



♥ Welcome to
Kindergarten

Class of 2033

From small beginnings come great things!

- Dutch Proverb

Welcome to Kindergarten!*



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**Welcome to Kindergarten* received an Honorable Mention at the 2007 Annual School Communications Competition. This version revised January 2020.

Welcome to Kindergarten!



THE FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL

Kindergarten is an important year in every child's life and as kindergarten teachers; we share in the excitement of this milestone. This year will be the beginning of many productive, rewarding, and memorable school experiences.

We recognize that every child is unique, and we will do everything we can to ensure that your child receives the nurturing and type of education that is right for him or her.

We look forward to working with you during the coming year and hope that this booklet will help to get our partnership off to a great start!

The Kindergarten
Teachers



BIG DAY IS COMING!

Today's kindergarten children come to us with diverse abilities and experiences, and they need a program that focuses on the development of the skills that will become the foundation of future learning. Our exciting all-day kindergarten program allows for an in-depth exploration of skills in the areas of social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. It provides children with opportunities for development and reinforcement of skills, enrichment of ideas, exploration and risk taking, and the development of responsibility for themselves and their actions within a nurturing classroom environment that fosters success.

Many of today's children come to kindergarten exposed to increasingly sophisticated ideas and experiences; nevertheless, all children have a need for a solid foundation in basic skills, as well as enrichment activities. All children have varied maturation levels and experiential backgrounds. Livingston's kindergarten program provides the opportunity to maximize the potential for all children while supporting them in their educational journey!

GETTING OFF TO A GREAT START!



In Livingston, a primary aim of the kindergarten experience is to help your child make a positive adjustment to school life. During kindergarten, students become aware of their role not only as individuals, but also as members of a classroom community. Through a variety of cooperative activities, they will share with one another their diverse interests and backgrounds.

Kindergarten plays an important role in helping your child acquire skills and make social adjustments, which are necessary for future success. Each child must feel important and develop a positive self-image, as well as learning empathy and respect for others.

In Kindergarten, your child will be encouraged to be generous and kind, and to care for personal property and the property of others. Students must develop self-control and the ability to give and take in order to work and play in a group. Grounding in these social skills opens doors for success for all students.

THIS YEAR, YOUR CHILD WILL BE **L**EARNING TO:

- Work independently and with others
- Share and take turns
- Explore and expand abilities and interests
- Effectively express thoughts and ideas
- Listen and show respect for others

In the classroom, your child will be actively involved in activities designed to:

- Build self confidence
- Foster creative play
- Improve fine and gross motor skills
- Encourage exploration and risk-taking
- Develop reading and writing readiness and an increased interest in books
- Develop math readiness and quantitative skills
- Foster creative and critical thinking and problem solving

Because each child will come to kindergarten with a unique background, our goal is to help each student become comfortable with new skills and concepts at a pace that is best for him or her. It is important that we work as partners to nourish your child's developmental readiness in a way that builds a positive self-concept as a learner, no matter what stage of readiness.

A TYPICAL KINDERGARTEN DAY INCLUDES:



- Opening activities
 - ... Sharing and circle time
 - ... Calendar Math
 - ... Daily News
- Reading and writing readiness
 - ... Whole group
 - ... Small group
 - ... Learning Centers
 - ... Independent activities
 - ... Writer's Workshop
 - ... Reading Workshop
 - ... Word Study – Including phonemic and phonological awareness, letter identification, sight words, phonics, and vocabulary
- Snacktime
- Gross and fine motor skill activities
- Specials: art, music, physical education, library/media
- Lunch/recess
- Integrated technology
- Math readiness
 - ... Whole group
 - ... Small group
 - ... Partner Games
 - ... Manipulatives
 - ... Independent activities
- Interdisciplinary units: science, social studies, arts and craft projects, music, rhythm and movement
- Free choice centers: self-select play and discovery time
 - ... Social problem-solving
 - ... Social skill development

Note: Sequence may vary

READING AND WRITING READINESS

The Kindergarten program focuses on literacy. It lays the foundation for reading, writing, speaking, listening and language skills using the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for English Language Arts as the guide. These standards help build a child's capacity to construct meaning in any arena, individually and with others. In Kindergarten, the emphasis is readiness, discovery, and enrichment. We want children to see themselves as readers and writers who are comfortable interacting and responding to both literature (stories) and informational (non-fiction) texts. We also want children to understand that text can hold meaning in pictures and words. Students will develop language skills as they talk about pictures and book, engage in conversations, retell stories, and use pictures, symbols and words to write their own stories, opinions and informational texts. To learn more about the English Language Arts Standards for Kindergarten, visit <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela/>

MATHEMATICS READINESS

Mathematics readiness engages students to use their reasoning and problem solving skills to make connections between mathematical concepts and their daily world. The New Jersey Student Learning Standards emphasize and support students while exploring mathematical ideas, making hands-on mathematical discoveries, learning math concepts as they appear in everyday life and posing and solving meaningful mathematical problems. The foundation of the math standards are introduced in kindergarten through Calendar Math, partner games, hands-on manipulatives, independent, small group and whole class activities. To learn more about the Mathematics Standards for Kindergarten, visit <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/math/>

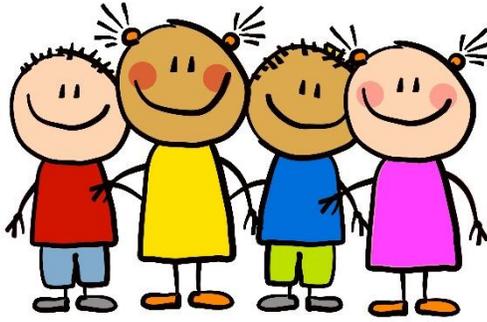
INTEGRATED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Many kindergarten literacy and mathematical activities are centered on themes that are rooted in a specific discipline such as science, social studies, health or fine arts. The media program is an important vehicle for effective integration of all subjects and physical education and health introduces the child to the fundamentals that round out our intention for developing the whole child. The integration of these areas provide opportunities for students to practice literacy and numeracy skills across the content areas. They also serve as a vehicle to teach and reinforce personal responsibility, strong interrelationships, healthy attitudes about their bodies and their minds, and an appreciation of the beauty in the world. In addition, technology skills are integrated into all content areas to help build skills and concepts across all disciplines. To visit additional NJSLS standards, visit,

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/science/>

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss/>

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/tech/>



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following skills are built into all activities throughout the daily kindergarten routine. They are critical skills and concepts that must be fostered in order to develop a balanced, responsible, confident and successful student. These concepts should be reinforced at home and in other settings.

- Treat others with respect regardless of physical, racial, or cultural differences
- Play safely and follow the rules of the game
- Try to do his or her personal best
- Speak respectfully to all people – children and students alike
- Include others
- Share with others
- Help others without being asked
- Say nice things to others
- Be proud of the successes of others
- Listen to others
- Practice home and school rules
- Work cooperatively in groups
- Respect the personal space of others
- Take care of personal belongings
- Make good choices
- Take joy in all accomplishments
- Accept oneself, and accept others as they are
- Express feelings in an appropriate manner

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Attendance

In school, regular attendance is important to promote growth in desirable attitudes and routines. It creates a sense of security, helps build self-confidence, and enhances the continuity of a well-planned program of work.

School begins promptly at 8:05 a.m. Please be sure to have your child in line a few minutes before the 8:05 a.m. bell. He or she will feel more comfortable and ready for schoolwork.

If your child is absent or late for any reason:

Please use our "Call for Safety" program. **Call 973-535-8000** and the appropriate school exchange **between 11:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.** When calling, give your child's name, grade level, teacher, and reason for absence. Calls are to be made **daily** during any period of absence (unless otherwise noted in writing). Children are not allowed to make this call. If a parent does not call, one of our office personnel will call home to make sure that your child is safe.

If your child is ill at home:

Keep your child home from school if he or she feels sick or is running a fever. This is for the well-being of your child, other students and staff. Be alert to such symptoms as upset stomach, runny nose, fever or sore throat. When necessary, check with your doctor for a diagnosis, treatment and the proper time to return to school. District policy requires 24 hours to have passed since vomiting or running a fever before returning to school.

If your child is ill or injured at school:

Your child should tell a teacher if he/she feels sick or is injured. The teacher may send the child to the school nurse. The nurse will call you if there is an illness or injury that requires treatment or if the nurse feels that your child should go home. It is important that your contact information, including emergency contacts, be completed in the Genesis Parent Portal before the start of school in September. This information must be kept up-to-date throughout the year.

When your child returns from an absence:

A child who has been absent for any reason should return to school with a note of explanation for the absence.



SCHOOL SAFETY



There are many helpers on hand to ensure that your child gets to and from school safely each day. Each school has specific drop-off and pick-up procedures to accommodate its particular location and arrangement. It is important to be familiar with these procedures and to review them with your child.

School Crossing Guard

A crossing guard is assigned to appropriate locations on or around our schools at morning arrival and afternoon departure. Children must cross in the *designated areas*.

School Safety Patrol and Fifth Grade “Buddies”

Members of the School Safety Patrol are upper-grade children who assist youngsters inside and outside the school and maintain order at the doors. Your cooperation in instilling respect for these helpers is appreciated. Fifth Grade students who are Kindergarten "buddies" often help our young students, in addition to sharing in a variety of collaborative projects and activities throughout the year.

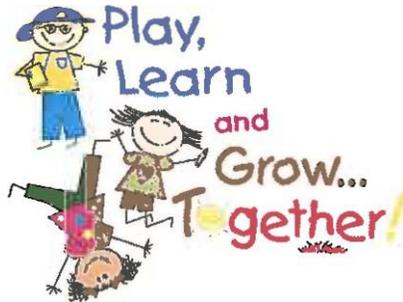
TRANSPORTING CHILDREN TO AND FROM SCHOOL

When transporting your child by car, please use designated drop off or pick-up areas at your child's school. Frequently talking to your child about safety issues is very important. Remind him or her that:

- Running between parked cars is extremely dangerous
- Opening doors on the traffic side of a car is also dangerous
- Waiting for rides should be done only in designated areas
- Students should never take a ride from, or even talk to, a stranger
- Students should never run across the street to a parked car but wait to be escorted by a parent, crossing guard or another responsible adult
- Listening to and obeying the crossing guards and safety patrols is imperative
- Students should always walk on sidewalks (or grass if there are no sidewalks) – but never in the street.
- Attending a play date or a change in the after school pick-up routine must have written permission
- If no one arrives for pick up, children must return to the main office and not wait outside the school alone

Teach your child that a stranger can be someone they know and that they should only go with someone that you have approved for this purpose. This information should be put in writing for the school so that we can make informed decisions. Remind your children that if they ever feel uncomfortable, they should immediately contact a teacher or staff member at school.

AVOIDING TEARS, FITTING IN, AND OTHER HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS



Excitement and anxiety!
Smiles and tears!
Hanging on and letting go!

These are all part of the first days of kindergarten! It can be an overwhelming experience for a five-year-old, even if he or she has gone to nursery school or day care. Your child will be going to a new school, meeting new teachers and making new friends from the very first day. Remember to support your child as he/she makes this transition.

There are some things that you can do to make the transition to kindergarten a little easier for your son or daughter. We call them "kindergarten readiness skills." Aside from learning letters and numbers, there are little things that make a child comfortable with his new surroundings. These skills build confidence and increase a child's feelings of safety and security. By working with your child on these "kindergarten readiness skills," you ensure that their first days are wonderful for him or her! The "kindergarten readiness skills are listed on the following page.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS SKILLS

Children entering Kindergarten will feel more comfortable if they have had experience with:

- Zipping zippers, buttoning buttons, and putting on and taking off outer clothing without help
- Using the lavatory properly and washing hands afterwards
- Knowing how and when to use a tissue
- Knowing his or her full name, address and phone number
- Keeping track of personal property (Remember to label all items!)
- Exchanging courtesies, such as, please, thank you, excuse me and I'm sorry
- Showing respect for others
- Sharing with others and doing something to help another person
- Taking turns and waiting patiently
- Accepting responsibility for him or herself
- Listening to adults respectfully
- Having a little job that he or she is responsible to complete
- Being praised for a real accomplishment
- Picking up after him or herself, especially his or her own toys

HOME AND SCHOOL CONNECTION

Not all learning takes place in the classroom. Parents, grandparents, siblings and friends all play a key role in your child's education and feeling of success. You, as parents, are your child's first and most important teachers. The following are suggestions of how everyday life provides simple yet effective learning experiences.

In the car

- Identify letters, numbers and familiar words on signs
- Create math problems; count items
- Play rhyming games
- Sing songs, tell stories and recite poems
- Use the license plate to create word games or teach states

In a restaurant

- Expect and require appropriate social behavior
- Discuss the menu
- Let your child order for him or herself
- Discuss foods and cultures

At home

- READ ALOUD TO YOUR CHILD EVERYDAY!
- Retell favorite stories about your family
- Set the table and talk about matching and sets
- Listen to your child tell you about his or her day
- Play games with numbers, words or ideas
- Play sporting games and have your child keep score
- Discuss healthy eating
- Exercise together
- Enjoy cooking with your child - discuss or create recipes, identify and recall steps, measure ingredients
- Let your child design a menu or organize the table setting
- Read and recite rhymes from Mother Goose

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD

You are not alone in raising your child as a student. We know that we are not alone either. Working as partners will help us make the best decisions for your child and provide the confidence needed for him or her to be successful.

Kindergarten is a developmental year, and all children develop at different stages and at different rates. We recognize each child's individuality and unique gifts. We also know that at times most of our students will have some challenges. Our kindergarten program is designed to meet a variety of needs and developmental levels and to help each child meet any challenge, big or small, in a way that fosters confidence, a positive self-concept and a strong foundation in academic and social skills.

In kindergarten, we lay the foundation for future growth. We immerse students into the world of literacy and math as the foundation for life-long learning. To do that successfully for all students, no child should feel that he or she needs to master all the skills that are taught. Some children are ready to master many skills when they are five years old. To many other children, kindergarten lays the foundational skills that they will use later on when they are ready to master literacy and numeracy skills and concepts. In the same way that children learn to walk at different time, learning is individual and developmental in nature.

In our area of the village, we have many specialists and support people, as well as processes and practices to monitor the development of each child and offer suggestions and support when needed. Because our specialists and support people work closely with our kindergarten team, simple solutions for normal developmental situations are frequently reached. The kindergarten team works together so that all teachers know all the kindergarten students and can brainstorm the best way to support each child's individual growth. Together, your child will have an amazing and enjoyable year!

Welcome to our LPS Kindergarten community!

ALL I EVER REALLY NEEDED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN

Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the kindergarten sandbox.

These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.

Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup - they all grow. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere: the Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living. Think of what a better world it would be if we all- the whole world- had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or, if we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true. No matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is *best to hold hands and stick together*.

adapted from Robert Fulghum