

Dear Parents,

We want to personally welcome your child to Kindergarten. The first year in school is a great adventure away from home for children and is very important to later achievement in school. Our greatest goal is to help your child become the best person he or she can be. We know this is a goal we share with you.

This has been prepared to assist you in helping your child make the happiest and best possible adjustment to kindergarten and the many new experiences of school. It contains information that will help you understand some of the learning opportunities that will be available for your child. We feel the information presented can help the home and school become joint partners in helping your child reach his or her potential. We value your participation in the education process.

We look forward to working with your child in kindergarten!

Sincerely,
The Kindergarten Team

CHILD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Children are alike in many ways. Each child goes through the same stages of growth, yet, each child is different from all others. Kindergarten children start school on the basis of their age. However, all five-year-old children have not reached the same level of development. **Each child is as "old" as his or her behavior.**

You cannot make a child learn, but you can help him or her be able to learn and to want to learn. The attitude a child develops may help or hinder the ability to learn.

In kindergarten, a child prepares not only for his or her future years in school, but also for the rest of his or her life. To effectively support the child's educational progress, parents are encouraged to:

- **recognize that play is the natural way children learn**
- **read to the child daily or as frequently as possible**
- **understand that young children require concrete, "hands-on" learning experiences**
- **provide varied activities and experiences that contribute to learning**
- **encourage the child to learn through discovery**
- **provide a rich verbal environment**
- **discuss experiences with the child**
- **praise the child for strengths and be patient with regard to areas not yet developed**

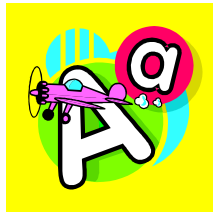
WHAT IS KINDERGARTEN?

Kindergarten is a wonderful place to be! Upon first glance, one might think that it is just a place to play, but it is a place of work and play. Five and six year old children learn best by doing and "playing." Our learning environment is one that encourages active participation on the part of each child. Children will learn as they explore, observe, and interact with each other. In kindergarten, your child will learn to:

1. get along with others
2. listen to and follow directions
3. work and play in group situations
4. share equipment and experiences
5. develop self-confidence
6. start and finish tasks
7. express himself/herself verbally
8. develop new interests
9. improve his/her muscle coordination
10. understand letters, words, and how to use them
11. develop math concepts
12. clean up after completing his/her work

This is a small list of the many things your child will work on this year.

The ABC's of Kindergarten



Absences

If your child is sick or you know that he or she will not be at school, please call the school office at 469-752-6000 to report your child's absence. You will also need to send a written note stating the reason for the absence as soon as possible.

Attendance

Your child's progress in kindergarten, both academically and socially, is influenced to a great extent by daily participation. Regular attendance without tardiness is very important. Once your child is enrolled in Kindergarten, they must attend for 90% of the school year.

Arrival

Students should plan to arrive in the classroom between 7:25 and 7:40 A.M. School begins promptly at 7:45 A.M. Kindergarten students need time to unpack their belongings and get ready for the day.

Art

Each class will go to Art once a week during their Specials period. Your child will love going to art class and creating many masterpieces.



Backpacks

Your child will bring home a take home folder daily. Please empty and return the folder each day. If you need to send any money, information, notes, etc., please place it in your child's take home folder. We check them every morning!

Some days your child may have papers and projects to bring home. To assure that your child gets home with all of these items, we ask that he or she bring a backpack to school every day. The backpack needs to be large enough for the take home folder, but we will not be taking home heavy books or many items. **Please do not purchase a wheeled backpack,** as

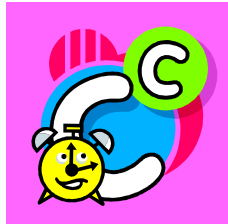
kindergarteners have a difficult time maneuvering with them and fitting them into our lockers. Please remember to check these daily.

Bear Centers

This is a time for your child to experience structured free play. Bear Centers takes place every day at different times for each kindergarten class. Our Bear Centers include four different learning areas: art, dramatic play, math/blocks and science/sensory table.

Birthdays

Students may only pass out birthday invitations during non-instructional time such as before or after school. If you choose to send in a birthday snack, please let your teacher know ahead of time so they may plan accordingly. Cookies would be the most appropriate and enjoyable snack for our age level as we do continue with instruction during this time. Please do not send drinks.



Clothes

Please send your child to school in clothes appropriate for learning. Becoming involved in kindergarten activities often means that the students will get a little "messy." Girls need to wear shorts under their dresses or skirts since we are sitting on the floor for a majority of our day. See F for footwear information.

Communication

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher whenever you have a question or a concern. The best form of communication is through your child's daily folder or email. Kindergarten teachers have a difficult time answering their phones during the busy school day.

Criminal History Check

If you are interested in volunteering at the school, you must complete a criminal history check. Please see the district website for more information.

Curriculum

Plano ISD Curriculum information can be found at the following website.
<http://k-12.pisd.edu/currinst/eleme/eleme.htm>



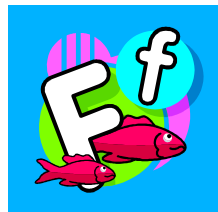
Differentiation Because all children are unique and special, they may be at many different instructional levels. We take each child from where he or she is to a higher level. Our goal is to meet your child's individual needs.

Dismissal Dismissal is at 2:45. The car pool riders will be dismissed out the front door of the school. Please have your paper plate with your child's name visible in your car for us to see. The children will come to your car in the line. The walkers are dismissed out the side door (#5) by the kindergarten hallway. No child is released at the walker door until that child's card is shown to the teacher. Your child's teacher will send home cards at the beginning of the year. If the child's card is not shown, you will be asked to present your driver's license in the front office.



Early Release We have several early release days each year. Please check the district website for specific dates. Dismissal will be at 12:00 on these days.

Envelopes When sending money to school, please put it in a sealed envelope labeled with your child's name, the teacher's name and what the money is for. This insures that all of the money gets to school and we know what to do with it.



Field Trip Kindergarten will go on one field trip. The field trip will be to the Holifield Science Learning Center. The date will be announced closer to when it will occur. We will need a few volunteers per class. The HSLC limits the number of parents we may bring along. You must complete a criminal history check

and be cleared before you are allowed to attend. This procedure may take as long as two weeks, so please fill out your forms early.

Footwear

Please have your child wear shoes that are appropriate for running and playing. Flip flops, boots or dress shoes, for example, are inappropriate for the gym and the playground.



Guided Reading

Guided Reading will encompass many different kinds of activities. For example, some children may be working on alphabet recognition; some may require teacher support to read stories with predictable text; while others may work on comprehension of texts read. Guided Reading provides an opportunity to teach children the variety of reading strategies they need in order to become fluent, independent readers.

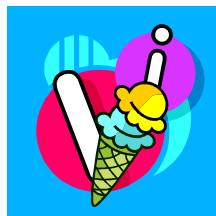
Gym

Each kindergarten class will have PE and Fitness several times a week. The children are asked to wear tennis shoes and girls should wear pants or shorts under dresses and skirts. Your child's teacher will let you know which days their class has PE.



Homework

Kindergarten homework is used as reinforcement of the skills that the children have learned at school. Each week, the Home Enrichment News will be sent home in their take home folder. See R for reading information.



Illness

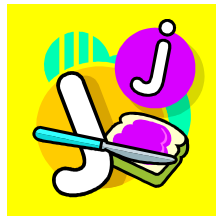
The question of when to keep your child home from school is often difficult, especially when decisions must be made first thing in the morning. It is important, however, to keep your child home if he or she is ill. This helps them to recover and prevents others from becoming ill. District policy cites that your child must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Independence

Independence is a goal for students because it builds self-esteem and self-confidence. Kindergarteners are very capable of doing many things on their own and we encourage them to do as much as they can for themselves. Please work on the following types of skills with your child: zipping zippers, tying shoes, buttoning buttons, and opening lunch items (juice boxes, sandwich containers, ketchup packets, etc.).

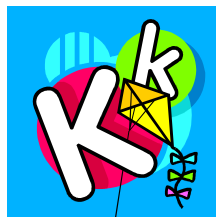
Information

It is important to keep all of your records current. If you move, get a new phone number or change how your child is getting home, please be sure to inform the office and your child's teacher.



Join the Fun

Your support of school activities sends the message to your child that you value school! We will be sending home a form that explains all of the ways you may volunteer your time. Please look at the form and sign-up to help us make this a fantastic year. There will also be a variety of special classroom activities and celebrations throughout the school year. We hope that you can come and join the fun!!



Kindness

Students in our classrooms are encouraged and expected to treat the members of our classes as well as others with kindness and respect. Hitting, fighting, name-calling and making fun of others will not be permitted.



Literacy Stations

During Literacy Stations, children practice reading and writing skills while the teacher works with small guided reading groups. The station activities are designed to strengthen letter/sound knowledge, listening skills, rhyming, letter formation, reading, fine motor skills, etc. This is a very important time that your child will need to work independently.

Lost & Found

We have a Lost and Found at Schell that is located in the cafeteria hallway. You may check the lost and found or have your child check for any missing items. We ask that you label all clothing items worn to school by your child. This will help us return a lost item to its owner.

Lunch

Kindergarten students may either purchase their lunch or bring it from home. A lunch menu can be found on the district website. If your child has special food requirements (vegetarian, peanut allergy, etc.) please look at the calendar and tell your child what they should eat that day.

Library

Each Kindergarten class will go to the library once a week. Your child's teacher will let you know which day they have library. Only one book may be checked out at a time, so your child must return their library book to check out a new one.



Math

The kindergarten mathematics curriculum provides students with mathematical experiences that help them develop number sense, patterns, shapes, problem solving and a positive attitude towards mathematics. For more information about our curriculum please see the following website: <http://k-12.pisd.edu/currinst/elemen/elemen.htm>

Music

Music helps fine tune motor skills, improves social skills, increases literacy, and most of all develops a well rounded, musical student. The students attend music twice a week during specials.



Newsletter

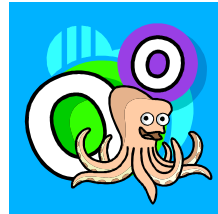
We will be sending home a newsletter at the beginning of each month to keep you informed of the happenings in our classrooms. This is a great way to stay aware of our curriculum, classroom news, special activities and upcoming events.

Nurse

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful nurse at Schell. If your child must have medicine during school, please contact the nurse for further instructions. Please be sure to keep your contact information updated in case the nurse needs to get in touch with you.

No School

We have several no school days each year. Please check the district website for specific dates.



Open House

We will have one Open House in the spring. This will be a special time for your child to show you his or her classroom and the wonderful work that we have been working on in kindergarten.



Parent-Teacher Conferences

Plano ISD uses a portfolio system in grades K-2. Parent/Teacher

conferences are held three times during the year in October, February and May. Further information about these conferences will be forwarded by your child's teacher.

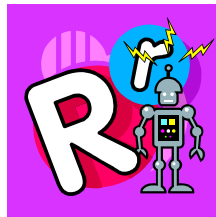
Parties

We will have three class celebrations during the school year. We will have a Winter party, a Valentine's Day party and the End of the Year party. The room parents organize these events and coordinate volunteers and donations.



Quiet Time

At the beginning of the year we will have a quiet rest time for approximately 15 minutes. Small bath towels are the perfect resting mats, as they are easy for the children to fold and fit nicely into their lockers and backpacks. Pillows and stuffed animals are not allowed. Towels should be sent to school on Mondays and they will be sent home on Friday to be washed. Quiet time will transition to additional learning time and you will be informed when we make this change.



Reading

Reading to your child or having your child read is important! We encourage you to read every day. Reading logs will appear in the Home Enrichment News after the beginning of the year.

Recess

We will have recess everyday after lunch. Please keep this in mind when helping your child select clothing for the day. We will follow PISD guidelines in reference to temperature and wind chill. Please remember to send your child with a jacket as needed and label all items.



Science

The focus of the kindergarten science curriculum is on developing an awareness of the world in which we live. Through scientific inquiry, concepts will be presented in the life and earth sciences, including the study of animals and plants, the five senses, and the four seasons.

Snack

Each day we have a short period for snack. The children will be responsible for bringing their own snack. Children may only bring **healthy snacks**. The children must be able to open the snack independently and they must be able to eat the snack without a fork or a spoon. We will be eating snack on the floor during instruction. Due to severe nut allergies, please do not send any kind of nut products for snack.

Social Studies

The kindergarten social studies curriculum focuses on the students and how they relate to others in their families, classroom, school and community. Activities will help the children focus their natural curiosity for the world around them.

Star Student

Each class will have a Star Student for each week. A poster will be sent home for you to add pictures of your child, his or her family and their special interests. The teacher will send information home about special items that your child may bring to school during his or her week to shine!



Transportation

If there is a change in the way your child will be going home, you must send a written note. Your child's teacher may not check their email or phone messages until after school, so this is not a good way to inform us of changes. If no written note is received, your child will be sent home by his/her usual method of transportation. For last minute changes please call the school office.



Understanding

Your child is important to us and we are interested in your child. We would like to know if he or she is happy, sad, sick, frightened, etc. Changes in

family life, such as the loss of a pet, death in the family, new baby, or exciting upcoming events can affect a child's behavior at school. We would appreciate a note, a phone call or a visit if there is anything that you feel we should be aware of. This lets us know that your child might need some extra attention or understanding.



Visitors

Plano ISD and Schell have a policy that all guests (including frequent volunteers) are required to check in at the office and wear a guest badge. We welcome and encourage family involvement. The presence of a guest badge will help identify visitors to all staff and create a safe learning environment.



Website

Plano ISD has a website which can be accessed at www.pisd.edu. Here you can find information about our school district and the curriculum we teach.

Writing

Your children will be encouraged and praised for all attempts and accomplishments in writing. Invented spelling is very appropriate for kindergarteners and we will encourage them to spell the words by saying them slowly and writing what they hear.



eXtra

Kindergarten will have many extra activities throughout the year. Please read your newsletter and notes that come home in your child's folder. Please check backpacks and folders daily so that you will be informed about all of the fun events we have planned.



You

The kindergarten teachers need your help in order for your child to reach his or her potential. Please let us know if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns. We look forward to working with you during the year.



ZZZZZ

Make sure that your child gets plenty of rest. Setting and keeping a bedtime is a wonderful gift that you can give to your child. It will help them to be alert and ready to learn each day!