



# **WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN**

## **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**



# Get Ready for Kindergarten

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## 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 or visit our website at [earlylearning.mnps.org](http://earlylearning.mnps.org).





# The Kindergarten Program

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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 and curriculum taught in kindergarten, please visit the Curriculum and Instruction section (under Learn) at [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org). Please read this information, as it will help you understand what is being taught and why.

Kindergarten instruction and activities are age-appropriate and designed to meet children's individual stages of development. Our teachers and school staff participate in on-going, researched-based professional development and our curriculum, along with positive classroom experiences, is designed to allow children to develop an understanding of their world. The kindergarten program integrates the teaching of:



**LANGUAGE  
ARTS**



**MATHEMATICS**



**SCIENCE**



**HEALTH**



**SAFETY**



**SOCIAL STUDIES  
SKILLS**

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](mailto:familyinfo@mnps.org).



# Important Information

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## 1 SCHOOL HOURS

Opening and closing times for your child's school can be found on the school's website. (Visit [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org) to find a school's website.) As early as 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](http://www.mnpsnutritionservices.org).

## 3 MEDICATION/SPECIAL CARE NEEDS

Prescription or non-prescription medication administration requires a written parent/guardian request using the district provided form that shall include:

- Child's name
- Name and address of parent/guardian
- Name of medication, dose, time of administration and route of administration
- Discontinued date
- Reason medication is needed

The student's parent/guardian must complete a "Request for: Assisted Self-Administration of Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications" form. Once approved, the medication should be taken to school by parents or guardians. 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](http://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-INFO(4636) for the most current information on school openings or closings.

## 5 STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOKS

A Student-Parent Handbook is available digitally for all families on the district's website. 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 [www.mnps.org/handbook](http://www.mnps.org/handbook).

## 6 STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM

Tennessee State academic standards are implemented beginning in kindergarten. To learn more about standards and curriculum taught in kindergarten, please visit the Learn section (under Curriculum and Instruction) at [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org).

# School Supports

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## 1 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 [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org) in the Extended Learning Section (under Students & Families).

## 2 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 support organization contact your child's school.

## 3 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 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 they need. For this reason, we see to it that each student identified as needing 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 can be found on [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org) in the Exceptional Education section (under Learn).



## GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION (GATE)

The MNPS GATE Program provides instructional opportunities for academically gifted/talented and intellectually gifted learners. The curriculum taught in GATE classes is designed to be rigorous, 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. GATE classes are offered in grades K-8 at every MNPS elementary and middle school. Students must be identified as academically gifted/talented or intellectually gifted to participate in GATE classes. More information can be found by visiting the Gifted and Talented Education page of [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org) (under Learn).



## 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-INFO(4636) or [familyinfo@mnps.org](mailto:familyinfo@mnps.org).



## CAMPUS PORTAL

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

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



## ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL) PROGRAM

As per the Tennessee State Board of Education Rule (0520-01-19-.03), all students whose Home Language Survey (HLS) indicate a language other than English must be screened with a Department of Education approved English language proficiency screener to determine whether the student qualifies for ESL Services. If a student does not meet the passing criteria, the student shall be identified as an EL student and receive Direct ESL Services, unless a parent or guardian chooses to waive Direct ESL Services. Schools must communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English (US DE Office of Civil Rights). If you need assistance at a meeting and an interpreter is not in attendance, please ask the school to contact the District Translation Department to arrange services for you. Information about the EL Program can be found by visiting the English Learners page on [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org) (under Learn).

# Riding the Bus to School

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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](http://www.mnps.org/transportation) or families can call the Family Information Center at 615-259-INFO(4636) for assistance.

The MNPS Transportation Department will mail bus route information to parents one week prior to the first day of school 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 arrives at the bus stop no earlier than 10 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**

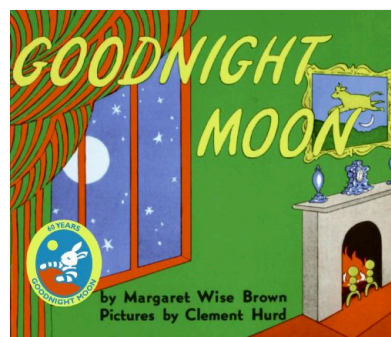
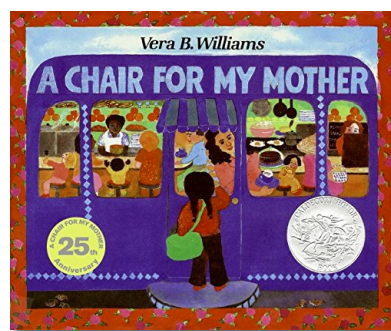
Reading aloud is one of the most important experiences you can give your child. Reading aloud with your child increases vocabulary, builds story understanding and encourages a love of reading. Four and five-year olds enjoy listening to all kinds of books. Stories read to them should be short with attractive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

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

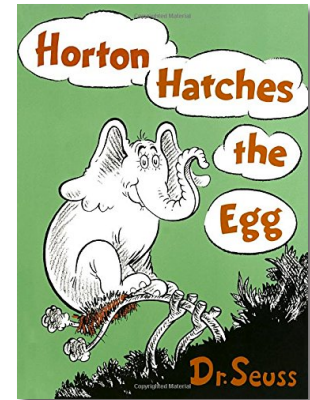
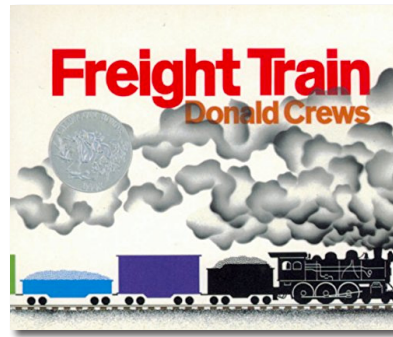
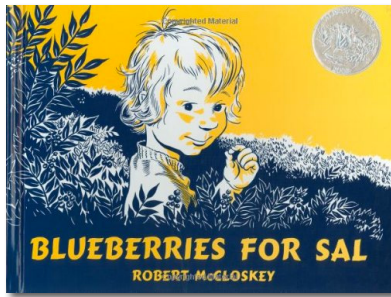
- Choose books that you and your child enjoy! If you start a book and decide it's not for you, it's OK to put it down and try a different one.
- Read with expression. Make sound effects, do different voices for characters—whatever makes it fun for you and your child!
- Make it interactive! Are there 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

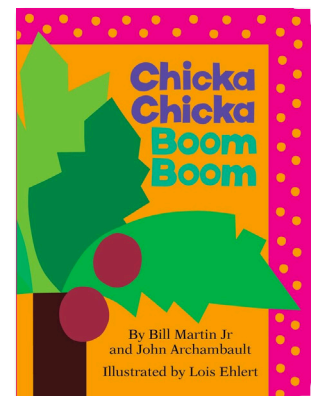
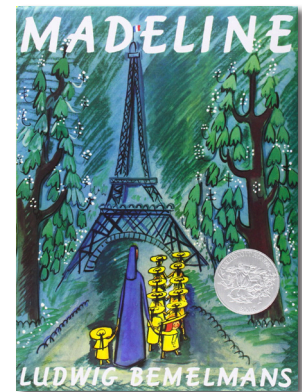
- ***A Chair for My Mother*** by Vera B. Williams
- ***Ben's Trumpet*** by Rachel Isadora
- ***Blueberries for Sal*** by Robert McCloskey
- ***Bread and Jam for Frances*** by Russell Hoban  
Illustrated by Lillian Hoban
- ***Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*** by Bill Martin, Jr.  
and John Archambault, Illustrated by Lois Ehlert
- ***Dear Zoo*** by Rod Campbell
- ***Doctor De Soto*** by William Steig
- ***Farmer Duck*** by Martin Waddell,  
Illustrated by Helen Oxenbery
- ***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



## REMEMBER!

For other suggested reading, contact your child's school or 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

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## THE SUMMER BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS:

- Determine if you will need before and after care services. Your 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 10.
- Help your child to begin recognizing the alphabet, both capital and lowercase letters.
- Contact your local Nashville Public Library branch for information on how to check out books to read with your child and attend their summer programs.

Visit our kindergarten readiness website for additional information and activities:

**[WWW.MNPS.ORG/COUNTDOWNTOKINDERGARTEN](http://WWW.MNPS.ORG/COUNTDOWNTOKINDERGARTEN)**

## 2 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.
- Provide your child an opportunity to see his or her new school to become familiar with the building.
- 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.

## 3 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.

## 4 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 THE  
FIRST DAY OF KINDERGARTEN!**





[www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org) • 615-259-INFO(4636)

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