



GETTING READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Great Falls Public Schools

Great Falls, MT

WELCOME!

Welcome to Great Falls Public Schools Kindergarten Program! Your “little one” is not so little anymore. The years fly by, and before you realize it, your “toddler” is ready for that tremendously important first year of school.

The learning that takes place, while it doesn’t show up as books read, sentences written, or number problems worked out, is nevertheless a real and necessary part of the continuing experience of education.

Mutual understanding and close cooperation between parent and school are important, of course, at every grade level. This cooperation and understanding, however, is absolutely essential to the success of the kindergarten year – and can have profound influence on a student’s attitude and achievement in future years.

We want you to know that we share your interest and your concerns. Your youngster’s success is the school’s purpose and goal, just as it is yours. Kindergarten helps the child to become well-adjusted and to be prepared to learn and achieve up to his/her capabilities. With your help, we are confident that this can be accomplished.

IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

When determining school readiness, there are several factors to consider. The age of five is not necessarily a magic number. Neither is a high intelligence or advanced reading ability a guarantee of readiness! Your child’s kindergarten teacher will be assessing your child carefully during the first few weeks of school. Indications of readiness which will be considered are listed in the next column:



Can the child:

- concentrate on one task for a given time?
- follow directions?
- play cooperatively?
- separate easily from parents?
- demonstrate self-control?
- adjust to changes in routine?
- demonstrate adequate motor skills?
- take care of toileting independently?

CONTENTS

READINESS/READING READINESS	2
WHAT MY CHILD WILL LEARN	2-3
IMPORTANT INFORMATION	3-4
HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD	5
TIPS FOR PARENTS	6

Our Kindergarten program is planned to develop readiness for school. Social and emotional adjustments are made first. Emphasis is then given to developing interest in reading. This interest is stimulated and developed by building up meaningful concepts through first-hand experience and direct observation, and the provision of interesting contacts with books and reading experiences.

During the kindergarten year, a well-organized pattern of learning takes place which logically could be called the first phase of reading instruction. Your child will:

- be exposed to a great number of books to increase the child's interest and foster a desire to read;
- become aware of the purpose of printed letters and words;
- learn to follow sequences of ideas;
- identify sounds in words;
- identify letters of the alphabet and their sounds;
- learn to interpret pictures;
- retell a story in sequence;
- learn to categorize; begin to read many environmental words and common sight words;
- use phonetic spelling when writing



WHAT WILL MY CHILD LEARN IN KINDERGARTEN?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/READING:

Kindergartners spend a major portion of their day involved in communication arts experiences. Emphasis is placed on developing reading and comprehension, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing.

Reading: Your child will understand print concepts, retell stories with detail, recognize types of text, and have discussions about reading.

Writing: Your child will learn how to draw, dictate and write to share ideas, explore writing tools, and participate in shared writing.

Listening and Speaking: Your child will learn how to listen to others, take turns speaking, ask and answer questions; speak to express ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Handwriting: Your child will use hands on activities to get ready for handwriting. They will learn posture, positioning and placement. Students will learn basic capital and lowercase letter formation, as well as how to write numbers.

TECHNOLOGY:

Kindergartners will explore and use a variety of digital tools appropriately to create group projects and to communicate ideas.

MATH:

Building an understanding of basic concepts and laying the foundation for the development of basic skills is the focus of the mathematics program at the kindergarten level. The activity-based program includes counting and cardinality, geometry, measurement, algebraic thinking and number sense.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

Kindergartners develop social skills through experiences centered around required unit topics. Children will develop an awareness of one's unique role and that of others in the family, the classroom, and the community; to respect one's flag and country; to develop a wholesome attitude as a member of a group; to identify the four seasons and the various traditions of holidays.

SCIENCE:

Kindergarten children develop investigative science skills and content through hands-on experience. Students will investigate interesting questions in ways mirroring how science is done in the real world.

ART AND MUSIC:

Kindergartners are encouraged to develop individual creativity through visual means. Students learn to use art materials, create works of art, respond to and analyze works of art and understand art influences.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/ HEALTH:

Kindergartners will develop muscular coordination, learn to release emotions in wholesome play, and learn the importance of health and safety. Kindergartners are encouraged to share, take turns, be courteous, and respect rights and properties of others. They will learn to be aware of personal health, dental care, safety, and nutrition.

ARRIVAL-DISMISSAL:

School starting time is at 8:25 a.m. Dismissal is at 3:20 p.m. on M-T-TH-F and at 2:40 p.m. on Wednesdays. **Please do not bring children to school before 8:10, as there is no outside supervision prior to that time.**

If you plan to pick up your child from school, please be prompt. (If your child walks home, he/she should be instructed to go directly on his/her way – no loitering or playing on the playground is permitted after dismissal.) It would probably be advisable for you to meet your child after school for the first week or so, in order to insure his/her safety home until he/she becomes familiar with the proper route. Parents who plan to pick up their children should make certain they arrive promptly at dismissal time. This is particularly important in cold weather. You may pick up your child at the kindergarten entrance of their school building. If someone else is picking up your child, please send a note. If you are going to be late, please make advance arrangements for someone else to pick up your child, then call the school and let us know your arrangements.

ATTENDANCE:

Regular attendance is very important! Whenever your child is going to be absent, please call the school and let them know. If we do not hear from you, we will make every effort to contact you as soon as possible after school begins. Please make sure we have your correct work number and also an emergency number of someone who knows your child.



BIRTHDAY PARTIES:

It is permissible for a child to bring treats from home for class members on his/her birthday. We suggest that you keep these treats simple. Those having birthdays not on school days may celebrate their birthday at another time designated by the teacher.

CARE OF CLOTHING AND LABELING:

It will prevent the loss of outer clothing if parents will write the child's name into his/her sweater, coat, hat, boots, etc. We hope that all boots will be large enough to slip on easily. Each child should be able to put on and take off his/her own outer clothing and boots.

CONFERENCES:

We will be scheduling conferences twice during the year. However, feel free to visit with us about your child if you have concerns. If we feel that your child has a particular problem in school or at home which influences his/her behavior and well-being at school, we will contact you.

HEALTH PROBLEMS:

If your child has any special health problems, it is essential that you let us know on the first day of school so that we may be aware of it.

HOME AND SCHOOL RELATIONS:

Parents are most welcome visitors! Please notify the teacher if you would like to visit your child's classroom. The first weeks of school constitute an important period of adjustment for your child – the transition from home to school – and he/she will make a more satisfactory adjustment if the teacher can have the opportunity of working alone with him/her during this period of training. If your child is upset because of something that has happened in school or at home, be sure to notify the teacher so that she/he is aware of the situation.

ILLNESS:

Parents are encouraged to keep ill children at home. Any child with a cold, earache, toothache, elevated temperature, rash, etc., should be kept home and under care of a doctor.

Chicken Pox - excluded one week and thereafter until all lesions have been encrusted.

German Measles - excluded three days.

Measles - excluded one week.

Mumps - excluded one week until swelling of salivary glands has subsided.

Medications: It is a policy that the secretary or any member of the faculty cannot administer medication at school. In special cases, where medication must be taken at school, the parents need to send written instructions to the school. In the case of prescription medications, instructions for administering the medication need to be written by a doctor. Forms are available in the office for this. The office staff, not faculty, administers medications.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA):

Parents/guardians are cordially invited to join and participate in the PTA. PTA provides the opportunity for teachers and parents to get together. These meetings will be held periodically throughout the year at your elementary school. We hope you will attend.

ROOM HELPERS:

If any of you are interested in being a room helper, please contact your child's teacher. Room helpers assist in planning kindergarten activities throughout the year and help-out whenever necessary.

WEDNESDAY ENVELOPES:

Each Wednesday, your child will be bringing home a "Wednesday Envelope" which holds important notes from the school, as well as the papers your child has completed for the week. Please read all notes carefully and go over your child's papers with him/her. It is important that your child's envelope be returned on Thursday, as we re-use the envelopes. These must last for the entire year, so please take care that they are not misplaced or damaged unnecessarily. If an envelope is lost or ruined, please notify the teacher.

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD:

- **READ TO YOUR CHILD ON A DAILY BASIS!**
Encourage an interest in stories and books. Talk about the story and pictures. Visit the public library with your child.
- Encourage your child to share in family responsibilities. Encourage your child to do simple household tasks, put away toys, etc.
- Take your child on trips to explore the wonders of nature. Encourage your youngster to bring interesting items to school.
- Be enthusiastic about your child's artistic efforts. Display them. Provide materials for art activities at home. Encourage singing and other music experiences.
- Help your child to write his/her name beginning with a capital letter and using lower case letters to finish. We will be sending home a sample of the D'Nealian alphabet with which your child will be learning to write his/her name. Help him/her to recognize the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet.
- Count objects with your child. Talk about the importance of numbers, time, measurement, and money.
- Encourage good health habits, pointing out the importance of diet, cleanliness, and proper rest. Suggest safety procedures. Stress the mandatory seat belt law and use the crosswalks in front of the school.
- Set time limits for and monitor your child's use of technology.
- Help your child demonstrate care for and appropriately use digital tools.
- You can help develop good habits at home, which will help your child at school. Encourage participation in family discussions; encourage proper enunciation and correct grammar. LISTEN when your child talks to you.
- Please take time to talk to your child about his/her school day and to go through schoolwork together. Share your enthusiasm and excitement by praising his or her efforts and progress. Your interest and attitude is of concern to your child. Make it known that what happens in the classroom is of the greatest importance.


**HELP YOUR CHILD GET OFF TO A GOOD START EACH DAY!**

Here are some suggestions:

- Be consistent with bed times and meal times; ten to twelve hours of sleep is recommended for children this age.
- Eat a balanced, healthy diet; including a good breakfast.
- Help your child get up in plenty of time for school so he or she does not have to hurry and is wide-awake when school starts.
- Please have your child-dress appropriately for the weather. Schedules sometimes change and children need to be prepared for outside play at all times. Children are happier when they are wearing neat, clean, and comfortable clothes and shoes appropriate for school activities.
- Arrive at school at the proper time, and pick up your child on time after the school day is over.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Here are some suggestions:

- Know the school calendar—which days your child will be in or out of school.
 - Label all articles of clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks, and any other school items. Be sure snow boots are large enough.
 - Return all forms requested by the teacher or school. Send a written excuse or call the school when your child will be absent or tardy. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!**
 - If your child brings money to school, place it in a sealed envelope with his or her name, the teacher's name and room number on it, and what the money is for.
- 
- Feel free to consult with the teacher on a regular basis.
 - We are looking forward to working with your child—and with you. We can all contribute to this most important endeavor.