



Welcome to Kindergarten!

Philosophy of Learning in Kindergarten

The Kindergarten year is an exciting and important time in children's development. By working together, teachers and families provide challenging and engaging learning experiences that will build children's confidence, develop positive views of learning and provide a strong foundation for their intellectual, social and physical development.

In the St. James-Assiniboia School Division, we believe:

- Each child is unique and has individual needs. Children develop through similar stages but at different rates and in different ways.
- Young children come to Kindergarten from diverse backgrounds and with varied experiences.
- Young children are naturally curious and eager to learn. Their learning is enhanced by interactions with others, including children and adults, as well as the environment.
- Young children learn through play. Through play in Kindergarten, children explore and experiment with their environment to add to their knowledge, learn new skills and practise familiar ones. Current brain research confirms that opportunities for children to learn through play helps the development of the brain.
- Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Parents and teachers work as partners to support learning both at home and at school.



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What will you see in a Kindergarten Classroom?

A Kindergarten classroom can usually be recognized by the way it looks and sounds: bright, happy, and many busy voices at play! Since play is the work of children, most classrooms have a variety of learning centers to facilitate play and learning.

Here are some of the areas that may make up a Kindergarten classroom:

- Dramatic play - an area that may be used for imaginative play with props, puppets and dress-up clothes
- Building- blocks of various shapes and sizes and manipulative toys for children to design, create and build
- Art - painting, drawing and creating with a variety of materials for children to explore and express their feelings.
- Games - puzzles and games for children to share, think and problem solve
- Sand and Water - cups, spoons, funnels and other tools for children to measure, create and solve problems
- Discovery- materials such as seeds, plants and objects from nature for children to observe and investigate
- Library and Listening - a wide variety of books for reading and CD's for listening
- Music - instruments and materials for children to express their feelings and simply enjoy listening to music
- Writing - paper, pencils, markers, crayons for children to express their thoughts and ideas

How Do Young People Learn?

From birth, children learn and develop by:

- touching
- tasting
- doing
- hearing
- seeing
- moving
- smelling

Children need to explore, experiment and manipulate with real objects. Play is an important and valuable way that children learn. It provides the opportunity for active learning where children are interested and engaged. There is a lot going on beyond what you may notice at a glance. At play, children are:

- clarifying ideas
- experimenting with their environment
- learning new things
- practising familiar skills
- learning how to handle their feelings
- learning how to get along with others
- learning the skills of self-regulation (ie. how to wait their turn, follow directions)
- problem solving
- developing their imagination and creativity

There is much research to back up the link between play and learning, especially in the areas of problem solving, language learning, literacy, numeracy and social skills. Play is a vehicle for learning and has a legitimate and integral role in Kindergarten.

Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

Kindergarten teachers seek to help children reach their full potential in all areas of development: social, emotional, intellectual, physical and creative. These areas of development are inter-related and make up the 'whole' child. Children move through stages of development at their own rate. Within the Kindergarten classroom there can be a wide range of stages of development.

The following are descriptors of each of the stages of development. Teachers will be reporting on each of these in the Kindergarten report card. The descriptors are typical of most 4 and 5 year olds.

Social and Emotional Development

Kindergarten children are making friends with children their own age, and are learning to share, cooperate and play in groups. They are learning to express their feelings and needs in appropriate ways. Young children are beginning to find ways to resolve conflicts and solve problems. They are able to follow directions more easily and are ready to take on (continued)

more responsibility and independence. During the Kindergarten year, children make choices, carry out plans and can accept learning challenges.

Literacy Development

Most young children love to talk, and their hearing and speaking vocabularies are growing. They develop their ability to stay on topic, take turns in a conversation and respond appropriately to questions. They begin to express their ideas in pictures and writing and respond to reading and viewing in a variety of ways. Their concepts of early literacy skills (rhyming, letter and sound knowledge) are developing.

Numeracy Development

Kindergarten children bring with them a knowledge of mathematics, which they have developed through their curiosity about the physical world. They understand many concepts from their daily experiences with manipulating objects (eg. fitting different sizes and shapes of blocks together), making observations/comparisons (“This pail holds more sand than yours”), and asking questions (“Who got more crackers?”). During the Kindergarten year, children will attempt to apply what they know about numeracy into classroom situations.

Creative Expression and Artistic Development

Young children use a variety of materials to explore, experiment and create. They can talk about what they have created as they seek to express their ideas and feelings. Music, dance and movement often happen spontaneously. Often the process of creating is more important to children than the end product.

Physical Development

Kindergarten children have better control of their large muscles than of their small muscles. They are developing their use of small materials, such as writing tools, scissors and shoelaces. They are increasing their ability to control and coordinate movements, such as throwing, kicking and catching a ball. Young children are full of energy, and may have difficulty sitting still for long periods of time. They start to consider the safety of self and others.

Awareness of Self and Environment

Kindergarten children are curious about the world around them and ask many questions. They start to wonder about scientific concepts and use their five senses to explore and investigate concepts using sand, water, blocks and other materials. They begin to recognize familiar places and people in the community around them, as well as the contributions people

make to the community. Young children start to see their place in the world around them and are learning to value and respect diversity.

Assessment is a natural, ongoing and important part of daily learning. In order to help children grow and develop, teachers must know each child’s level of skill and understanding. Kindergarten teachers spend much time talking to children, asking questions, listening to the language they use and observing their behaviour in a variety of settings.

Teachers will collect learning evidence through observations, conversations and student-created products in order to build a complete picture of your child’s learning progress. They will gather learning evidence by using a combination of descriptive notes, checklists, photographs and videos. In Kindergarten, your child will also begin to develop an understanding of self-assessments in relation to their participation in learning and/or the creation of their personal work products. Items such as artwork, writing samples, work samples, photographs or videos may be compiled over the course of the year in a portfolio or e-portfolio (electronic portfolio).

It is important to note that children are not compared to one another. All of the above information is used to build your child’s learning profile, identifying where they are at in their development. The learning profile will provide the teacher with the information needed to plan for the most appropriate learning experiences to meet the needs of each child.

The Kindergarten report card will be issued in November, March and June. Parents are invited to talk with their child’s teacher at any time about their child’s progress and achievements, in order to celebrate and support their learning at home.



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The Home - School Partnership

The Kindergarten year is where the partnership between home and school begins. We welcome you to be involved in your child's schooling! For example, parents can share their expertise and skills with the class, help organize activities or school functions, help on field trips or prepare materials at home.

Parents have an important role in supporting their child's development. Here are some ways you can help your child make the most of their Kindergarten year.

- Talk to the teacher and ask how you can support your child at home every day. For example, by reading to your child every day, playing with your child and providing opportunities for them to make decisions and solve problems.
- Show an interest in your child's learning by asking what your child learned at the activity centers.
- Celebrate and encourage early attempts at writing and reading.
- Attend information meetings and other events organized for parents and families.
- Speak to your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns about your child's school experience.



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