special educational or physical needs. How can I get help?

The PPS Early Childhood Transition Team helps make the move to kindergarten easier for children eligible for a wide range of special education services. For help, contact the Integrated Student Support Department at 503-916-3152.

Can kindergarten students participate in the Talented and Gifted Program?

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. TAG brochures, a parent handbook and nomination forms are available in the school office or on the Portland Public Schools Web site at www.pps.net/district/depts/tag. Call your school principal or the TAG Office for more information: 503-916-3358.

READINESS IDEAS

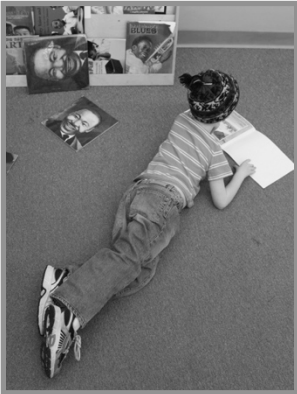
Create with your child an “All About Me and My Family” book. Staple or tie a few sheets of paper together to make the book.



Involve your child in adding personal information such as first and last name, parent and sibling names, child’s gender, age, address, and likes and dislikes. Your child can make a cover and decorate the book.



I work until 5:30 p.m. Are there after-school programs for my child?



Most PPS elementary schools have on-site before- and after-school care, offered by nonprofit, state-licensed providers. For more information, go to pps.net, “Departments” and “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

Can my child take the bus to and from school?

Generally, PPS provides bus transportation for kindergartners living 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 unless they are enrolled through special education. PPS does not require most students in grades K-12 to be met at the “home” school bus stop. For information, go to www.pps.net, click on “Departments,” then on “Transportation Department.” Or call 503-916-6901.



When does school start and end?



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, go to “Families” and “New to PPS” to find out the bell time at your school.

How do I sign up for meals at school?

Your child can participate in the district's breakfast program, and full-day kindergartners can either buy lunch 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."



READINESS IDEAS



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.



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. Be understanding of mistakes.
- Read, talk and encourage writing with your child every day.
- 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. Get help before your child falls behind.
- Show your child that you value learning by attending classes, writing and reading. Make sure she has quiet time for reading.
- Volunteer. Help your child's teachers in the classroom. Join the school Site Council, PTA or other parent group.



For more helpful tips and information about becoming more involved, go to www.familyengagement.pps.net or call the PPS Program Director for Family Engagement at 503-916-5234

Tips for reading aloud to children

Talking with and reading aloud to children are two important activities leading to early success in school.

- Make time for reading every day.
- Choose books with interesting words and engaging illustrations or photographs.
- Ask your child to predict what might happen next as the story develops.
- After reading the story, have your child talk about favorite parts and/or pictures. Always encourage your child to tell the “why” of his/her thinking.
- Have fun reading together!

Take your child to the library and learn about Storytime and the Summer Reading program. It’s a great way to get children excited about books. For more information about the Multnomah County Library, go to www.multcolib.org and then “Events” and “Storytimes,” or call 503-988-5408.

READINESS IDEAS

Go to the library and help your young student get a library card. For more information, go online to www.multcolib.org



A Short List of Our Favorite Read-Alouds



"Eliza's Kindergarten Surprise" by Alice B. McGinty



"Pete the Cat Rocking in my School Shoes" by Eric Litwin



"When Sophie Gets Angry" by Molly Bang



"A Snowy Day" by Ezra Jack Keats



"A Place Called Kindergarten" by Jessica Harper



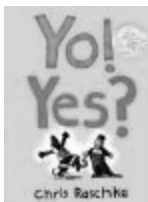
"Zig-Zag: Zoems for Zindergarten" by Loris Lesynski



"The Bus Stop" by Janet Morgan Stoeke



"Where are you Going Manyoni?" by Catherine Stock



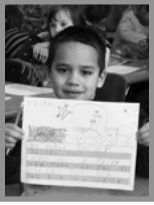
"Yo! Yes?" by Chris Raschka



"Kitten's First Full Moon" by Kevin Henke

Calendar of kindergarten events and get-ready tips

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



February

Attend your school's Connect to Kindergarten and other school events (call the school for scheduled dates) or go to pps.net, click "Departments" and "Kindergarten."

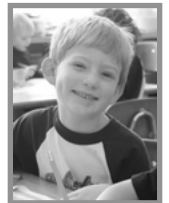
February/March

If you are interested in exploring school options, you must submit a school choice form by the deadline — typically early March. For exact deadlines and to access forms go to the school or www.schoolchoice.pps.net.



April

- If you missed Connect to Kindergarten, you can still go to the school and register. When you register, ask the school if you could arrange for a parent volunteer to give you and your child a tour of the school.
- Get involved at your school now! Call the school to learn about volunteer opportunities, school events, and parent meetings such as the PTA.



May

- If you need before- or after-school child care, contact your school or visit www.pps.net/departments/childcare.
- Contact the school and ask when teacher assignments, supply lists, and other information will be sent out.



June

- Before school closes (in late June), make sure you have registered your child for school and submitted all the necessary paperwork.
- Check with the Portland Public Schools 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.
- Once school is out, go to the school and have your child “practice recess” by playing on the playground.

July

- Arrange for your child to play with other children his/her age.
- Sign your child up for a park preschool activity and library storytimes.
- Build a positive attitude about school in the home. Talk about your fun memories of school with your child.

READINESS IDEAS

Practice counting with your child: people on the bus, stairs, socks, plates at the table, and windows.



August

- Help your child draw a picture and/or write a letter to his or her new teacher. The picture or letter can tell the teacher what your child likes to do, what your child is looking forward to about school and what your child is curious about.
- Practice the school routine in the morning a few times this month. This includes getting your child up at the necessary time, eating breakfast, walking to school or to the bus stop, and walking right up to the school door.
- Later in the month you will receive information from the school about the teacher, supplies, and the date of the kindergarten assessment. The assessment is given by the teacher, and is a great opportunity for your child to meet the teacher before the first day of school.



September

During the week before school starts, you will attend the kindergarten assessment with your child. Here are some tips 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 with him/her 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.

