The District 97 Kindergarten Handbook
Dear Kindergarten Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to District 97 kindergarten. We are looking forward to working with you and your child/children.

We have prepared this handbook to answer some of the questions you may have about your child’s entrance to kindergarten. We hope it will help you make a smooth transition to school.

Sincerely,

The Kindergarten Team
of District 97
KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY

Kindergarten offers the opportunity to lay the foundation for a love of learning, a sense of self worth, respect for others, and the development of critical thinking skills.

We recognize that a child’s development of attitudes, habits, capabilities, and skills begins long before entering a formal educational program. The kindergarten curriculum builds upon this foundation and provides additional experiences that will enhance learning.

An effective kindergarten program involves parents and school personnel working cooperatively to build a partnership between home and school that will support the child throughout the school experience.

We hold these convictions:

• We believe each child is unique and we recognize the importance of individual differences.

• We believe in the dignity and worth of each person.

• We believe each child can become an independent, creative thinker.

• We believe a love of learning is basic to lifelong learning.
Kindergarten should provide a place where:

- Children experience a planned, child-centered environment that encourages learning through exploration and discovery.
- All the activities are planned to promote a positive self-image and attitude toward school and peers.
- The mental and physical well-being of each child is of paramount importance.
- Different levels of ability and development are expected, valued, and accepted - therefore, children have access to multi-level experiences and activities of varying degrees of complexity.
- Children learn there is often more than one right answer. Divergent thinking is developed and encouraged through the use of open-ended materials and many informal conversations among the children and with adults.
- Play is respected for its value as an appropriate way to learn for children of this age.
- The children’s own language, experiences, and stages of development form the basis of reading and writing activities.
- Children learn to enjoy books and to appreciate literary language through a daily story time, creative dramatics, and repeated opportunities to hear and learn simple rhymes and other poems.
- Children develop mathematical understanding through the use of familiar manipulatives such as blocks, counters, and other concrete materials.
- Children’s curiosity about natural, familiar elements form the basis of scientific observations, experimentation, and conclusions. Both planned and spontaneous interaction with real objects such as plants, animals, rocks, soil, water, etc. is considered to be essential.
- Children participate in daily, planned activities fostering both gross and fine-motor development, including such activities as running, jumping, bouncing balls, playing with clay, cutting with scissors, etc.
- Experimentation, enjoyment, and appreciation of varied forms of music are encouraged on a daily basis.
- Many forms of art expression are encouraged through the use of a wide assortment of media integrated within the daily curriculum. The final product is never as important as the process of creating.
Kindergarten readiness is...

A child who listens
* to a story
* to an adult
* to his or her peers
* to directions without interrupting

A child who speaks
* in complete sentences
* to ask for help
* to tell a story
* to express his or her needs
* and can be understood by others

A child who can
* work and play independently
* transition from one activity to another
* follow 2 or 3 step directions
* listen attentively to a 10-15 minute lesson
* give the main idea of a story

A child who shares
* with an adult
* with another child
* and waits for his or her turn
* and works in a small group
A child who can
* dress himself or herself
* use the toilet independently
* eat using proper manners
* clean up after himself or herself
* run, jump, skip, and bounce a ball

A child who has the following academic skills
* identifies body parts
* knows basic positional concepts
  (in/out, up/down, front/back, etc.)
* knows the basic colors and shapes
* holds pencil/crayon correctly
* can copy shapes
* communicates ideas through drawing and writing
* recognizes and writes his or her first name
* looks at books and pretends to read
* recognizes common environmental signs and sounds
* recognizes most uppercase letters
* recognizes some lowercase letters
* knows the difference between numbers and letters
* recognizes and can say the numbers 1-10
QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL

What are the hours of attendance for kindergarten?

8:00-2:55 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
8:00-1:55 Wednesday

Please make sure your child arrives at school on time. Please be prompt when picking your child up at dismissal time. Teachers will escort children to the door and make sure that all children are safely picked up by a parent or appointed caretaker. Please inform your child's teacher about who will be picking your child up after school each day. Please send a note to school if your arrangements for pick up changes at any time during the school year.

What should I do if my child will be absent or tardy?

If your child will be absent or tardy, you must notify the school office.
If your child becomes ill at school, we will send her/him to the office. You will be contacted at home or work if the illness or injury requires that your child go home. Please make sure that the office has current home and work phone numbers so that you can be reached in an emergency.

What kinds of clothing should my child wear to school?

- Your child should wear comfortable clothing that allows him or her to move freely.
- Choose clothing that your child can manage easily on her/his own. Overalls and jumpsuits are not easily removed for the occasional bathroom emergency.
- Choose jackets and/or coats that your child can zip or fasten on
his/her own. Some practice time before winter arrives may be necessary.
- We will be painting, gluing, and playing outside so choose clothes that can be easily washed.

**What kinds of shoes are best for kindergarten?**

- Sturdy shoes that slip on, tie, or fasten with zippers or Velcro are all appropriate for school. Sandals, clogs, or “Crocs” can be dangerous on the playground. If your child wears these to school, he or she should have gym shoes to change into for outdoor play.
- Boots may not be worn in the classroom, so when the weather outside requires boots, please send a pair of shoes for your child to wear in the classroom. A pair of shoes may be kept at school if that is more convenient.
- Gym shoes are required on days when the children have P.E.

**What things can I do to help my child adjust to school?**

Bring your child to visit the school playground over the summer. Read books to your child about starting school. Have a positive, encouraging attitude about this upcoming change in your child’s life. Listen to any worries or concerns that your child has, but reassure him or her that the teachers at school are there to help make sure everyone is safe and has fun. Focus on the positive things that will happen when kindergarten starts - the chance to make new friends and learn new things.

**Will there be opportunities for parents to help at school?**

There are many ways that parents and guardians can help in the classroom. Often parents are invited to assist with learning activities (such as math stations or reading and writing centers). Parents can read books to the class or share a special hobby or interest. There are also things that parents can do from home to
help the teacher, such as putting together student books or cutting out shapes for math projects. Your child’s teacher will give you more information on how you can be involved.

**Are there report cards and parent-teacher conferences for kindergarten?**

Kindergarten students receive three report cards during the school year. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers at any time to discuss concerns or questions.

**How does the lunch program work?**

A school lunch menu will be sent every month. Your child can purchase a school lunch every day or only when he or she chooses to do so. You can send a lunch from home, complete with a drink, or your child can bring a lunch and purchase only milk. More lunch information will be given out at each building before school starts.

**What curriculum is used in kindergarten?**

Our district uses the Open Court reading series, the Everyday Math series, Delta science activities, and Handwriting Without Tears. More information will be provided at each school’s curriculum night. Information on the curriculum can also be found on the District 97 website ([www.op97.org](http://www.op97.org)).

**READING TO YOUR CHILD**

One of the most important gifts you can give a child is a love of reading and it is never too early to start. Interest in books is very important for success in school. You can help by reading to your child as often as possible. When you read to your child, here are some tips to keep in mind.
• Show delight and enthusiasm as you read. Never turn reading into a chore.
• Try to read to your child every day.
• Find a time when you and your child are relaxed and interested in reading.
• Point to the pictures as you talk about them.
• Read or tell a familiar story and leave out words or parts of sentences for your child to fill in.
• Have your child dictate a story to you. Write it down and then read it to him or her.
• Let your child see you reading. This will help show that you think reading is important and fun.
• Your child will be bringing home small books from kindergarten to read to you. You might want to have a basket or box for these books so that your child can read them over and over again. Repeated reading builds confidence and improves fluency.
• Even when your child has learned to read, continue reading to him or her.

KINDERGARTEN SUMMER READ-ALOUD LIST - District 97

Anno, Mitsumasa                      Anno's Alphabet: An Adventure in Imagination
Barrett, Judi                         Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing
Brodecker, N.M.                       It's Raining said John Twaining
Burningham, John                      Mr. Gumpy's Motor Car
Burningham, John                      Mr. Gumpy's Outing
Burton, Virginia                      The Little House
Burnham, Nancy Evans                  The Umbrella Day
Brodecker, N.M.                       It's Raining said John Twaining
Burningham, John                      Mr. Gumpy's Motor Car
Burningham, John                      Mr. Gumpy's Outing
Burton, Virginia                      The Little House
Cooney, Nancy Evans                   The Umbrella Day
dePaola, Tomie                        Tomie dePaola's Mother Goose
Ehler, Lois                           Planting a Rainbow
Foreman, Michael                      Ben's Baby
Freeman, Don                           Corduroy
Grimm                                  The Shoemaker and the Elves
Hague, Kathleen                       Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
Hoban, Russell                        Alphabears: an ABC book
Hoban, Russell                        Bedtime for Frances
Hoban, Russell                        Bread and Jam for Frances
Hutchins, Pat                          Don't Forget the Bacon
Hyman, Trina                          Little Red Riding Hood
Johnson, Crockett                     Harold and the Purple Crayon
Jonas, Ann                             Color Dance
Kellogg, Steven                       Can I Keep Him?
Kraus, Robert                         The Carrot Seed
After hearing these books read aloud several times, many kindergartners will be able to “read” them on their own. Let them make up their own story for the wordless books.

Aliki
Araugo, Jose
Baer, Gene
Bang, Molly
Benjamin, Alan
Carle, Eric
Crews, Donald
Day, Alexandra
dePaola, Tomie
Ehlert, Lois
Gibbons, Gail
Ginsburg, Mirra
Gloor, Ron and Nancy
Hamsa, Bobbie
Hoban, Tana
Hutchins, Pat
Jones, Carol

Hush Little Baby
Look What I Can Do
Thump, Thump, Rat-a-Tat-Tat
Ten Nine Eight
Rat-a-Tat, Pitter Pat
Do You Want to be My Friend?
Freight Train
School Bus
Truck
Carl Goes Shopping
Pancakes for Breakfast
Eating the Alphabet
Growing Vegetable Soup
Tool Box
The Chick and the Duckling
Signs
Fast Draw Freddie
Count and See
I Read Signs
I Read Symbols
Rosie’s Walk
Old MacDonald Had a Farm
Kalin, Robert
Keats, Ezra Jack
Kredenser, Gail and Stanley Mack
Langstaff, John
Lobel, Arnold
MacKissack, Pat
Maestro, B and G
Martin, Bill, Jr.
Martin, Rafe
Mayer, Mercer
Quackenbush, R.
Shaw, Nancy
Spier, Peter
Tafuri, Nancy
Turkle, Brinton
Willoughby, Alana
Zemach, Margot
Zimmerman, H.W.

Jump, Frog, Jump!
Dreams
One Dancing Drum
Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go
On Market Street
Messy Bessy
Busy Day: A Book of Action Words
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom
Will’s Mammoth
A Boy, A Dog, and a Frog
She’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain
Sheep on a Jeep
Crash! Bang! Boom!
Rain
Do Not Disturb
Early Morning in the Barn
Deep in the Forest
Boots
Little Red Hen
Henny Penny