



# Kindergarten FAQ

## **GET SET FOR SCHOOL!**

### **How do I know if my child is ready for kindergarten?**

If your child has attended preschool, talk with his/her teacher.

### **What is my child expected to know and what should my child be able to do when entering kindergarten?**

Westerville City Schools has prepared a listing of ways you can help your child prepare to begin school (included in the kindergarten packet). The Ohio Department of Education also has prepared a booklet that will give you a sample of some of the things your child should experience before entering kindergarten. Preschool Learning includes helpful tips and activities you can use that will be helpful to your child before entering into kindergarten.

### **Am I allowed to come in and observe kindergarten classrooms this year to get an idea of the classroom setting?**

Yes, you may visit classrooms; however there are a few conditions: you must schedule the visit through the principal, the visit will last no more than 30 minutes, the principal chooses the classroom you visit, you cannot bring your child along, the teacher is not to be disturbed (they are teaching, not conferencing), and no more than one visitor is allowed per "visit".

### **If my child is younger than the cut-off, can I have him/her tested to enroll?**

Typically, children must turn five years old before September 30 to enroll in kindergarten for the coming school year. However, children who turn five between October 1 and December 31 can be considered for under age admission upon meeting the criteria set. In such instances, the child is evaluated to measure his or her maturity to do satisfactory work in

kindergarten. Children identified as being academically, socially and emotionally prepared for school may enroll in kindergarten early if recommended to do so by the Gifted Education Department of Westerville City Schools.

### **May I wait to enroll my child in kindergarten until he is six?**

Yes, state law requires compulsory attendance of children between the ages of 6 and 18.

### **My child has little or no school setting experience. Is there something I can do to help prepare him/her for school?**

Yes, Westerville City Schools offers a Kindergarten Readiness Camp to help give your child a head start for next year. The camp is offered during summer break. Specific information will be in the kindergarten registration packet.

## **REGISTRATION PROCESS**

### **Is kindergarten required?**

Yes, Ohio Revised Code 3321.01 specifies a child must successfully complete kindergarten. The kindergarten requirement may be waived in the case of a child who is at least six years of age by September 30 of the year of admittance and who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the committee that he/she possesses the social, emotional, and cognitive skills necessary for first grade.

### **How do I start the process?**

Our procedure for registration is designed to meet the needs of parents and to personalize this experience. Registration will be held using a two-step process described in the next column. Please call your building principal or the Enrollment and Family Resource Center at 797-7700 with any question regarding kindergarten registration. When

confirmed, the timeline for registration will be posted on the district website.

### **Step 1—Registration Packet Pick-Up**

- Pick up a numbered registration packet at your home school\*\*\*, and
- Sign-up for an individual registration appointment to register your child at the Enrollment and Family Resource Center, 300 Polaris Parkway, Suite 3200 (inside the OhioHealth Medial Building).

*\*\*\*Westerville City Schools is currently in the process of realigning the attendance boundaries for its elementary schools, including creating a new attendance area to serve Kindergarten through Grade 5 at a combined Emerson/Hanby Elementary School. For the purposes of Kindergarten Packet Pick-up, please report to your currently assigned home school according to the address at which you reside. You will be notified in April if your home school is changed based on the boundary realignment.*

### **Step 2—Individual Registration Appointments**

- Keep your appointment, and bring your completed registration packet!

Your school will determine a date for the Parent Orientation Meeting and it will be in a letter sent to your home during the first week of August. It will also indicate whether your child will attend the AM or PM session, your child's "Gentle Start" assessment date and time, and the name of your child's teacher.

### **Should I bring my child with me for Kindergarten Packet Pickup?**

No, packet pick-up is strictly for the purpose of setting your registration appointment and picking

up materials. There is no opportunity at this time for the parent or child to tour the facility or meet teachers.

### **What is the birthday cut-off for entering Kindergarten?**

Children who are 5 years of age on or before September 30th of the current year are eligible to enroll in kindergarten.

### **Who can enroll in Westerville City Schools?**

In order for your child to attend Westerville City Schools, you must be a resident of the school district.

### **Where can I get free immunizations for my child?**

Informational Immunization Handout included in the Kindergarten Packet.

### **Am I allowed to pick which school I want my child to attend?**

No, school district boundaries within the city school district will be established by the Superintendent. In establishing these boundaries, due consideration will be given to the capacity of buildings, size of classes, distances, topography, transportation and other pertinent factors. Students will attend the school in the school attendance area in which they reside, unless open enrollment is requested and approved.

### **May I apply for open enrollment in kindergarten?**

Yes, the Westerville City Schools Board of Education wishes to provide opportunities for students to attend schools other than those which they are geographically assigned. Therefore, the Board will permit students to apply for attendance at their school of choice based on criteria and guidelines established by the superintendent.

### **What school will my child attend?**

The best way to determine which school your child will attend is to contact either the Enrollment and Family Resource Center at 797-7700 or the Office of Transportation at 797-5950.

### **How do I know if I qualify for the Free & Reduced lunch and breakfast programs?**

The forms are available in the school offices.

### **What is the Parent Orientation Meeting, and should I bring my child?**

Parent Orientation is for the purpose of meeting the building principal and kindergarten classroom teachers, reviewing building procedures, distribution and quick review of the student handbook, and an overview of curriculum. Your child should not attend this meeting.

## **SCHEDULING & TRANSPORTATION**

### **What are the starting and ending times for the AM and PM kindergarten sessions?**

Current times:

AM—9:05 a.m.—11:35 a.m.

PM—1:00 p.m.—3:30 p.m.

Parents will be informed of any changes

### **Am I allowed to request AM or PM?**

Requests for AM or PM sessions may be made at the time of registration. While every effort is made to accommodate your request, it may not be possible based upon enrollment numbers and transportation schedules. AM and PM sessions are determined by our Transportation Department because of bus scheduling. Decisions are based on many factors including the number of students in your building who walk or ride. Other determining factors can include enrollment in neighboring schools. A letter will be sent to your home during the first week of August indicating whether your child will attend the AM or PM session, your child's teacher,

and your child's assessment date/time.

### **How will I learn about bus routing?**

Bus transportation schedules are available on our district's website, posted at each of the elementary schools, or by calling Transportation at 797-5950. Post cards are mailed to the home immediately prior to the start of school with bus numbers and schedules.

### **When do I know whether my child will be in the AM or PM session?**

A letter is sent to your home during the first week of August.

### **Can my child attend for a full day instead of a half-day?**

We do not offer full-day kindergarten. Kindergarten classes throughout the district are all on a half-day schedule.

## **THE JOURNEY BEGINS**

### **Does the assessment determine if my child will attend kindergarten? Can my child fail the assessment?**

The scheduled kindergarten "Gentle Start" assessment, performed during the first week of school, is used to help the teacher assess your child's current levels of understanding in math, reading, and writing; and to determine motor skills. This will enable the teacher to determine proper strategies for instructing your child. All children of school age will be admitted to kindergarten.

### **What if my child needs special services (Speech & Hearing, LD, etc.)?**

If you know, or suspect, your child has a disability, contact Westerville City Schools' Special Education office at 614-797-5900.

### **How do I determine if my child is gifted?**

Though physical development is very similar, gifted preschoolers differ from their same age peers in the way they think and feel. This is referred to as asynchronous development. Recognizing giftedness allows the young child

to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and enthusiasm for learning. Eight areas where a gifted child may exhibit differences as described by the National Association of Gifted Children ([www.nac.org](http://www.nac.org)) are: curiosity, memory, learning, attention, reasoning/critical thinking, vocabulary, sense of humor, and fluency/creativity/perspective... Families, teachers, and caregivers should be aware of:

- Intense personalities,
- Hypersensitivity on many levels (welfare for humans, environment, animals and justice),
- Issues of perfectionism and organizational extremes, and
- The child's need to feel normal at sometimes detrimental costs.

Children should be allowed to follow interests, provided with added opportunities, and loved for who they are, not what they can do. The Ohio Association of Gifted Children ([www.oagc.com](http://www.oagc.com)) and "Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom (ages 4-9)" by J. F. Smutny, S.Y. Walker, and E.A. Mechstroth can be helpful resources for more information on the young gifted learner.

### **May I attend school with my child the first few days?**

No, however you will be given the opportunity to attend part of your child's "Gentle Start" assessment/orientation day.

### **What school supplies will my child need?**

You will receive a copy of supplies needed during Parent Orientation.

### **How much are fees for kindergarten students, how are they determined, and how are they used?**

Student fees cover the costs of math consumable support materials, handwriting workbooks, and general instructional materials such as record keeping folders, art supplies (clay, paper, paste, paint), science supplies, math supplies (straws, yarn, graph paper, transparencies), printer cartridges and other technology-related consumable supplies.

Fees for the upcoming year are posted on the district website.

### **What kinds of things will my child learn?**

The Ohio academic content standards define what your child should know and be able to do at every grade level.

### **Do the students receive grades and/or report cards?**

Westerville City Schools has aligned our elementary progress reports with the academic content standards. Currently kindergarten progress is indicated using check marks to show how well a student has attained the listed performance objectives: general development, listening, speaking, reading, handwriting, math readiness, science, social studies, and health.

### **May I volunteer in my child's classroom?**

Westerville City Schools welcomes volunteer participation. Volunteers provide needed assistance at all levels of district programming and serve as excellent resources to enrich the lives of our students. Volunteers may be assigned to assist in school activities and programs without recompense.

### **Do you offer before- and after-school childcare?**

Though the school district does not offer a traditional "latchkey" program, there is a school age child care program, YWCA Kids Place, available before and after school through the YWCA in all of our elementary schools (not in the Magnet schools). This is a fee-based program that operates independently from the school district. For more information, call the YWCA at (614) 224-9121, ext. 271.

### **Will someone make sure my child gets on the right bus?**

Measures are in place in every building to make certain new students board the proper busses, including teachers and volunteers who walk students to their bus, bus numbers indicated on student nametags, and assistance from older students.

