

## Entry into Kindergarten Parent Guides

There is so much great information available about the transition from pre-k to kindergarten. KC Ready 4s has put together a packet of our favorite parent guides from the Michigan Department of Education regarding the kindergarten experience. This packet includes some of our favorite ones but all 24 parent guides are available in English, Spanish and Arabic, and can be found on the Michigan Department of Education website at this shortened web address:

<http://tinyurl.com/jng5m8o>



♥ Welcome to  
Kindergarten

Kalamazoo County Ready 4s  
*Joyful, Intentional, Life-Changing: The Power of Pre-Kindergarten!*

## How Do I Know if My Child Is Ready for Kindergarten? Parent Guide #2

**A child who is five years old on or before September 1 may enroll in kindergarten.\***

- Some children seem too young or not ready for school. Some families and teachers believe that getting older will help the child get ready for kindergarten. This is not always true; remember that children change a lot between May and September.
- Children grow and develop by learning from the world around them.
- New people and children help your child learn and grow.
- All children need time to talk about what they are doing with adults and other children.
- Kindergarten can help parents help their children at home.

### ***The Family***

Every child wants to feel safe and ready to succeed in school. Your family is the most important factor in supporting your child to achieve these feelings. Parent involvement improves your child's school success. It also helps your child feel good about himself or herself. Family support helps encourage your child to learn.

- Maintain a daily routine that includes mealtimes, snacks, and bedtimes.
- Be sure your child's shots and health check-ups are current.
- Make sure your child has plenty of play and outdoor time.
- Play with your child.
- Listen to your child.

- Talk to your child.
- Read to your child.
- Write with your child.

### ***The Schools***

Work with families and neighborhoods so children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

- Must be ready to teach children who come to school with different experiences of learning.
- Teach the material children need to learn for that grade level.

All young children can learn if they are given proper material, encouragement and family support.

***\*Please see Parent Guide #4 for information about an early entry option for kindergarten enrollment.***

## How Do I Enroll My Child In Kindergarten? Parent Guide #3

**A child who is five years old on or before September 1 may enroll in kindergarten.\***

- Most public school districts begin signing children up for kindergarten in early spring for the following fall.
- Contact your local school to find out the exact date.
- If you are interested in signing up your child in a district other than your own, contact that district to see if they are offering schools of choice enrollment for kindergarten and if so, what the deadline is for application.
- Be ready with names, addresses and phone numbers to fill out forms. Also bring contact information about your child's doctor.
- Check with your local school for what information they want you to bring.
- If you do not have all of the forms they want, you should still sign up your child for kindergarten. The staff can help you get any missing forms.
- If you are staying in a temporary place or have lost your housing recently, let your school know that when you sign up.
- When you sign up, let the school know if your child gets other services, such as speech therapy.

Here are some common papers needed to sign your child up for kindergarten.

- Proof of your child's age and identity (birth certificate) is required. Other proof of birth may be accepted (passport, hospital birth record, adoption record or baptismal certificate, etc.).
- Proof of where you live (driver's license, voter registration card, utility bill, rent statement, income tax return statement, or any official document showing both your name and address).
- Records of vaccination and immunization. You may contact your school to apply for a waiver, which is an exemption from vaccinations for religious or medical reasons. Current immunizations can be found at the [Michigan Care Improvement Registry](http://www.mcir.org) ([www.mcir.org](http://www.mcir.org)).
- Vision and hearing tests. Each child needs to have a hearing and vision test before starting kindergarten.

***\*Please see Parent Guide #4 for information about an early entry option for kindergarten enrollment.***

## Early Entry Option for Kindergarten Enrollment Parent Guide #4

Michigan law\* states that a child must be five years old on or before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten.

### ***Early Entry Option:***

With the change in the state law about when a child can enroll in kindergarten, some children may end up having to wait an extra year to attend. This concerned lawmakers. What if your child's birthday causes him or her to just miss being able to enroll? That's where the "early entry option" comes in.

If your child is not five years old by September 1, but will be five years old on or before December 1, and you wish to enroll him or her in kindergarten the school year BEFORE he or she would now be age eligible to enroll, you must notify the school district of your plan.

Once a school district receives notice of the desire by parents to enroll their child who just misses the age cut-off, they consider the request. They may talk with you about your child's readiness for school, and about the kinds of things that children will be expected to do and learn in kindergarten. They may also recommend whether or not your child should be enrolled early. Regardless of what they recommend, you make the final decision about whether or not to enroll your child in kindergarten.

\*The section of the Revised School Code that addresses this issue is contained in the Michigan Compiled Law under MCL 380.1147.

## What Will My Child Do In Kindergarten? Parent Guide #9

**If your child has gone to a preschool or child care center, kindergarten could be a “big change.”**

- The kindergarten program will be more formal than preschool. Schools today have more teaching time to meet certain goals.
- Local schools are allowed to choose programs that meet those goals for learning. Schools also choose the daily routine in kindergarten.
- The state of Michigan has goals for what children should have learned by the end of the kindergarten year.

***Ask your child’s teacher to share the kindergarten daily routine with you. Then you can talk with your child about parts of the day, such as:***

- Large and small group time.
- Time for children to work alone on projects or in “centers” around the room.
- Snack time.
- Lunch in the cafeteria.
- Active and quiet activities.
- Extra classes such as gym, music, art, library and computers.

**No matter what the kindergarten routine looks like, the most important thing is the variety and types of learning opportunities.**

- Good teachers know that kindergartners need lots of learning opportunities. Activities in typical subject areas are blended with social/emotional and physical development experiences.
- By talking with the teacher, you can learn about what your child is doing. This is important during changes as you work together to help your child adjust.
- When this works, your child looks forward to school each day!

***Growing up - Changes from the preschool years. Differences your child may experience in the classroom:***

- More structured time and more teacher-directed activities.
- More group projects and less free play.
- More inside activities, less outside time.
- More writing letters and numbers.
- More school-wide rules.
- More children in the class.

## What Can I Do at Home? Parent Guide #16

**As your child's first teacher you have a key role. You can help your child prepare for school and life success.**

*The quantity and quality of time you spend with your child matters. You can do some things to help your child be better prepared for school while having fun.*

- **READ every day.** Share your love of books with your child. Research shows there are benefits from reading to your child for 30 minutes a day. It does not have to be done all at once.
- **TALK and LISTEN.** When you talk and listen with your child, he/she builds language and learns needed skills.
- **WORDS. Use as many words as possible to describe things in your child's world.** The number of words your child knows relates to his/her later reading success. Don't use 'baby talk.' If your child makes mistakes in grammar, repeat the word correctly.
- **RESPECT.** Be respectful with your child and others. Your child learns from watching you. Make sure your actions are ones you want your child to repeat.
- **PLAY with your children.** Let them see you as a playful person. Remember that play *is* a child's work. Children solve problems and learn new skills through play.
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**HELP your child see herself/himself as a capable person.** Help build self-esteem by pointing out all the things your child does 'right.' Make an effort to look for the good in your child. Help your child see how wonderful she/he is.

- **COOK with your child.** Measure, pour, stir, read the recipe, clean up, and eat with your child. Cooking activities are good ways to work small muscles. These muscles are used later to write.
- **COLOR and draw with your child.** This will improve his or her fine motor skills and help prepare the muscles in the fingers for writing.

**ASK for help.** If you are concerned about your child's development in any area, and he or she is under the age of three, call 1-800-*Early On*. If your child is over the age of three, contact [Build Up Michigan](http://buildupmi.org) (<http://buildupmi.org>), your local school district, or the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education, at 1-888-320-8384.

## How Can I Help My Child Ease Those First Day Jitters? Parent Guide #18

### ***Positive attitudes go a long way.***

- Your child will feel your confidence in his/her ability to succeed.
- Your child is influenced by the things you say and do. He/she also sees the feelings you show.
- It is important that you are happy and excited about your child starting kindergarten. Your child will follow your lead.
- There are many good books to read together to get ready for the first day of school.

### ***Breakfast is fuel for your child's body.***

A good way for your child to have energy through the day is to give him/her a healthy breakfast. This meal is important because your child's body needs the "fuel" to get going in the morning. Numerous studies show that children who eat breakfast daily have better school records and better attitudes. The fuel gained from a healthy breakfast also helps with memory.

### ***Choices are empowering.***

Let your child make choices about school clothes, food and school supplies. This can help him/her feel more confident and in control. This also increases his/her independence skills.

### ***Morning rush hour can be avoided.***

- Waking up with enough time to get ready for school makes your home more relaxed. This helps

your child feel more comfortable.

- Setting out clothes and supplies the night before works well for many families.

### ***Saying goodbye is better than the "disappearing act."***

- Leaving your child that first day might be difficult. Studies show that a loving but firm goodbye is the best way to go.
- Comfort him/her and let him/her know the next time he/she will see you. Don't make your child feel awkward when he/she is upset to see you go.
- The teacher can help with good ideas before the first day of school.