



welcome to kindergarten



Simcoe County
District School Board

The SCDSB welcomes you and your child to the Kindergarten years!

Children begin a lifetime of learning at home. Kindergarten introduces them to the school years and helps to widen their learning horizons. These early years in education involve tremendous growth and learning. Parents and school staff, working together as partners, can help to ensure all children fully develop their potential. This is your school system. We wish you and your child a warm welcome and a future of exciting learning experiences.

The learning journey

Kindergarten is a German word meaning “a garden of children.” Using this name for the first years of school expresses how strongly we believe that children have the opportunity to grow and develop at their own individual rates with appropriate programs and support. It is vital that home, school, and community co-operate to make this new beginning a secure and positive experience. Education is a life-long pursuit, beginning at birth and extending from home to school and on to the adult world.

Children develop at different rates and in different ways. Each child is unique and has individual needs. Some children will benefit more from one type of teaching strategy than another; some may need more time than others or additional resources to achieve the learning goals.



In addition, the many diverse languages and cultures of our students contribute to differences in the ways in which they develop and learn.

From home to school and back again

It is our shared responsibility to ensure that your child’s first school experience will be a time remembered with joy and a sense of accomplishment. Simcoe County District School Board kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators strive to provide enriched, exciting and positive learning experiences for all students.

These experiences will be foundational building blocks for future personal and academic learning and success. We look forward to creating strong links between home and school so that we can make each child’s learning journey a successful one.



Getting ready for Kindergarten: the first steps

Learning to look after belongings

Kindergarten is an active environment. Comfortable and casual clothing will let your child participate without worrying about getting messy!

In Kindergarten, we help children develop independence. Your child will learn to dress and undress as independently as possible. So, it helps if the clothes are easy to take on and off. Please try to send a change of clothes in a labelled bag, to be kept at school...just in case.

It is helpful for your child to have more than one pair of shoes or slippers, one for indoors and one to wear outside. Please send shoes that have rubber soles and are easy for your child to put on. Velcro shoes are a good choice.

Your child also needs a bag that is large enough to hold a lunch and books. If your child uses a backpack, it should not be adult sized because it may be too heavy for a small back.

Playing and exploring outside

Outdoor activities are part of the daily kindergarten program. When you help your child dress for school, consider the weather so he or she will be comfortable outside.



Generally, if your child is not well enough to go outside, he or she is not well enough to be at school.

Managing the washroom alone

Kindergarten children use the washroom independently while at school. Be sure your child can wash hands with soap and water and manage clothing as independently as possible.

Before school starts

If possible, visit the school, walk around the playground, look at the building and talk about the wonderful things that will happen at school.

On the first day of school

- Be calm and positive about the new experience.
- Talk about the fun things your child will be doing.
- Take your child to the bus or school on time.

Getting ready for Kindergarten: the first steps

Saying goodbye

Give your child a “magic” kiss on his or her hand. These kisses don’t wash off and can be used whenever the child feels lonely or misses a parent.

Reassure your child that you know he or she will be fine.

Give your child another kiss and then calmly leave. It is usually easier for a tearful child to calm down when the parent is not there.



“Is it lunch yet?”

Your child will need a lunch bag or box that can be easily opened and closed. It is important to pack healthy foods that:

- are easy to open independently;
- can be repacked if not finished;
- do not require heating (if you wish to send warm foods please use a thermos);
- are in reusable or recyclable containers (remember to include utensils if needed);
- are peanut- and nut-free.

For healthy lunch and snack ideas contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit at: www.simcoemuskokahealth.org or call 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8813.



What happens at school?

The Child

Each child is a unique individual. Learning success depends on the development of feelings of confidence and self-esteem as well as the recognition of the value of the child's individual abilities.

The Educators

The teachers and early childhood educators create rich learning environments that are safe, caring, accepting, challenging and stimulating. Children are expected to think, to notice, to question, to explore, to discover, and to make connections. The educators carefully observe each child in order to know his or her growing capabilities and then provide appropriate learning experiences.

The Kindergarten program

Kindergarten children are energetic, lively, sensitive, curious and creative. They learn best in an active setting, manipulating and playing with materials, investigating, observing, experimenting, inquiring, drawing conclusions and interacting with others.

Your child will have many experiences in the Kindergarten years that will prepare him or her for meeting expectations as outlined in the program.

Since children develop at different rates and in different ways the program is flexible and diverse. We provide a range of instructional supports and services to help all students learn and succeed - including early interventions, special education services, transition planning, etc.



Play

Play is the child's natural way of making sense of the world. Children learn when all their senses are actively involved. They need to talk and think about everything they do. This is why our Kindergartens are active environments where children are involved with ideas, feelings, and concepts. Research indicates that play is the way young children learn best.

Activities will engage all children in meaningful experiences which will be the foundations for:

- reading and writing
- solving problems
- manipulating materials
- speaking and listening
- viewing and thinking
- forming concepts

Your child's program will include four areas of learning. These areas are:

- Belonging and Contributing
- Self-Regulation and Well-Being
- Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours
- Problem Solving and Innovating

In our program, children:

- experience books, poems, verses and dramas
- listen to and tell stories
- imagine, wonder, think
- read and write
- become aware of colour, shape/size and numbers
- classify, sort, compare
- climb, run, jump, push, pull, catch, throw
- play alone or with others
- ride vehicles
- learn to share
- respond to rules and routines
- talk about safe behaviour
- talk about and/or express thoughts and feelings
- paint, draw, model, build, construct
- explore sand and water
- experiment
- sing, dance, move, make music
- play with dolls, puppets, and tools
- engage in dramatic play and role-playing
- explore, investigate, create, represent
- solve problems
- work with computers
- look, listen, hear, touch, taste
- think and make decisions



Communication of learning

Communication between the teacher and home is crucial. You will learn about your child's growth at school in formal and informal ways.

You are encouraged to send notes, make phone calls or have a chat outside of the school at the end of the day when you wish to share information or ask questions. It is important to share any concerns or ask questions so your child's school experiences remain positive. If a major issue or concern arises, a conference may be arranged.

Each class has a system of regular communication with home. You may receive:

- newsletters
- phone calls
- monthly calendars
- notes
- agendas

Your child will receive a 'Communication of Learning' three times during the year.

How can I help my child at home?

LITERACY

Reading aloud is the best way to prepare children for learning to read. It will help them develop a wide range of language skills needed for success in school and throughout life. In addition, there are many other fun things you and your child can do together to help growth and learning.

Cuddle up and read. Talk about the book, look at the pictures, read the same book over and over, talk about ideas and new words. Use funny voices, laugh, snuggle and have fun.

Let your child see you read. Your child will copy what you do.

Have books, magazines, comics, and other texts in your home. Buy books and give books or subscriptions as gifts. Don't forget that the public library is a great source of books and other texts. Get your child his or her own library card and enter a world of adventure.

Words are everywhere! Your child's world is filled with words — on cereal boxes, street signs, stores, posters, etc. Pick out words and letters whenever you can.



Sing, recite poems and nursery rhymes. This will help your child develop an ear for language as well as have fun.

Why? Encourage your child to ask questions and to use words to communicate.

Write with your child. Provide materials like pencils, markers, paper, and crayons for writing activities. Help your child to begin to learn his or her name and also to draw pictures and tell stories.

Work with your child on the computer. Provide your child chances to use a computer with you. If you do not have one in your home they are available at the public library.

Watch T.V. and movies with your child. Talk about what you see, enjoy the time together but limit the time spent on these activities.

Play games! Play guessing games, finger paint, make (and bake) letters out of cookie dough, make words with magnetic letters or alphabet cereal.



How can I help my child at home?

EXPLORING THE WORLD

Young children are very curious about the world around them and love to explore, experiment and manipulate materials. This exploration helps them learn many important skills in math and language but also gives a foundation for science, the arts and healthy living.

You and your child can:

1. **Play outside.** Go to the park, throw a ball, go to the beach, take a walk or ride your bikes. Active children are more likely to grow up to be healthy, active adults.
2. **Enjoy the world.** Take time to explore nature with your child. You can watch worms after it rains, dig in the garden and plant seeds, collect leaves, admire the snowflakes, etc. The possibilities are endless. Talk about what you see and do.
3. **Be creative.** Provide your child with opportunities to use art materials such as scissors, markers, glue, paint or crayons. Make playdough together and enjoy making amazing items.
4. **Sing, dance and make music together.** Sing songs, listen to children's music and dance to your favourite song.



MATHEMATICS

Math is already part of your daily life so let it be part of your child's.

You and your child can:

1. **Sort things** - cutlery, laundry, games, toys, etc
2. **Count things** - toys, steps to the corner, people at the table, buttons or street lamps. Sing counting songs and read counting books.
3. **Cook** - cooking is filled with math. Talk about measuring, pouring, timing and counting (how many cookies are left).
4. **See shapes** - point out and name shapes and patterns in your home and community.
5. **Measure things** - check the temperature, pick out the biggest apple, compare the size of the two leaves, etc.
6. **Play in the sand and in the bathtub** - playing with sand and water will help your child learn many math concepts.



Elementary School Transportation Information

Eligibility for Transportation

Students attending their home school are eligible for transportation if their residence lies within the designated busing area of the school. School attendance and walkzone information is available at each school.

Bus Stops

Bus stops are designated within each school's boundary area. The distance each student will walk from home to the bus stop, the level of safety for the stopping of the bus, and the level of the safety for children standing at the stop are all considered when locating these stops.

Pick Up and Drop Off

Most transportation eligible students are picked up every morning and dropped off every afternoon at the designated bus stops closest to their homes. Some parents require regular before and/or after-school care for their children at a location other than at home.

If a student is eligible for transportation from their home address and their child-care location is within the school boundaries and is served by an existing bus route, the following exceptions to normal service are available:

- the student may be picked up either at the home stop or at the child-care location stop; and,
- the student may be dropped off at the child-care location stop every afternoon, five days per week, for the entire school year.

Parents wishing to make use of this service would make an application to the principal.

Emergencies

Emergency family situations may arise which require a change in either the pick-up or drop-off location for one or a few days.

Parents of transported students should make contingency plans for such situations so that they know where it is possible for their children to be dropped off. Buses cannot be rerouted or overloaded in order to handle such changes.

Requests for assistance in emergency situations will be handled by the principal.

Responsibilities of the Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring the safety and conduct of their children while waiting at and while travelling to and from the designated bus stop;
- ensuring that their children are at the bus stop prior to the scheduled arrival time of the bus – five minutes is recommended;
- arranging to have someone meet their primary age children at the designated bus stop;
- ensuring that their children have an alternative plan in case an adult is not home to accept them;
- knowing their children's bus route number and the name of the bus company;
- listening to the local radio stations during possible inclement weather situations.

To contact the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium, call 705-733-8965 or visit www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca.

Commit to Character

The SCDSB provides safe supportive environments for positive learning and working experiences for all students and staff. Board and school initiatives are designed to teach and encourage students to be positive, productive members of our community. Character Development is the intentional modeling, teaching and practicing of positive character traits and is an integral part of each day. Character Development includes respecting others by listening, promoting responsibility and honesty, trusting and respecting the ideas of others, encouraging honest/responsible actions, respecting individual differences, as well as being responsible in learning.



SCDSB Commit to Character Traits

INTEGRITY

We act justly and honourably in all that we do.

RESPONSIBILITY

We are accountable for our actions and we follow through on our commitments.

COOPERATION

We work together towards shared goals and purposes.

CARING

We show kindness towards others.

RESPECT

We treat ourselves, others and the environment with consideration and dignity.

OPTIMISM

We maintain a positive attitude and have hope for the future.

HONESTY

We behave in a sincere, trustworthy and truthful manner.

EMPATHY

We strive to understand and appreciate the feelings and actions of others.

COURAGE

We do the right thing, even when it's difficult.

INCLUSIVENESS

We include everyone in what we do and value their unique contributions.





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