Get Ready for Kindergarten

WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN!

Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) has one of the best kindergarten programs in the nation. Our kindergarten classrooms are full of rich learning opportunities that will broaden your child’s horizons and prepare him or her for first grade. We share with you and your child the excitement of taking this big step on a lifelong educational journey.

Kindergarten is an exciting time for your child. This guide will provide you with an overview of the kindergarten program, and important information regarding your child’s development and education as your child begins his or her scholastic years. Remember, your interest and involvement in your child’s education will instill a positive attitude toward learning and promote academic achievement.

Should you have any questions about MNPS or our kindergarten program, please contact your child’s school principal or visit our website at www.mnps.org.
Kindergarten is an important part of the pre-k - 12 educational program. MNPS offers full day kindergarten classes for 5-year-olds. Research shows that children are higher achievers when family members take an active role in their education. Your child’s teacher will provide your family with opportunities to be involved in the classroom throughout the year.

Kindergarten classrooms in MNPS implement Tennessee State Standards. To learn more about standards taught in kindergarten, please visit the Academics section at www.mnps.org. Please read this information, as it will help you understand what is being taught and why.

The kindergarten program is a developmental program, which means teachers and school staff participate in research-based, ongoing professional development to ensure all instructional activities are designed to meet the needs of children appropriate to their individual stages of development. The curriculum is designed for children to actively construct an understanding of their world through continuous experiences within a positive classroom environment. The kindergarten program integrates the teaching of:

Kindergarten students experience a literacy-based curriculum that incorporates a variety of multi-sensory approaches to learning in the areas of reading, writing and word study. Experiences in art, music and physical education are also provided.

The assessment of children’s needs through daily observations, as well as formal and informal evaluation, is ongoing and serves as the basis for kindergarten instruction. This information also helps the classroom teacher plan lessons. Your child’s teacher will send home regular reports about how your child is doing in school. You will receive a notice from the school announcing the day during the year that is set aside for parent-teacher conferences. Teachers are also happy to schedule meetings with individual parents at other times as needed. Should you have any additional questions about the kindergarten program, please contact The Family Information Center at 615-259-INF0 (4636) or familyinfo@mnps.org.
Important Information

1. SCHOOL HOURS
   To learn the opening and closing time for your child’s school visit the MNPS home page at www.mnps.org under “Schools” to find your child’s school. Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school. It is important to establish good attendance habits for your child, which includes arriving and leaving on time each day, and minimizing absences. For information on your child’s classroom schedule, please contact your child’s school.

2. BREAKFAST/LUNCHES
   The Office of Nutrition Services offers healthy, nutritious meals for breakfast and lunch every school day. Information on nutrition is included in the School Parent/Student Handbook distributed at the beginning of the school year or on the MNPS website at www.mnpsnutritionservices.org.

3. MEDICATION/SPECIAL CARE NEEDS
   Medication should be taken to school by parents or guardians. All medication, prescribed and over-the-counter, should be accompanied by a written physician’s order and parent’s signature. Contact your child’s school for the policy on administering medicine to children. Parents are asked to contact the school principal if a child has any special nursing care needs that should be provided during school hours. Examples of this include catheterization, blood sugar monitoring, and seizure precautions. The nurse will facilitate and coordinate arrangements for meeting these needs, along with parent and physician collaboration and input.

4. NOTIFICATION PROCESS OF SCHOOL CLOSING OR CANCELLATIONS
   If schools are closed or cancelled due to an emergency, inclement weather, or any other condition that may affect the safety of children and staff, an official notice will be posted on the district website, www.mnps.org, along with notification to local television and radio stations. Depending on the situation, the district may also issue an automated call to families. If you do not have access to our website, you may call the Family Information Center at (615) 259-4636 for the most current information on school openings or closings.

5. STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOKS
   A Student-Parent Handbook is distributed to all students during the first week of school. In this handbook, you will find helpful information about breakfast and lunch programs, school counseling services, homework, parent/teacher conferences, procedures to follow for school emergencies, closings and cancellations, student conduct, and reporting student progress. The Student-Parent Handbook can be found by visiting the Parents and Students section at www.mnps.org.
STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM

Tennessee State academic standards are implemented beginning in kindergarten. Families are encouraged to read information about what their child should learn in kindergarten found in the Academics section at www.mnps.org.

BEFORE AND AFTER CARE SERVICES

There are many options for before and after care programs to extend your child’s educational experience beyond school hours. Programs and providers vary by school. A complete roster of before and after care providers by location can be found on the Before and After Care section on www.mnps.org.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

We define family engagement as a partnership between families and educators that supports student learning. Collaboration includes building and maintaining trusting relationships, academic partnering, and on-going communication between educators and families. We encourage families to communicate regularly with teachers and staff regarding the instruction, intervention, achievement, behavior, and needs of their children. In addition, schools will communicate kindergarten expectations and provide frequent updates on your child’s academic and behavioral progress including successes, challenges, and growth towards goals. Families also have the opportunity to participate in school and district learning opportunities to support their children’s education. For information on the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) contact your child’s school. More information on family engagement can be found visiting the Parents and Students section on www.mnps.org.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

In accordance with Tennessee State Law and Child Find, our schools strive to provide every child with exactly the kind of learning environment they need.

The purpose of Child Find is to identify, locate, and evaluate those who need special education and related services. A Support Team (S-Team) is a team of school personnel who provide behavioral, social, emotional, academic, and attendance support for your child. The team will determine what resources are needed in order for a child to be successful in the learning environment. A child referred for an S-Team intervention is not necessarily being referred for special education. However, this team may function as an intermediate step between recognition of a problem and formal referral of the child for a comprehensive evaluation.

MNPS is devoted to making sure that every student receives the help that they need. For this reason, we see to it that each student through special education services has an Individual Education Program (IEP) that addresses their needs and is tailored to their abilities. A student’s IEP will serve as a point of reference for all of our team members that interact with them. We ensure that every student has an IEP based on present levels of educational performance, as instructionally appropriate. Service can be provided at student’s school of zone or choice. Information on special education services be found by visiting the Academic Programs section of www.mnps.org.
**ENCORE (GIFTED SERVICES)**

The MNPS Encore Program offers an instructional experience designed specifically for intellectually gifted and academically talented learners. The curriculum is hands-on, interactive, and problem-based with a focus on developing students’ critical and creative thinking abilities. Instruction is interdisciplinary and aligned with Tennessee content standards. The MNPS Encore Program values the creative, emotional, and social needs of a diverse population of gifted and academically talented students through the engagement of a rigorous curriculum.

Encore classes are available for grades K-8 at every MNPS elementary and middle school — for FREE! Students must be identified as intellectually gifted or academically talented in order to qualify for the Encore program. Information on Encore can be found by visiting the Gifted and Talented section of [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org).

**SCHOOL UNIFORMS & SUPPLIES**

Please visit [schools.mnps.org](http://schools.mnps.org) to find your child’s school to access specific information pertaining to information on school uniforms and supplies. If you have additional questions, families can also contact the Family Information Center at (615) 259-4636 or [familyinfo@mnps.org](mailto:familyinfo@mnps.org).

**FAMILY PORTAL**

The MNPS Family Portal gives families access to the classroom at their fingertips. Connected directly to the district’s student management system, Infinite Campus, the Family Portal provides real-time information about grades, assignments, attendance, discipline and much more.

The Family Portal allows for better communication between teachers and families through emails and mobile alerts. Teachers will be able to send messages to individual parents or groups of parents. Schools will be able to post important news and announcements for all of their families to see. Access the family portal at [www.mnps.org/familyportal](http://www.mnps.org/familyportal).

**ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL) PROGRAM**

All students whose first language is not English must be assessed for English proficiency. If a student is not proficient, English language services must be offered. The EL Office serves as a central contact for the registration and assessment of potential EL students. The EL Office is mandated by the Bilingual Act of 1988 to assess your child’s language skills to help to ensure he or she has the English skills needed to be fully prepared for Kindergarten learning.

Once a child has been assessed and qualifies for the EL program, parents or legal guardians may accept EL services or can decide to waive the EL Program by signing a waiver form.

Schools also provide non-English speaking parents with interpreters whenever possible. There is a procedure in place that allows for schools to provide interpreters for parents. If you need assistance at a meeting and a interpreter is not in attendance, please ask the school to contact the EL Office to arrange services for you.
Riding the Bus to School

Bus transportation is provided to and from school for children enrolled in Metro Nashville Public Schools who live 1.25 miles from their zoned school. School personnel will assist you with determining if your child is eligible to ride the bus to school. Bus route information can be accessed through www.mnps.org/transportation or families can call the Family Information Center at (615) 259-4636 for assistance.

The MNPS Transportation Department will mail bus route information to parents one week prior to school starting if your child is registered for Metro Nashville Public Schools. A parent or designee should accompany each child to and from the school bus stop. It is recommended that your child arrive at the bus stop no earlier than ten minutes before regular pick-up.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

As a parent, you can help ensure your child arrives to and from school safely each day by practicing the following school safety tips:

- Be sure your child arrives at his or her bus stop 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- When the bus approaches, remind your child to stand at least five giant steps away from the curb and line up away from the bus.
- Remind your child that he or she should never run after the school bus if it has already left the bus stop.
- Remind your child that he or she should never run in front or behind the school bus to pick up something he or she dropped or forgot.
- Make sure you tell your child never to get on the bus until it has completely stopped.
- Remind your child to take firm hold of the handrail to get onto the bus after the bus stops and the door opens.
- Students should never push another student while getting on or off the bus.
- All students riding the bus should go directly to a seat and sit quietly. This allows the bus driver to concentrate on driving safely.
- Students should never place any part of their body through the bus window.
- When outside of the bus, make sure your child is aware of the danger zones and is always within sight of the bus driver. The Danger Zone is a 10-foot wide area on all sides of a school bus – an area where children are in the most danger of being hit. Children should be taught to stay 10 feet away from a school bus (or as far away as they can) and never go behind it. They should be told to take five giant steps in front of the bus before crossing so the driver can see them clearly.
Reading With **Your Child**

Reading aloud is one of the most important experiences you can give your child. Reading aloud with your child increases vocabulary, builds story understanding and encourages a love of reading. Four and five-year olds enjoy listening to all kinds of books. Stories read to them should be short with attractive illustrations.

No matter what book you read to your child, here are a few things to remember:

- Choose books that you and your child enjoy! If you start a book and decide it’s not for you, it’s OK to put it down and try a different one.
- Read with expression. Make sound effects, do different voices for characters—whatever makes it fun for you and your child!
- Make it interactive! Are there words or phrases that get repeated? Have your child join in.
- Identify words in the book that are new to your child and discuss them.
- Read the pictures. Did you know you can read a book without ever reading the words? Look at the pictures and have your child tell you the story they see. You can help them out by asking questions like, “What’s happening here?” “What do you see?” or “What do you think will happen next?”
- Talk about the book. The story doesn’t have to end on the last page! Talk about what you read. What did you like? What didn’t you like? Can you connect what you read to your life?

**SUGGESTED AUTHORS & TITLES**

- *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams
- *Ben’s Trumpet* by Rachel Isadora
- *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey
- *Bread and Jam for Frances* by Russell Hoban, Illustrated by Lillian Hoban
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault, Illustrated by Lois Ehlert
- *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell
- *Doctor De Soto* by William Steig
- *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell, Illustrated by Helen Oxenibery
- *Freight Train* by Donald Crews
- *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret W. Brown, Illustrated by Clement Hurd
• **Happy Birthday, Moon** by Frank Asch

• **Harold and the Purple Crayon** by Crockett Johnson

• **Horton Hatches The Egg** by Dr. Seuss

• **If You Give a Mouse A Cookie** by Laura J. Numeroff, Illustrated by Felicia Bond

• **Julius** by Angela Johnson, Illustrated by Dav Pilkey

• **Komodo!** by Peter Sis

• **Little Blue and Little Yellow** by Leo Lionni

• **Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile** by Bernard Waber

• **Madeline** by Ludwig Bemelmans

• **Make Way for Ducklings** by Robert McCloskey

• **Miss Nelson Is Missing** by Harry Allard and James Marshall

• **Mouse Paint** by Ellen S. Walsh

• **Mr. Gumpy’s Outing** by John Burningham

• **Officer Buckle and Gloria** by Peggy Rathmann

• **Old Black Fly** by Jim Aylesworth, Illustrated by Stephen Gammell

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**REMEMBER!**

For other suggested reading, contact your child’s school or visit your local Nashville Public Library branch. You can apply for a free library card for your family. The library also provides family activities including puppet shows, reading times, and other fun events.
Countdown To Kindergarten

THE SUMMER BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS:

• Determine if you will need before and after care services. School can assist you in identifying services within or near your school.

• Read with your child every day and discuss whether the story is real or make-believe. Ask your child to predict what will happen.

• Talk with your child. Be sure your child can tell you what he or she wants rather than pointing or crying.

• Encourage your child to describe, answer and talk in complete sentences.

• Help your child to recognize the basic colors: red, yellow, blue, green.

• Give your child opportunities to use safety scissors, crayons and glue sticks.

• Talk with your child about objects. Discuss the size and shape of things. Help him or her to know that a puppy is small, a house is large, a tree is tall, and a shrub is short. Talk about the round ball, the square table, and the corners of the sandwich.

• Write simple notes to your child.

• Emphasize responsibility with your child. Teach him or her to dress for play, school, or bedtime; to put away clothing and sort toys.

• Teach your child to respect the toys and belongings of other children.

• Talk with your child about qualities to look for in friends and qualities to be wary of in strangers.

• Discuss with your child all the good things he or she will experience in the coming year.

• Practice counting objects from one to 20: cookies, pennies, pebbles, crayons. Ask your child to bring you two spoons, one apple, and four books. Help your child learn to recognize numerals one to ten.

• Help your child to begin recognizing the alphabet, both capital and lowercase letters.

• Visit your local library to check out books to read with your child and attend their summer programs.

VISIT OUR KINDERGARTEN READINESS WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES AT WWW.ITRAILS.ORG
DURING THE WEEKS BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS:

- Continue to discuss with your child all the good things he or she will experience in school.
- If your child is walking to school, help your child learn his or her way to school. Be sure to practice all safety rules along the way.
- Discuss with your child the plans for before and after care.
- Make arrangements to visit your child’s school with him or her prior to the first day.
- Establish a bedtime to ensure your child receives the proper amount of rest he or she requires to have the energy needed for a full day of kindergarten.
- Monitor and limit your child’s television viewing and use of electronic devices. Assist your child in selecting programs or apps that present appropriate ideas, behaviors and attitudes.

THE DAY BEFORE SCHOOL:

- Help your child select his or her clothing for the first day of school.
- Review with your child the way he or she is to go home or to after care.
- Discuss with your child who to contact in an emergency. Be sure he or she knows more than one person who can be called in an emergency.

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:

- Help your child adjust easily and quickly by NOT staying with him/her on the first few days.
- Discuss the importance of always sharing notices and messages from his or her teacher.
- At the end of the day, ask your child to name two things he or she did in school.
- Speak enthusiastically about school to provide additional encouragement for your child to feel confident about the next day of school.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AND YOUR CHILD ON THEIR FIRST DAY OF KINDERVGARTEN!
METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MNPS) DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, RELIGION, CREED, GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, COLOR, AGE, AND/OR DISABILITY IN ADMISSION TO, ACCESS TO, OR OPERATION OF ITS PROGRAMS, SERVICES OR ACTIVITIES. MNPS DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE IN ITS HIRING OR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.

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