

Kindergarten Parent Handbook



Sachem Central School District

Kindergarten Mission Statement

The Sachem Central School District believes that the Kindergarten year is a critical one in the development of a child. This experience is unique and can hold the key to the love of life-long learning.

The kindergarten year has a definite place and an important purpose in the educational life of the child. It helps to lay the foundation for the child to become a thinking person. The kindergarten classroom provides materials, experiences, information, relationships and opportunities planned to meet the needs of the young child. Kindergarten helps the child move with ease from home to school.

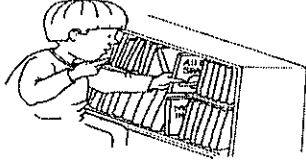
Our program is designed to be developmentally appropriate and to allow for the differences and experiences each child brings to the classroom. The major goals of the program are to increase basic skills in the areas of literacy and math, build self-esteem, and develop a sense of responsibility and respect for others. Each day's schedule is centered around language-based activities and hands-on learning experiences as building blocks in this foundation for learning.

There are many objectives of the kindergarten program that the five year old child is striving for regardless of the content of the subject area. All these objectives are fundamentals which will be built upon in later years. These must be mastered before the child can expect to succeed in the upper levels of the educational program.

The district is committed to an integrated approach to kindergarten while meeting and/or exceeding expectations set forth by the New York State Education Department in accordance with the Common Core Standards. Curriculum integration will be presented where appropriate within a meaningful context. Assessments will be on-going in the form of classroom observations and interactions, literacy benchmarks and assessment, and quarterly math benchmarks. Special education and remedial support will be provided within the regular classroom setting where possible.

You Can Help Prepare Your Child for a Positive School Experience

By doing so, you'll help make the move a smooth one. Kindergarten means changes in daily routines. You can take steps to reduce any anxieties you or your child may feel. It's natural to have doubts and fears about change. Talking about what you and your child can expect - and his/her feelings will help you both feel more secure. Create a positive attitude toward school and try the following:

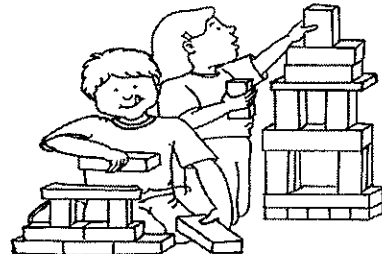


Develop Thinking

Visit the Library often. Help your child discover books, stories, poems, places and all things new. Daily reading to your child will help build a strong foundation for reading. Talk about the books you read. Discuss the pictures. Make predictions about the ending. Encourage story telling and retelling the stories in correct sequence. Help your child set limits and be selective about TV viewing, computer time, and video games.

Encourage Language

Encourage your child to speak clearly. When your youngster uses incorrect language, repeat the sentence correctly. Listen and show enthusiasm when your child speaks. Try not to anticipate what your child needs, wants or feels. Children need opportunities to question, to discuss, to develop conversational skills, and to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. Ask specific questions. Instead of asking "What did you do today?", ask "What did you do at learning center time today?"



Share

Spend time with your child by providing many experiences for your child. Your child learns on outings, in stores, at family gatherings, on trips, with pets, with toys, and with new people. Plan, create, and carry out projects and activities together. Play games that provide opportunities for sharing and turn taking. Encourage your child to make choices. Reward your youngster with praise and encouragement for things well done or "good tries."



Guide

Develop good listening skills by expecting your youngster to listen and follow one and two step directions the first time you say them. Try not to get into the habit of continually repeating directions and requests. Instill responsibility in your child. Allow for independent completion of tasks. Guide your child to share and interact appropriately with peers. Encourage understanding and tolerance of others.

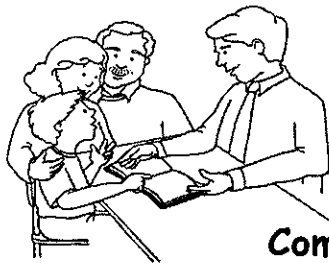
Encourage Gross-Motor Activities

Provide opportunities for running, climbing, jumping, skipping, and hopping. Have your child catch, throw, kick, and bounce a ball. Encourage your child to use jump ropes, beanbags, and all kinds of balls.



Develop Fine-Motor Skills

Provide many opportunities for using crayons, magic markers, pencils, scissors, glue, and play dough. Encourage your child to draw, and write letters and numbers. Demonstrate and practice proper pencil grasp. (See attached handwriting information.) Providing your child with a variety of materials and opportunities to write reinforces the importance of the writing process.



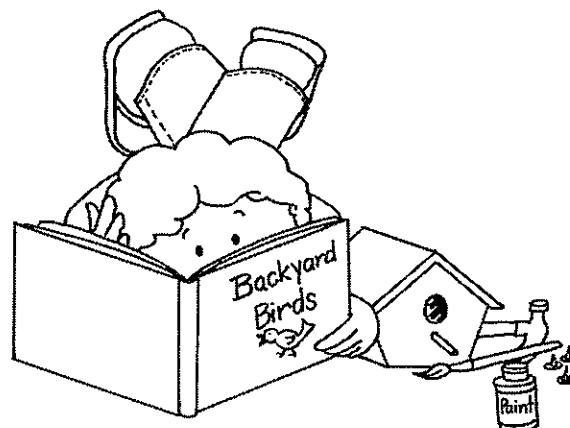
Communicate with Your Child's Teacher

Be supportive of your child's education. Supervise homework. Select a good time and place for you and your child to work together daily. Children do well with structure and predictable routines. Encourage and practice good organizational skills. Support your child's teacher and reinforce skills at home. Always contact your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns.

Give Your Child a Head Start

You can prepare your child for school by giving your child a head start on each of the following:

- Reciting his/her full name, address, telephone number, and birthdate
- Recognizing his/her name in print
- Writing first name (only the first letter is capitalized - example: John, not JOHN)
- Taking off/putting on and fastening (zipping, buttoning, snapping) jacket or coat
- Being familiar with nursery rhymes (a great introduction to rhyme)
- Being familiar with pencils, magic markers, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, and glue
- Displaying independent use of the bathroom
- Demonstrating proper use of a tissue
- Knowing how to listen and follow simple directions
- Knowing how to put away toys and other materials properly
- Opening lunch containers and snack items (drink boxes, fruit snacks, yogurt)
- Recognizing most capital letters and some lower case letters
- Being familiar with some letter sounds and with numbers
- Being able to accept simple responsibility
- Being able to wait to have a turn
- Being able to sit and focus attention for a reasonable amount of time



A Typical Kindergarten Day May Include the Following Activities:

Pledge of Allegiance
Morning Song
Calendar Concepts
Morning Message
Phonemic Awareness
Alphabet Recognition/Phonics
Sight Word Vocabulary
*Read Alouds
*Shared Reading
*Guided Reading
*Independent Reading
Literature Connections
Comprehension Skills
*Shared Writing
*Interactive Writing
*Independent Writing
Handwriting
Learning Centers
Math
Social Studies
Science
Health/Safety
Technology
Lunch
Recess/Free Play
Snack
Physical Education
Music
Art
Library



Students will not be participating in all the above activities every day and will vary based on the daily schedule of each classroom.

* For a detailed explanation please go to www.sachem.edu , click on Curriculum Tools and then on Sachem Central School District Language Arts Program

Handwriting Skills

One of the many skills your child will learn in Kindergarten is how to properly form the letters of the alphabet. When your child begins writing, use the chart on the following page and encourage them to practice the correct formation of letters. The chart follows a top-to-bottom and left-to-right format just like reading. Be patient, positive, and provide encouragement as coordination improves.



Kid Writing

Kid writing introduces children to the world of written language through journal writing and Writer's Workshop. During this time they will receive fundamental writing skills they can apply for many purposes across the curriculum and at home. Children begin writing with illustrations and will progress with developmental spelling. The key is to help children decode unknown words by writing letters for the sounds they hear. Conventional spelling will follow as writing skills are developed. Below is a sample of typical Kindergarten writing:

My nam is Devin.
I am fiv yrs old.
I wnt a pet brd and sevin cats.



Writer's Workshop

Writer's Workshop provides children with the opportunity to be independent writers. The goal of writing is to communicate ideas, gain confidence, and enjoy writing. The workshop is structured, and instruction is tailored to the needs of the students. The workshop begins with the teacher providing a brief focused mini lesson. The purpose is to teach and model a skill or strategy that can be used when writing. The children then begin writing as the teacher circulates around the room, conferencing with students about their work. Finally, the class gathers to share work in progress or published writing.

Important Information to Remember

Absences/Tardiness

Daily attendance at school is encouraged and beneficial to the development of your child. If your child is absent from school, you are required to send a note explaining the reason for his/her absence (see attached). In this way we can record the exact reason for absence as required by law. Being absent without an excuse is illegal and must be recorded as so. If your child is going to be absent, parents are asked to call the school nurse. Any missed work and assignments can be picked up after 2 days of the absence or upon your child's return to school.

Students who are late to school are to be accompanied by an adult into the building and signed in. It is very important that parents report their child's tardiness or absence the morning either event occurs.

Emergency Notification

Should we need to contact you during the school day, we will be requesting emergency contact information, such as the name of several trusted neighbors or family members. In the event we are unable to contact you personally, we will continue to call the emergency contact numbers. Please keep the school office advised of any change in home or business telephone numbers, including unlisted numbers.

Leaving School

You have entrusted your child to our care and this responsibility is not carried lightly. A child will not be permitted to leave school during regular hours unless personally picked up by a parent/legal guardian, or an authorized adult as noted by the emergency contact card or parent note. **Photo identification will be required upon pick up (i.e. driver's license).** A neighbor or friend may pick up a child only with the authorization of the parent which is a written note to the teacher indicating the date and name of authorized adult to pick up his/her child. Please be sure to send your dated permission note beforehand. Otherwise, your child will be dismissed in the usual manner.

School Closings

On days when it is necessary to close schools due to bad weather, please refer to the following web sites, radio and/or TV stations:

WALK 97.5 FM
Channel 12 News

www.sachem.edu

When possible, a Connect-ED call will be made to the telephone number you provided to your child's school about delayed openings, early dismissals or school closings.

School Absence Note

Class _____ School _____

Today's Date _____

My child, _____

was absent from school on _____

because _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

School Absence Note

Class _____ School _____

Today's Date _____

My child, _____

was absent from school on _____

because _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

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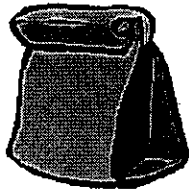
Parent/Guardian's Signature

Food and Nutrition

To prepare your child for learning, please be sure that your child eats a balanced diet, gets some daily exercise, has 10 hours of sleep at night, and has a healthy meal to start every school day.

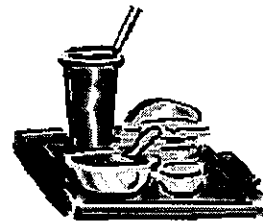
Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is available to all Sachem students. A menu is available on <http://www.sachem.edu/nutrition/> indicating breakfast choices and costs, should you require this service. Children are encouraged to eat at home when possible to avoid any delay in the instructional time and the start of the school day.



Snack

An opportunity will be provided for kindergarten students to have a snack period. Please have your child bring in a small nutritious snack including a drink, each day. We recommend sending something which can be easily opened and eaten within about 10-15 minutes.



Lunch

A one half hour lunch period will be provided each day. Kindergarten students may purchase a nutritious school lunch or bring one from home. A lunch menu will be available on <http://www.sachem.edu/nutrition/> detailing daily choices and costs. We recommend you pre-pay for lunch through Sachem's Food Service Department. Our Kindergarten Aides provide individual assistance while the Kindergartners are proceeding through the lunch line and provide supervision while the children are eating.

If Your Child Will be Riding the Bus

Parents will be advised of the hours school will be in session. If your child is eligible for bus transportation, you will be notified of the closest bus stop to your home. During the first few days of school, plan to be at the bus stop at least thirty minutes prior to the time indicated on the bus schedule. The printed bus schedule is approximate; however, you can determine bus time more accurately after a few days of experience.

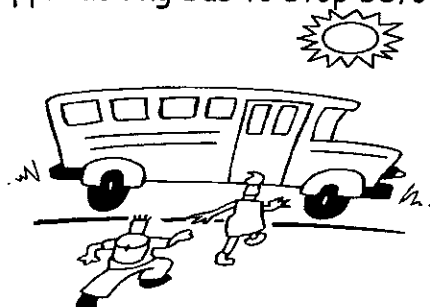
After determining bus arrival time, always have your child out for the bus five minutes before it is due to arrive. Your child will receive a special identification tag before school begins. **Have your child wear this tag for the first few weeks until he/she becomes familiar with the particular bus and driver.** Drivers will check the tags to assure that your child is on the right bus, and the tags will be helpful to teachers in getting to know your child and putting him/her on the right bus after school.

All kindergarten children must be met at the bus stop by an adult or they will be taken back to school. A form will be sent home to indicate who will meet your child when they get off the bus in the event you can not be there. During the school year, if your child is being picked up at the bus stop by someone not on this form, a note should be sent to school. The bus driver will then be given a copy of this note at dismissal.

On the first day of school please do not drive your child to school. Rather, take your child to the regular assigned bus stop and wait there. You will have the opportunity to meet other parents, and your child will share this experience with his/her classmates. The company of peers boarding the bus helps to make the first day more natural, and we have found this procedure to work most effectively.

Please review the following bus safety rules with your child before the first day of school. Children should:

- Remain seated while the bus is moving
- Talk quietly to their neighbors; no yelling or playing around
- Keep arms and heads inside the windows
- Wait for the approaching bus to stop before walking toward it



SACHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
51 School Street
Lake Ronkonkoma, New York 11779

Dear Parents,

In order to ensure the safety of your child for the _____ school year, we will need to have a list of adults who can meet your child at the bus stop. The bus driver will not drop kindergarten students at the stop unless an authorized adult is available to meet the child. In the event an authorized adult is not available, the driver will return the child to the school.

Please sign and return the slip below to your child's classroom teacher on the first day of school. After the school receives and makes copies of the form, it will be given to the bus driver to keep on record. Any changes to the form must be submitted in writing to the attention of the school principal.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring the safety of your child.

Name of School _____

Child's Name _____

Bus Number _____

Classroom Teacher _____

Please allow my child to be released from the Sachem school bus to the following person(s):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Parent or Guardians Signature

Principal's Signature

Before Registration

Eligibility

To be eligible for kindergarten, your child must be five years old on or before December 1st of the same year. This date has long been established in the district as the official cut-off for kindergarten eligibility and there are no exceptions granted. By regulation, chronological age may, in fact, be the sole criterion for entering kindergarten.

Parents must present a certified copy of a birth transcript from a government agency as proof of their child's age. A hospital certificate is not acceptable.

Residence



The child and parents or legal guardians must reside within the boundaries of the Sachem School District as of the first day of school and thereafter.



The Sachem Elementary Curriculum Department, in consultation with teaching staff, completed this curriculum project. Special thanks to Lisa Ranieri, Kristin Fullam, Donna Bleck, Adrienne Spivak and Cathy Juliano for their collaborative efforts in creating this informational document.

