

# A Parent's Guide to Kindergarten



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Springfield Public Schools  
525 Mill Street  
Springfield, Oregon 97477  
Contact: 541-747-3331  
[www.springfield.k12.or.us](http://www.springfield.k12.or.us)

# Exciting Times!



Welcome to Springfield Public Schools! We welcome families from a variety of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Getting ready for kindergarten is a fun and exciting time for families. It can also be a little scary. Children, and parents, come to kindergarten with a variety of

experience and skill levels. This booklet is intended to give you an idea of what to expect and how you can help your child get ready.

## Building positive expectations

Take every opportunity to get to know your child's school and staff. Take your child to play at the playground, attend school events, and talk about school as being an exciting new time in life. Read books about starting school.

## Staying in touch

Communication between you, your school and your child's teacher is the key to success in school. You know your child best—let the teacher know if your child has any special needs, fears or talents.

If you have questions about what your child is doing in school, or how your child is doing, schedule a time to talk with the teacher.

Your school will work to make information available in your home language. Many schools have bilingual staff to help with communication.

## Parents as partners

Parental involvement is one of the best predictors of a child's success. You are your child's most important advocate, and your child's teacher is your partner in educating your child. Visit the classroom often, talk to the teacher, volunteer at school.

## Contact us

Please see the contact numbers at the back of this booklet.

# What to Know

As you get ready to send your precious child off into the world, here are some things to consider.

## When to come

Full-day kindergarten hours are the same as elementary hours. Check with your school.

## What to eat

Breakfast and nutritious hot lunch options are available every day. You can also choose to prepare a sack lunch. Milk will be available for purchase. Ask your school about options for payment or to find out if your family is eligible for free or reduced lunch.

## When they're sick

It's hard to learn if you're not in school. Children should go to school every day unless they are sick with something other than sniffles.

Sick children should stay home until they are better. Call the school to let them know if your child is home sick.



## How to get there

Kinders taking the bus will **not** be dropped off at their bus stop after school unless they are greeted by an authorized adult or accompanied by an authorized older sibling.

If your student is going to daycare after school, be sure the provider greets the child.

If walking or biking, kinders will need to be accompanied by an adult, and kinders will only be released to an authorized adult.

Check with your school for more information about walking groups, car pools or other options that might be available.

# Getting Ready to Enroll

Children who turn 5 on or before September 1 may be enrolled into kindergarten.

## Kindergarten Welcome and Registration events

Schools generally have events in the spring where prospective families can visit the school, meet the principal, get to know the staff and fill out required paperwork.

## What to Bring to Enroll

- **Proof of age:** Bring your child's birth certificate or hospital record showing date of birth to the school during registration.
- **Proof of identity:** Bring your photo ID (driver's license, state ID or passport) showing address.
- **Proof of address:** Bring 1 item from each category:
  - ◆ Valid rental/lease agreement, escrow papers or property tax bill
  - ◆ Current resident service bill such as electric, water, gas, garbage or cable bill (cell phone or other mail is not sufficient)
- **Proof of immunization:** Make sure your child's immunization records are up-to-date. Your doctor can provide the list of vaccinations your child has had. Students will need at least the first immunization in a series before school starts.

**All families are encouraged to attend welcome events even if they don't have all their paperwork.**

## Vision Testing

Students aged 7 and under are required to have their vision tested. The district may be able to provide this testing for free thanks to community partners. Check with your school. Please note that your child will not be withheld from school because of this requirement.

# Getting Ready to Enroll

## What to Do When You Visit

**Complete registration forms** for the school, including your pediatrician's name, emergency contact phone numbers and any special instructions about your child (allergies, etc.).

**Review transportation options.** Elementary students who live more than 1 mile from school are eligible for bus transportation. You must fill out the registration form to be assigned a route. Routes are determined and shared in late summer. You will be asked the names of any individuals who are authorized to pick up your child.

Families who live closer can get information about Safe Routes to School such as suggested routes, walking groups, bike routes, and carpool groups.

**Get information** about important programs, such as before- or after-school programs, school readiness options, summer Safety Town, Brattain House services for families in need, etc.

**Consider joining** your school's parent-teacher organization (PTA, PTO or Site Council).

## What to Ask

- Be sure you know the school's start and end times.
- If you plan to transport your child, learn the school's policies about drop-off and pick-up.
- Learn about school lunch options and payment.
- Review the school calendar and understand the notes about early release.
- Learn how the district makes decisions about closure or delay in bad weather and how to find out.
- Ask if the school has a newsletter or uses social media.
- Any other questions you might have!

# Checklist for the First Day

- All registration forms have been filled out, including bus form, if applicable.
- Your child has had at least the first immunization in each series.
- School supplies have been given to teacher (since kinder supplies are usually shared, there's no need to label unless asked).
- You've applied for free or reduced lunch or have deposited lunch money in your child's account.
- Your child's clothes and shoes are comfortable, safe to run and play in, and are appropriate for the weather.
- Lunchbox, backpack, coat have been labeled with your child's name.
- If your child has medicine that needs to be administered, it's been delivered to the school along with instructions.
- Your child has a basic understanding of what his or her schedule will look like.
- Arrangements have been made for an authorized person to pick up your child or be waiting at the bus stop.
- You've had "the talk" about not getting in cars with strangers.
- Your child knows what he or she will be doing at the end of the day and how to get there.



# A Day in Kindergarten

Kindergarten will provide a fun and engaging experience for your child to learn valuable social skills along with laying down important foundations for future learning.

Your child will be learning through discovery, exploration and active learning, including both structured and unstructured play.

In kindergarten, children will be:

- Learning good school habits like how to sit still, listen quietly, raise hands and respect boundaries.
- Learning how to work, play and share in large and small groups.
- Learning how to follow simple directions and solve problems.
- Building the skills in early reading and writing that students need for future success.
- Learning basic counting skills and developing deeper understanding of math and problem solving through hands-on experiences.
- Accessing a variety of opportunities in science and social studies, as they learn more about the world around them.
- Learning how to express themselves through oral communication, writing, art, music and physical activities.



# Language Arts



In kindergarten, your child will learn early literacy skills. These are the skills that children need in order to read well.

Students will learn the concepts of print (how books work), work with the sounds and syllables in spoken words, learn letter names and sounds, and blend sounds to read simple words.

Teachers and students will build vocabulary and comprehension through read-alouds, listening to others, and discussions. Students will also develop early writing skills, including drawing, printing letters, labeling, and writing about their world.

## ***How you can help at home***

- Play games with letters, sounds and rhymes.
- Read with your child daily and discuss the pictures and stories. It is okay to read the same story over and over.
- Read in your child's home language—it helps develop vocabulary and concepts.



# Mathematics

In kindergarten, your child will learn basic math skills, concepts, and problem solving.

Students will learn numbers and number concepts, count and compare numbers, use addition and subtraction, and identify and work with shapes.

Students will write numbers, draw, and use objects to solve problems.



## ***How you can help at home***

- Practice counting by ones and tens.
- Use everyday objects to count and sort.
- With your child, look for shapes in everyday objects.
- Make comparisons of numbers, shapes and objects (same and different).



# Science

Students will weigh, measure, poke, touch, sort and observe, question and experiment using their five senses.

They will engage in science problem-solving and begin to understand the “how” and “what” of things.

Teachers will be engaging children by asking questions, exploring and discussing possible solutions, investigating science concepts and using reasoning just like real-world scientists do.

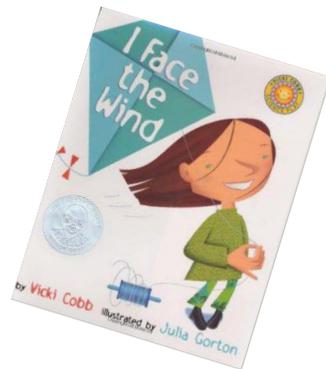


## ***How you can help at home***

- Look for ways to explore science at home and in the community with your child.
- Enjoy the outdoors together, talk about animals and plants and teach them to understand what plants and animals need.
- Encourage your child to keep asking questions, just like scientists.
- Let your child know you don't have all the answers, and together try to find them.



**READ!  
READ!  
READ!**



# Art, Music, Physical Education

Art and stories are great avenues for introducing young students to social sciences (sometimes called social studies). Art activities provide an important way for children to explore creativity and self-expression.

They also gain a basic knowledge of where they are in history and in the world.

These projects will also help children develop small muscle groups as well as learn valuable social skills like sharing and cooperation, responding positively and making decisions.



## ***How you can help at home***

- Teach your children songs. Listen to music and sing along.
- Play catch with your child.
- Color together and give your child access to art materials or craft activities.
- Share stories that have characters from other cultures or historical periods.
- Look at maps together and talk about other parts of the world.

Music and physical education have a lot in common. Musical activities include listening, singing, chanting, rhythms and creative movement. These experiences help them cooperate in other areas of school.

Physical education is designed to help children to use large muscle groups and develop strength, fitness and coordination. Students will hop, jump, skip, run, balance and play in small groups.

# Preparing for Kindergarten

## *You are your child's first teacher*

Here are some things you can be working on to help get your child ready for school!



### Academic skills

- **Read to your child every day** in your home language. Help your child learn to sit still and listen quietly.
- Have lots of **conversation** with your child every day. Children learn to use language by experiencing language.
- Provide opportunities for your child to **ask and answer questions**. Follow your child's lead and natural curiosity.
- Take any opportunity to **count** objects together out loud, and point out letters and their sounds.
- Help your child learn to **write his or her name** correctly with lower and uppercase letters.
- Expose your child daily to **songs, rhymes** and **music**.

# Preparing for Kindergarten

### Body skills

- Help your child to learn how to use **tools** they will use in school, like crayons, pencils, safety scissors and glue. (Notice which hand your child is using.)
- Teach some simple **motor skills** like balancing on one foot and hopping.
- Teach your child to **button** and **zip** clothing.

### Independence skills

- Encourage your child to be increasingly responsible and **independent** about grooming, getting dressed and cleaning up.
- Teach your child to manage his or her own **bathroom** needs.
- Have your child get used to spending **time away** from you by visiting with friends or family.

### Social skills

- Teach your child **common courtesies** (such as please and thank you) and social behavior.
- Provide frequent opportunities for your child to **socialize** with other children successfully and learn about sharing and taking turns.
- Teach your child how to **follow simple directions**.
- Make sure your child can say his or her full **name and address**.

**If you notice that your child has difficulty in any of these areas, be sure to let the teacher know. Most children will continue to develop these and other skills throughout the year.**

# Tips for Kinder Families

Develop **routines** for going to bed and getting ready for school, doing homework and keeping school papers in a certain place. These routines developed early will pay off for years to come.



Be sure your child is getting enough **rest** and access to healthy, **nutritious** food. Healthy kids learn better!

# Tips for Kinder Families

Children develop at different rates and times. Try not to compare them to siblings or other children.



If your first language is not English, continue to speak and read to them in your **home language**. This is important in developing vocabulary and basic academic concepts.



Make sure your child gets plenty of **playtime** every day outside and away from electronics.

**Let your teacher know** if there is going to be a change in your child's routine.

Teach your child how to **stay healthy** by coughing into his or her elbow, keeping hands away from noses, not sharing drinks, and washing hands a lot.

Walking your child into the classroom is fine, but it's best to **keep the goodbyes quick and cheerful**. If your child has issues with separation anxiety, let the teacher know. Children usually get quickly swept away by the activity in the room.

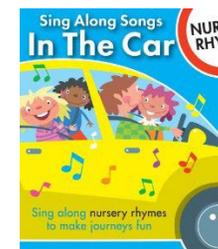


Get used to checking your child's **backpack** often for copies of work or important notices from your teacher.



**Reading** with children does not have to be limited to picture books at their reading level. Try reading chapter books at a higher level. Use voices. Have fun with it!

Resale shops are great places to find inexpensive **songbooks**, children's CDs and books.



**Keep reading** to your children even after they have learned to read!

Check the school's **Lost and Found** periodically to see if your child has left something behind.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q. How can I help prepare my child for the first days of school?**

You can help your child have a positive mental outlook about school by talking about it as a friendly, happy place where people go to learn things. Read books and watch videos about school.

Talk to your child about any fears or doubts about school and try to answer all questions in a positive manner. Visit the school together, play on the playground, meet the staff.

## **Q. How will you help my child adjust to a full day of school?**

Children will be involved in a balance of active and restful activities throughout the day. The teachers will work on developing children's stamina. Activity in the fall may look different than activity in the spring. Teachers may have snacks available during the day; check with your child's school.

## **Q. What is the policy when a child is ill?**

Children with a fever of 100.5 °F or more or who are vomiting, have a rash, a bad cough or something other than minor sniffles, should be kept at home. Call your school to let them know your child is home sick. To return, a fever should be gone for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine. If your child will be out for a long time, speak with the teacher about things that you can do at home to help your child continue to learn.

## **Q. Will my child be riding the bus with older kids?**

The move to full-day kindergarten will mean that all kinders will be riding buses with older elementary students to and from school. Kinders are seated at the front of the bus, and all students will be dropped at designated bus stops. Kinders will only be allowed off the bus if an authorized adult, or authorized older sibling, is present.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q. What do I do if my child has a special need?**

If you believe your child has a special need (whether it's medical, physical—like a speech impediment—academic, emotional or social), let your school know when you visit. You may be able to make an appointment with a Special Programs representative before the school year begins to discuss options to accommodate your child's needs.

## **Q. Is there after-school care available?**

Most schools have low-cost after-school care available from Willamalane Park & Recreation District. Some schools also offer before-school programs and some schools have free, grant-funded after-school opportunities. Check with your school for availability.

## **Q. Can I contact the school during the summer if I have questions?**

Elementary schools close for the summer and reopen the third week of August. Try to get your questions answered before school lets out in June. If you absolutely can't wait, you can call the district office at 541-747-3331 and we'll try to get you an answer.

## **Q. Can I send my child to a different school?**

Springfield Public Schools has an "open attendance" policy that allows students to attend schools of their choice, provided 1) space is available in the school and grade, and 2) the parent or guardian provides transportation to and from the school.

Parents who wish to have their child attend a school outside their attendance boundary must complete an In-District Transfer Request form, available in each school office or online at [www.springfield.k12.or.us/transfers](http://www.springfield.k12.or.us/transfers).

New applications are required for incoming kinders or students not currently on an approved transfer. Transfers can be revoked at any time for poor student behavior, excessive tardiness, absenteeism or any violation of the terms of the transfer.

# Helpful Resources

The district's **Welcome Center**, located at the Brattain House (1030 G Street), is an excellent first point of contact for Spanish-speaking families.

Many schools have a **Family Resource Center**, a welcoming place where students and their families can feel safe and supported.

In our community, the **Springfield Public Library** has a wide variety of ongoing and special programs available for children, including English and bilingual story hours.

The **internet** is also a wonderful place to explore for ideas and activities to do with your child.

- Visit [ReadingRockets.org](http://ReadingRockets.org) for excellent tips and suggestions in a variety of languages for helping your child learn to love reading.
- For more general advice, resources and parenting tips by grade, visit [ParentToolKit.com](http://ParentToolKit.com).
- You can also visit [www2.ed.gov/parents](http://www2.ed.gov/parents) for tips and resources in both English and Spanish to help your child be successful.

## ***Free school readiness programs***

Children who already have basic skills when they enter school will be able to grow and learn that much sooner. Preschool is one option; the district offers some free programs as well.

- Kinders entering Two Rivers–Dos Ríos, Maple or Riverbend elementary schools may be eligible for the **Kids in Transition to School** (KITS) program in the summer. Ask about family classes.
- **Learning Littles** is an ongoing bilingual program for pre-K children.

Find out more at [www.springfield.k12.or.us/preschool](http://www.springfield.k12.or.us/preschool).

# Helpful Resources

The school district's website contains all of the information in this booklet and more. The **Parent Resources** area of the district website contains a wide variety of information that is common to all schools, such as weather-related closures, lunch menus, bus routes, health forms, and more.

[www.springfield.k12.or.us/parents](http://www.springfield.k12.or.us/parents)

You'll also find all kinds of resources, including more tips on getting your child ready for school, lists of recommended books and websites, apps that can help give kids a jumpstart in school, and much more.

# Important Numbers

## **Instruction: 541-726-3224**

Transfers • Common Core Standards • Testing •  
Talented and Gifted Program

## **Special Programs: 541-726-3250**

Early entry • Special education •  
Other special physical or psychological needs

## **Transportation: 541-744-6373**

Bus routes and policies

## **Nutrition Services: 541-726-3236**

Food allergies • Free and reduced lunch program

## **Health Services: 541-744-4131**

Immunizations • Medications •  
Access to free or low-cost dental services

## **Brattain House: 541-744-6769**

Welcome Center • Help with shelter, clothing or school supplies •  
Parenting classes • English as a second language

# Springfield Elementary Schools

## **Centennial Elementary School**

1315 Aspen St.  
Springfield, OR 97477  
541-744-6383  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/centennial](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/centennial)

## **Douglas Gardens Elementary School**

3680 Jasper Rd.  
Springfield, OR 97478  
541-744-6387  
[dges.springfield.k12.or.us](http://dges.springfield.k12.or.us)

## **Elizabeth Page Elementary School**

1300 Hayden Bridge Rd.  
Springfield, OR 97477  
541-744-6407  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/epage](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/epage)

## **Guy Lee Elementary School**

755 Harlow Rd.  
Springfield, OR 97477  
541-744-6391  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/guylee](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/guylee)

## **Maple Elementary School**

2109 J St.  
Springfield, OR 97477  
541-744-6395  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/maple](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/maple)

## **Mt. Vernon Elementary School**

935 Filbert Lane  
Springfield, OR 97478  
541-744-6403  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/mtvernon](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/mtvernon)

## **Ridgeview Elementary School**

526 66th St.  
Springfield, OR 97478  
541-744-6308  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/ridgeview](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/ridgeview)

## **Riverbend Elementary School**

320 51st St.  
Springfield, OR 97478  
541-988-2511  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/riverbend](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/riverbend)

## **Thurston Elementary School**

7345 Thurston Rd.  
Springfield, OR 97478  
541-744-6411  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/tes](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/tes)

## **Two Rivers–Dos Ríos Elementary School**

1084 G St.  
Springfield, OR 97477  
541-744-8865  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/trdr](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/trdr)

## **Walterville School**

40589 McKenzie Highway  
Springfield, OR 97478  
541-744-6415  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/walterville](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/walterville)

## **Yolanda Elementary School**

2350 Yolanda Avenue  
Springfield, OR 97477  
541-744-6418  
[blog.springfield.k12.or.us/yolanda](http://blog.springfield.k12.or.us/yolanda)

