



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

# Welcome to Kindergarten

## Information for Parents

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's kindergarten program provides children with organized educational activities appropriate for young learners, taking into account their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs. The young child's natural world is one of curiosity, exploration, and imagination; the richest gains are likely to occur when these capacities are promoted in the classroom through play. Children investigate and develop an understanding of their world through play. Play provides a context in which the teacher observes the children's handling of materials and social situations, assesses their stages of development, and encourages experiences to further growth.

### • **Social/Emotional Development**

In order to learn effectively, children must feel good about themselves, about school, and about others. A prime goal of kindergarten is to foster social and emotional growth through play. Children practice socially appropriate behaviour and develop self-help skills to assist them in working with new people and situations.

### • **Physical Development**

In indoor and outdoor play children use balls, hoops, water, sand, climbers to strengthen large muscles. Fine motor skills enhance small muscle growth and coordination and include such activities as manipulating stacking toys, picking up small objects with the thumb and forefinger, tracing over simple shapes and designs.

### • **Intellectual Development**

Kindergarten encourages children to develop critical thinking such as observation, compare/contrast, categorization and sequencing skills, to question, to experiment, and to develop creativity through language, music, the arts, and drama. As individuals and in groups, children explore topics of natural interest to young learners.

### • **Language and Communication Development**

Activities in kindergarten enhance speaking and listening habits in young children. Games, music, stories, and discussions build necessary

oral language skills such as vocabulary, concepts, and grammar which are required for later instruction in reading, writing, and oral communication.

Kindergarten provides a learning program developed from guidelines provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

### **Great Beginnings Start with Caring Staff**

Kindergarten teachers have a genuine love for small children, show a lot of patience, kindness, and empathy toward the needs of the young child. They realize the initial years in the kindergarten environment provide an extension of the home and provide a warm, caring environment for your child in order that he/she may develop in the above areas. At the same time the kindergarten teacher will help your child to develop a sense of responsibility and beginning independence.

### **Your Child's Introduction to Kindergarten**

Once your child is registered in kindergarten, you will be notified regarding school entry procedures. You and your child will have an opportunity to meet your child's teacher alone, prior to regular attendance of all children. This meeting will occur during the first two weeks of school. Its primary focus is to share information about your child: preschool and health history including allergies, along with developmental milestones and pertinent details relating to your child's history in your family. At this time, there is no attempt by the teacher to assess your child's academic readiness for formal learning. Rather, the emphasis is on creating a relaxed, joyful transition from home to school.

In order to foster a climate of warmth and comfort, the entry of kindergarten children is staggered over several days. This means each child enters school for the first time as one of a smaller group, whose needs can better be met by the teacher during the first busy days of school are required to attend school.

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## City of Ottawa Public Health Branch

Although the City of Ottawa Public Health Branch gathers information about your child's immunization record, it no longer provides visual and auditory screening. Parents who notice their child having difficulty seeing or hearing should contact their family doctor. Parents who are concerned about their child's communication development before the age of five years, should contact the Parent-Child Information Line of the First Words Program at 613-737-7600 ext 2500. If your child has lived outside Canada or in a First Nations community in Canada for more than three months in the past five years, contact the City of Ottawa Immunization Line at 613-580-6744 ext. 24108 or visit [www.ottawa.ca/health](http://www.ottawa.ca/health) for information.

## French Instruction

Children in junior and senior kindergarten are introduced daily to French through songs, rhymes, movement, stories, and a variety of other activities. The Core French Second Language Program is delivered each school day. Early French Immersion is an option in senior kindergarten with instruction given in French. Further information is available from schools offering these programs. Please call the Curriculum Services at 613-596-8292, for a list of these schools.

## KINDERGARTEN CLASS TIME

The time children spend in a kindergarten class includes:

### Play Time at Learning Centres

Children engage in small group and individual play at learning centres, some permanent and others short term. Learning centres may include water, sand, crafts, blocks and other building tools, nature, puppets, dress-up, library, puzzles, carpentry, climbing, and computers. Much of the subject content is pursued through activities at these centres. Teachers modify the focus at various centres to accommodate changing needs and interests. Many classrooms are equipped with computers that have software programs to reinforce readiness skills. During play time, the teacher interacts with the child, or small groups of children.

### Circle Time

Children assemble in a large group for storytelling, songs, games, finger plays, rhythm band, creative movement, math, science activities, and discussion. The focal point of this part of the day is literacy development: the growth of oral expression, the fostering of interest in books and reading, and related language activities.

### Indoor/Outdoor Play

Most frequently, students play together in the classroom, in the gym, or outside. Enjoyment of energetic activity allows students to use large and small muscles to improve coordination and to build self-confidence.

## KINDERGARTEN PARENTS ARE IMPORTANT

### Partnership

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board believes in a strong partnership between school and home. An active role in your child's education is vital.

### Volunteering

Children, teachers, and parents gain from active parent volunteer programs. Kindergarten teachers often welcome parents, older students, teachers-in-training, early childhood educators, senior citizens, specialists such as storytellers or musicians, and other members of the community. Volunteers enrich the kindergarten program in many ways. Parents gain valuable insights by observing their children in the preschool setting; children feel special pride and pleasure by having parents with them.

### School Councils

All our elementary and secondary schools have a school council. Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active part in this advisory group.

To volunteer or find out more about your school council, speak to the principal, or the kindergarten teacher.

### For Further Information

Talk to the staff at your neighbourhood school. These caring individuals are able to provide you with support, guidance, and information on kindergarten. Information sessions are held in individual schools. These meetings highlight program possibilities, children's needs, and preparation for school, as well as parent concerns.



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133 Greenbank Road • Ottawa, ON K2H 6L3 • 613-721-1820

Fax 613-820-6968 • Website: [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca)

