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WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten is a time for children to expand their love of learning, their general knowledge, their ability to get along with others, and their interest in the world around them. Your child’s first year of school will be filled with new challenging activities and hands-on learning experiences that foster a joy in learning and a positive attitude toward school.

Kindergarten is an important time of transition for young children and is the foundation year upon which future academic success is built. Indian Prairie School District is committed to helping your child grow and learn in a stimulating and nurturing environment that promotes self-discovery and celebrates accomplishments.

REGISTRATION AND RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

When a child is registering in District 204 for the first time, a parent or guardian must provide proof of identity and age by providing one of the following documents:

- Original or certified copy of a birth certificate. (Which will be copied and the original returned to parent or guardian.)
- Valid passport, or
- Other record recognized by a court of law.

In addition, a parent or guardian must provide 3 varied proofs of address evidence as proof of residency. One valid document from each of the following groupings is required.

- Title Evidence, Mortgage Statement, Lease Agreement or Tax Bill
- Current Utility Bill (e.g. electric, gas)

PHYSICAL EXAMS & IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

The Indian Prairie School District follows the mandates of the Illinois Department of Public Health with regards to required immunizations for our students.

Students entering kindergarten must
present proof of the required State of Illinois immunizations and examinations (physical, dental, and vision). Additional information, required forms and the district’s policies on medication are available in the school office and our district website at www.ipsd.org. The DuPage (630-682-7400) and Will (815-727-8480) County Health Departments offer immunizations for a nominal fee. Please contact them directly to schedule an appointment.

In the registration packet you will find an emergency medical card, which must be filled out, signed, and returned to your child’s school. This card is kept in the nurse’s office and used in the event of an emergency. This card is needed in the nurse’s office prior to your child starting school. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call your school health office.

**HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY**

The Federal NCLB-Title III Act and the Illinois School Code require that each school district administer a Home Language Survey to every student entering the district for the first time. The district is then required to screen the English language proficiency of each student identified through the Home Language Survey as having a non-English background in order to determine the student’s eligibility for English Language Learning Services (ELL).

Bus transportation is provided for those students that reside more than 1.5 miles away from the school. If you enroll your child in a half-day kindergarten program and it is not offered in your home school, bus transportation will be provided for your child.

- Prior to the opening of school each fall, specific routes and times will be posted in eSchool and Home Access Center.
- Bus schedules can be checked online by visiting eSchool and Home Access Center.
- Note the bus number and the times listed for pick-up and drop-off.
- Students must be at their bus stop 5 minutes prior to their scheduled pick up time.
- Students may only ride their assigned bus.
- Staff will assist to load and unload the buses and monitor students while entering/exiting the building.
- The school is unable to make route and stop changes. Use the Bus Route Change Requests under “FAQ” on the transportation link at www.ipsd.org for any route change requests.
- Parents of kindergarten students are responsible to meet their child’s bus each day or to designate a responsible individual to be with their child during pick up and drop off times. The responsible adult will have to show a Kindergarten Parent Bus Pick-up ID Badge.
SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

A food service program is offered to kindergarten students who attend all day. All menus are planned based on USDA guidelines and offer nutritional information. Daily fresh fruit and vegetable choices are offered.

Applications for free or reduced lunch benefits will be available online no sooner than 30 days prior to the start of the school year.

There are several ways to find out what is on the menu:

- Menus are available online by clicking the “School Lunch Program” icon on your school’s website
- Most PTA newsletters publish the monthly menu
- Menus are posted in the school

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM HOURS

We are pleased to offer an all-day kindergarten program at all of our elementary schools. District 204 recommends the all-day kindergarten program as it allows more time for instruction, enrichment, reinforcement and intervention. Parents interested in half-day kindergarten should contact their building principal. Students attending a half-day will attend their home school.

KINDERGARTEN HOURS
6 hrs. 30 min
9:05 A.M.-3:35 P.M.

SPECIALS*
Music – 25 minutes twice a week
Physical Education – 25 minutes three times a week
Art – 50 minutes once a week

* Opportunities for Specials will vary for students attending half-day.
KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Developmentally appropriate kindergarten classrooms encourage the growth of children’s self-esteem, their cultural identities, their independence and their individual strengths. Kindergarten curriculum actually includes individual and group activities in addition to those academic activities we traditionally think of as educational. Exploring their school environment in any context area are all meaningful learning experiences to children.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Indian Prairie School District 204 recognizes that kindergarten students come to us with a wide range of readiness and experiential backgrounds. Differentiated instruction offers a flexible learning environment to meet the needs of diverse learners. Differentiation occurs naturally and through careful planning and implementation of learning objectives. Differentiated instruction can take the form of guided reading groups, writing activities, learning centers, computer technology, math and reading games, etc. and can be accomplished in individual and/or small group instruction in any of the content areas.

LITERACY

Our literacy mission is to develop, through the use of a balanced literacy approach, each student’s potential to effectively construct and convey meaning in all areas of language. A balanced approach to teaching literacy provides students with opportunities to read, write, discuss, and play with words and letters, all working towards building a solid foundation in literacy.

District 204’s Kindergarten English Language Arts curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. These standards include a balance of literacy outcomes related to: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, Language, and Foundational Skills.
Sample literacy outcomes for Kindergarten include:

- Naming upper- and lower-case letters, matching those letters with their sounds, and printing them
- Comparing the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories, such as fairy tales and folktales
- Asking and answering questions about key details in stories or other information read aloud
- Retelling familiar stories and talking about stories read to them using details from the text
- Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to describe an event, including his or her reaction to what happened
- Stating an opinion or preference about a topic or book in writing (e.g., My favorite book is...)
- Learning to recognize, spell, and properly use those little grammatical words that hold the language together (e.g., a, the, to, of, from, I, is, are)
- Taking part in classroom conversations and following rules for discussions (i.e., learning to listen to others and taking turns when speaking)
- Speaking clearly to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, including descriptions of familiar people, places, things, and events
- Understanding and using question words (i.e., who, what, where, when, why, how) in discussions

ASSESSMENTS AND LITERACY SUPPORT

Kindergarten students are given assessments on a regular basis. Assessments are used to inform instruction and to monitor academic performance and growth. The kindergarten reading curriculum is committed to equipping students with literacy skills to support academic performance in the classroom as well as in real-life. Reading support services are provided for students who require more intensive and specialized teaching. Selection for meeting with a reading specialist will be based on information from the assessments which are given to all kindergarten students including:

- Curriculum Based Measures (CBM)

MATHEMATICS

The mathematics curriculum allows students to construct an understanding of mathematics from their own experience, and includes practical routines to build arithmetic skills that are essential for building number sense, estimation skills, and flexibility in a problem-rich environment. Important concepts are introduced and revisited in a variety of formats providing considerable practice.

The mathematics focus is to have students
recognize that there are various ways to accomplish a task and to use the best tools and strategies for solving problems. This is done by establishing a framework for dialogue about mathematics between the teacher and students.

The District 204 math curriculum is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards incorporating Common Core. At the kindergarten level, these include:

- Counting and Cardinality
  - Know number names and the count sequence
  - Count to tell the number of objects
  - Compare numbers

- Operations and Algebraic Thinking
  - Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from

- Measurement and Data
  - Describe and compare measurable attributes
  - Classify objects and count the number of objects in categories

- Number and operations in Base Ten
  - Work with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations for place value

- Geometry
  - Identify and describe shapes
  - Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes

Teachers incorporate instructional strategies to encourage students to apply these mathematical habits of mind:

- Mathematical Practices
  - Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
  - Reason abstractly and quantitatively
  - Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
  - Model with mathematics
  - Use appropriate tools strategically
  - Attend to precision
  - Look for and make use of structure
  - Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

SCIENCE/HEALTH

The purpose of the science curriculum is to provide students with balanced, relevant, hands-on opportunities and experiences to better understand science and to promote scientific literacy.

Science units include:

- Seeds to Plants
- Ecology—Save the Earth
- Water Explorations
- Magnets
- Marvelous Me (Five senses, food pyramid, nutrition and disease prevention)

SOCIAL STUDIES

Kindergarten students are beginning to develop an awareness of the world around them.
Social Studies units include:

- The school community’s rules and responsibilities
- Decision making and problem solving
- Families
- Respect for culture and traditions
- Community awareness

ART

The purpose of the visual arts curriculum is to have students grow creatively, intellectually, emotionally, and academically.

Art content includes:

- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- Using knowledge of art elements and principles of design
- Choosing and evaluating ideas, subject forms, and symbols
- Understanding visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Reflecting on and assessing student work
- Making a connection between art and other disciplines

MUSIC

The curriculum builds knowledge of the technical and artistic elements of music from different cultures and eras through lessons designed to stimulate creativity and develop listening and performance skills.

Music content includes:

- Singing
- Performing on a variety of instruments
- Improvising melodies
- Composing and arranging
- Reading and notating music
- Listening, analyzing, and describing music
- Evaluating music and musical performance
PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

Students learn, develop, and apply skills needed for participation in personal fitness and activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Physical Education/Health content includes:
- Fundamental gross motor skills
- Movement and spatial awareness
- Health and fitness

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The Library Media Center is an important part of the school and your child’s educational experience. Students enjoy frequent visits to check out books to bring home, and they enjoy story times and motivational reading programs that inspire a love of reading. Research projects are led by your child’s teacher in collaboration with the LMC director, beginning with early fact discovery and progressing through a series of information and literacy skills. The LMC also contains the computer lab where important technology skills are taught and where the Internet and various software programs support learning. Your LMC strives to support and serve parents too, so be sure to visit or call with questions or concerns.

TECHNOLOGY

Kindergarten students will participate in a technology curriculum that involves skill development. Technology experiences include software use that begins to develop students’ computer skills. Computers are used to enhance learning in the content areas throughout the kindergarten curriculum as appropriate.
Transition of services from Preschool and Early Childhood

If your child received specialized services or instruction through an Individual Education Plan (IEP), service plan, or Section 504 plan, the preschool and district staff will transfer this information to your home school prior to the end of this school year. Please feel free to contact your principal, however, if you have any concerns about your child’s services in the kindergarten setting.

Referral Process

During the course of the school year, a parent or staff member may have concerns regarding a child’s progress in the classroom. When this occurs, the teacher and grade level team will use the ongoing progress data and information from parents to address concerns. Each building also has a Problem Solving Team, which regularly reviews classroom performance and assists in connecting students to the appropriate instructional interventions. Parents are a vital part of the process and will receive ongoing progress data regarding their child’s performance in school. If the use of interventions is not sufficient to address concerns, the student can be referred for a special education screening, where building staff and parents review all information and determine the possible need for a more complete evaluation.
Services and Supports

Special education services are provided within the context of the general education classroom to the fullest extent possible. This can include instruction in the classroom with support, instruction in small groups within the classroom, instruction in groups of students across grade levels, and instruction on an individual level. If students have sufficient need for a self-contained and intensive setting, specialized classrooms are available in specific elementary buildings across the district.

Support Staff

Each building is staffed with personnel who are qualified to provide the appropriate services and support, as determined by your child’s IEP. Support teachers, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, school social workers, and certified school nurses are active members of building teams, participating in the planning for students. Other related personnel, such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, vision and hearing itinerant staff, are assigned to buildings based on student need.

Communication

In all of these efforts, a collaborative approach is emphasized for coordination of a student’s program and generalization of new skills. Communication between school and home is an important component to the success of these efforts, so your child’s classroom teacher and/or case manager will be in touch on a regular basis.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM

The Indian Prairie School District 204 English Language Learning (ELL) Program has two components: English as a Second Language (ESL) and Bilingual Education.

Students are referred to and placed in this program based upon the district Home Language Survey, and assessment by the ESL or Bilingual teacher.

ESL is offered at each of the district’s elementary schools. Bilingual Education is offered at Prairie Children Preschool, Brooks, Cowlishaw, Georgetown, Gombert, Longwood, and McCarty Elementary Schools.

English Language Learners are completely mainstreamed into the regular classroom and receive specialized instruction for part of the day from an ESL or Bilingual teacher. The amount of ELL instruction a student receives is based upon his level of English Language Proficiency.

ESL is taught through grade level academic content using current instructional strategies that emphasize active, discovery-oriented, and cognitively complex learning. The goals of the ESL program are to develop English skills while learning grade appropriate academic content and to develop academic English language proficiency to assist students in meeting Illinois Learning Standards as well as the Illinois English Language Proficiency Standards.

In addition to ESL instruction, students in the Bilingual Education Program receive native literacy instruction and/or native language support in an effort to promote bilingualism and biliteracy.
TIPS FOR PARENTS

BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL — GETTING OFF TO A GREAT START!

Speak positively about kindergarten, the teachers, the school and learning. Build on this so that your child is excited and looks forward to school with fun anticipation of learning new things and making new friends. Explain that it is perfectly natural to feel nervous about starting school and remind them that the teacher is very nice and it is okay to ask questions or ask for help.

Work with your child on how to use buttons, zippers and tie shoelaces. This will greatly help to gain independence in putting on and taking off their coat, shoes and boots on and off.

In order to promote good hygiene, remind your child to wash their hands before eating and after using the bathroom or playing outside.

Help your child to be independent with meals.

Practice with your child to learn basic numbers, colors, and letters and how to write their first name. (Capital first letter followed by lower case letters).

Help your child to memorize their full name, address and telephone number.

Reinforce numbers, letters and symbols found in their everyday environment to help students see the connection of concepts.

Encourage creativity and constructive play. Do arts and crafts, puzzles and educational activities together.

Encourage your child to express wants and needs and to be a good listener and friend.

Review transportation routines with your child. Consider walking routes, others who have permission to transport, safety rules, etc. If your child will be taking the school bus, the stop’s location and your expectations for getting to and from school safely should be discussed.

Students should wear comfortable, practical clothing. Label everything!

Make home a place for learning. Designate a special spot for practicing skills together, displaying school work, and putting important school information and calendars.

Read to your child frequently simply for pleasure! Look at books and magazines together.
**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

The first day of Kindergarten is a shortened orientation day designed for students, parents and guardians. We have found this to be an excellent transition for kindergartners and a very positive approach toward easing anxious feelings about the first day of school. Each school will provide you with a schedule for Kindergarten Parent-Student Orientation. Please bring your student’s school supplies to the orientation.

Allow plenty of time to get ready and travel on the first day of regular attendance for kindergarten so that your child doesn’t feel rushed. It is recommended that you begin your normal routine on that day. Separating from you may be hard for your child. Provide plenty of reassurance that you will be back at the end of the school day. Make drop-off quick, give them a hug and kiss and go. Most of the time the children are just fine as soon as their parents are out of sight. There will be plenty of staff on hand to assist your child in making the adjustment.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

School-family-community partnerships continuously plan, participate in, and evaluate activities that enhance the success of students. Indian Prairie School District 204 recognizes that a student’s education is a joint responsibility shared by schools and parents as part of the larger community, and that these participants directly impact learning.

**Parent-Teacher-Organization (PTA)**

Each elementary school has an active PTA. The PTA works to provide information, support and resources to students and parents in a variety of formats. Parents and guardians of incoming kindergarten students are given information about the local PTA along with membership forms during the registration period.

**PTA’S National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:**

Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.
Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way and meaningful communication about student learning.

Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Sharing power—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

Collaborating with community—Families and school staff collaborates with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Below are some ways parents can become involved:

- Joining the PTA is the first step in becoming an involved parent
- Assisting in the classroom, helping the teacher with clerical tasks and special projects
- Working with small groups and individual students
- Volunteering in the Library Media Center (LMC)
- Reading with students
- Speaking to the class about an area of expertise that may be of interest and/or connected to the curriculum
- Chaperoning field trips
- Acting as an interpreter/translator
- Serving on a school committee

District 204 Parent Groups

- Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- Indian Prairie Special Needs PTA
- Indian Prairie Parents Council (IPPC)
- Parent Diversity Advisory Council (PDAC)
- Project Arrow Gifted Program Parents PTA (IPPA PTA)
- Title I Parent Advisory Committee
Community Resources and Early Education Links

- Aurora Public Library, 630-264-4100
  www.aurorapubliclibrary.org
- Naperville Public Library, 630-961-4100
  www.naperville-lib.org
- Fountaindale (Bolingbrook) Public Library, 630-759-2102
  www.fountaindale.org
- Illinois State Board of Education
  www.isbe.net
- ISBE Kindergarten Corner
  www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/kindergarten_corner.htm
- Illinois Early Learning Project
  www.illinoisearlylearning.org
- State /County Resources and Hotlines
  www.IllinoisParents.org
- YMCA Safe ‘n Sound, 630-585-2207
  www.ymcachicago.org/programs/safe-n-sound
- Starfall (Where children have fun learning to read!)
  www.starfall.com
- PBS Kids
  www.pbskids.org

204 e-News

The district uses 204 e-News to keep parents informed about upcoming events, news and important announcements. Make sure you sign up for this email news service and also your individual school’s email news list. You can subscribe to both on the district’s website at www.ipsd.org