

The ABCs of Kindergarten



Westminster School District



Dear Parents,

The Board of Trustees, along with the staff, welcomes you and your child to the Westminster School District.

Starting kindergarten is an exciting and hopeful time for families and children. Education will play an important role in shaping the future for your children. Kindergarten provides the strong start your child deserves for successful learning.

This guide was designed to provide you with information to help answer questions about school readiness, our kindergarten programs and ways to be involved with the school.

As you and your child embark on the exciting road to kindergarten, the District and school staff will work together with you as a team to provide your child with an outstanding program. Best wishes for a successful kindergarten experience!

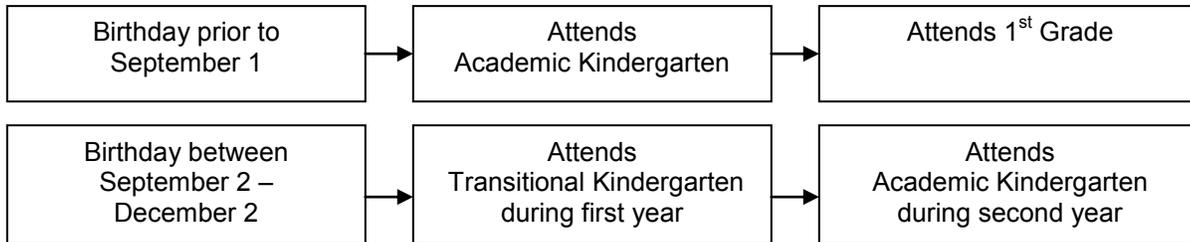
Sincerely,

*The Westminster School District
Board of Trustees and Staff*

General Information

Age Requirements for Kindergarten

In 2010, the *Kindergarten Readiness Act* was passed in California to change the age when children can begin Academic Kindergarten. Under this law, children must turn five years old on or before September 1 to enroll in Academic Kindergarten. Children with a birthday between September 2 and December 2 will go into Transitional Kindergarten*, which is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program.



WSD Kindergarten Programs

The Westminster School District offers two kindergarten programs to meet the individual needs of our young learners: Academic Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten. Placement in a specific program is based on the state law birthday requirement, and criteria designed to help determine the appropriate educational setting for each child. Instruction in both kindergarten programs is based upon the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To see the full listing of Kindergarten CCSS go to the website for the California Department of Education at www.cde.ca.gov.

Academic Kindergarten Program

Available at all of the elementary sites, the Academic Kindergarten Program will provide a rigorous learning experience. This program provides a structured learning environment that allows for both large and small group, formal and informal instructional time. The development of early reading, writing, and math skills is a primary focus of this program. In addition, children learn to work well both independently and with others in a variety of settings.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)* Program

Transitional Kindergarten is a program for kindergarten age students who have birthdays between September 2 and December 2. It is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program designed to prime young kindergartners for school success. This program follows the same all-day time schedule, but has a smaller student to teacher ratio than the Academic Kindergarten. Transitional Kindergarten gives young learners the gift of time by allowing them the opportunity to access the rigorous kindergarten curriculum standards over a two-year period. This program provides children with a stimulating environment which fosters physical, social-emotional and intellectual development. Once students complete a year of Transitional Kindergarten, they continue on to Academic Kindergarten the following school year.

Special Education

If your child qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), kindergarten placement and school location is determined by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team assigned to your child. If you have any questions pertaining to special education assessment, eligibility, placement and/or services, please contact your school site or the Student Services Office at (714) 894-7344.

**Formerly known as Preppie Kindergarten or Preppie K in Westminster School District*

Open Enrollment Program

Most parents choose to have their child remain at their home school, the local school serving the attendance area of their residence, in order to establish friendships with children in their own neighborhood. However, for a variety of personal or educational reasons, some parents opt to have their child attend another school within the District. Our program provides parents with that option on a space-available basis. Transportation to any school site other than the home school is the responsibility of parents. For more information call the Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources at (714) 894-7311.

Transfers Are Welcome

Westminster School District accepts interdistrict transfers (children of families from outside the attendance boundaries of the District) for enrollment in our schools. Permits to attend Westminster School District schools are granted based on space availability. Once enrolled, the District will do all it can to assure K-8 enrollment in the District. Permits may be granted for the following reasons:

1. Current law (Allen Bill) allows parents working in local businesses to use their work address as a home address for school attendance purposes.
2. Childcare proximity is also a reason to establish school attendance.
3. If a specialized program (such as All-day Kindergarten and/or Transitional Kindergarten) is not available in your district of residence, an interdistrict transfer can be requested.

For more information call Human Resources at (714) 894-7311.

Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality play key roles in helping a student be successful in school. Please schedule doctor, dental and other appointments outside of the school day whenever possible. If your child is ill, please call the school office to report the absence. Good health is more important than perfect attendance. Please do not send your child to school with symptoms of illness or pending illness, such as:

- Fever of 100° or more
- Hacking cough or persistent runny nose
- Strep throat or pink eye
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Earache
- Chicken pox

Registration Checklist

- Will your child be 5 years of age on or before December 2 of this year?
- If you do not know where your child's neighborhood school is, please check the District website (www.wsd.k12.ca.us) for the School Locator function. You can also call the District office at (714) 894-7311 for information.
- Pick up enrollment information when it is available from the neighborhood school. Kindergarten registration begins in the Westminster School District on the first Wednesday of March. Return all forms to the school office as soon as they are completed. Bring copies of your child's birth certificate and proof of residency, such as a utility bill.
- Make sure your child has had all necessary immunizations prior to enrollment.
- Please return your packet as soon as possible. It is very important as school staffing and class assignments can be more accurately made when all packets are collected.
- Will your child need before- or after-school care? If so, contact the Extended School Program Office at (714) 894-7311 for enrollment information.

Frequently Asked Questions

Which Westminster school should my child attend?

If you are not sure which school to attend, please check the District website (www.wsd.k12.ca.us) for the School Locator function. You can also contact Human Resources at the Westminster School District office at (714) 894-7311. Your home school is based on where you reside within the community.

We live in Westminster but want to attend a school other than our home school. How do I register?

Go to the office of your home school and request a kindergarten registration packet and an intradistrict transfer. At this time, inform the home school that you will be requesting to attend another Westminster school if they have space. Turn in the completed application and intradistrict transfer into your home school. Registration priority is first given to residents within the attendance boundaries of the school.

We don't live in Westminster but I want my child to attend a Westminster school. How do I register?

Go to your home school district. Obtain an interdistrict permit to release you from your home district. Present the permit to the Human Resources department at the WSD office for approval. Go to the office of the Westminster school that you want to attend, show them your interdistrict permit and request a registration packet. Turn it in as soon as possible. Your child will be admitted to the school if the application is complete and space is available. Registration priority is first given to residents within the attendance boundaries of the school. If space is not available at the school of your choice, the District will make every effort to find a space at another Westminster school. Please contact Human Resources at (714) 894-7311.

Where can I get more information about the Transitional Kindergarten program?

Please refer to the Westminster School District Preppie Kindergarten brochure for more information about this popular program. Preppie Kindergarten brochures can be obtained at each school site. This information is also available online at www.wsd.k12.ca.us or call the School Readiness Office at (714) 898-8389.

How do I get more detailed information about the school district or a particular school?

School Accountability Report Cards are available from each school site. Contact the school principal to request information about the school and district. This information is also available on our web site at: www.wsd.k12.ca.us.

What is the Kindergarten oral health requirement?

California law now requires that your child have a dental check-up by May 31 of his or her first school year. Dental evaluations that have taken place within the 12 months before your child enters school also meet this requirement. Your school will give you the required form to take with you when your child has his or her next check-up.

What immunizations must be completed to enroll my child in kindergarten?

Proof of immunization against:

- MMR 2 doses
- Polio 4 doses total, or 3 doses with the last dose after age 4
- DPT 5 doses total, with the last dose after age 4
- Hepatitis B Series of 3 shots
- Varicella 1 dose of the vaccination or documentation of chickenpox disease

Physical Exam for 1st Grade

California law requires all children enrolled in public school to have a physical exam. The physical exam must be completed by December 1st of the child's first grade year. Exams completed up to 18 months prior to the beginning of first grade will be accepted. To meet this requirement, a special form, which is in the Kindergarten enrollment packet, must be signed by a physician.

When will I be able to discuss my child with his/her teacher?

An individual conference for each child will be held in the early part of the school year. Special conferences are welcome on an "as needed" basis.

What is Back-to-School Night?

This is an evening for parents when the instructional program will be explained by his/her teacher. This meeting is held early in the school year.

What is Open House?

This is an evening for parents and students to tour the school and the individual classrooms and for your student to share his/her projects with you. Please refer to your local school calendar for dates.

What will happen in an emergency (fire, earthquake, etc.)?

Each school has its own emergency preparedness plan and students practice drills regularly. More specific information about your individual school will be sent home in your "beginning of the year" packet.

Is my child a bus rider?

In some areas, bus transportation is provided. Your individual school will provide times, bus stops, and schedules after your address has been verified.

When can I volunteer in my child's classroom?

You are welcome and encouraged to volunteer at your child's school. Your participation will benefit all of the students and staff at the school where you will be volunteering. Westminster School District believes that parents, grandparents and community members serve as valuable resources to our school by enriching the learning for children. By volunteering, you make a direct contribution to the instructional program. Please contact your child's school for more information about the protocol for participating on campus.

Additional Resources

Parent Resource Center

School readiness is a combination of many factors. Social development, emotional development, language and literacy skills, cognitive ability and physical development should all be considered when preparing to send your child to kindergarten. Our Parent Resource Center provides a creative learning environment to help children between the ages of birth and five years become academically and socially prepared for kindergarten, with support for parents as their child's first teachers. The Parent Resource Center is located at Land School, 15151 Temple Street, Westminster. Please call Land School at (714) 898-8389 to learn more about our programs and services.

PTA

Each school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that supports children, parents and the school through a variety of programs. There are many volunteer opportunities with this association. Please contact your individual school for information.

School Site Council

The School Site Council (SSC) is an advisory group that meets regularly to receive information, discuss school programs, and provide input toward school-based decision-making. All meetings are open to the public. The School Site Council is composed of the principal, three classroom teachers, one other school staff member, and five parents of students. A subcommittee of the School Site Council is the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC).

Early Childhood Education

The Early Childhood Education Program provides an enriched environment for children ages 3-5, to benefit their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development. Children participate in a nurturing, active, challenging environment that encourages curiosity, exploration, problem solving, language development, and positive self-image. The goal of the Early Childhood Education Program is to prepare all children to enter Kindergarten ready to learn. The district offers developmentally appropriate free or reduced fee-based preschool programs at 14 school locations within the district. For information, visit the Child Development Programs website at www.wsdchilddevelopment.org, or contact the Child Development Program Office at Land School at (714) 898-8389.

English Learner Program

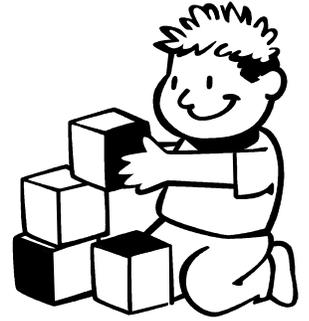
The program for English Learners (EL) is focused on helping students become proficient in English and empowering them to achieve academic success in the core curriculum offered to all students. As a part of the enrollment process, students who speak a language other than English are assessed both in English and their primary language through our district office. Parents receive notification when results are received from the State.



The Kindergarten Child

The Kindergarten Child Will Be:

- * Four years and nine months old to six years old
- * Quite active
- * Independent in eating, dressing, toileting, and sleeping
- * Losing his or her first lower teeth
- * Growing rapidly
- * Maturing in motor control
- * Interested in other children yet still focused on self



The Kindergarten Child Will Have:

- * Emerging reasoning power
- * The ability to distinguish right from wrong with adult guidance
- * The ability to share ideas and participate in activities
- * Desire to speak plainly and use new words
- * The ability to relate experiences and retell stories



The Kindergarten Child Needs:

- * To feel secure and loved
- * Ten or more hours of sleep each night
- * Good nutrition habits
- * Time to play freely and be creative
- * To have group approval and acceptance
- * A few special friends
- * A happy environment at home and at school
- * Opportunities for exercising large and small muscles
- * To share toys and take turns in play
- * To increase his or her vocabulary
- * A balance of quiet and active experiences

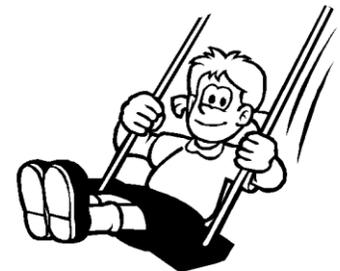


School Readiness

Is my child ready for Kindergarten?

Ask yourself: Does my child...

- ✓ Sit still for 10 to 15 minutes?
- ✓ Listen to a story or participate in an activity and respond to questions related to that activity?
- ✓ Retain information?
- ✓ Follow simple two-step directions?
- ✓ Have an interest in reading, listening to stories, letters, and numbers?
- ✓ Count to 10 and understand simple number concepts?
- ✓ Focus on an activity?
- ✓ Finish what he/she starts?
- ✓ Name colors?
- ✓ Enjoy coloring and drawing?
- ✓ Express himself/herself verbally?
- ✓ Speak in complete sentences?
- ✓ Label or name things appropriately?
- ✓ Answer open-ended questions?
- ✓ Ask for help when appropriate?
- ✓ Ask questions?
- ✓ Know the correct way to hold a pencil, crayon and scissors, and work with them comfortably?
- ✓ Work individually and in small groups?
- ✓ Understand the ideas of sharing and taking turns?
- ✓ Cooperate?
- ✓ Take care of own toilet needs and wash hands without assistance?
- ✓ Know how to roll, throw and catch a ball? Also, run, hop, jump, swing, and gallop?
- ✓ Have confidence to separate from a parent or caregiver and stay with another adult?
- ✓ Respect rights and belongings of others?
- ✓ Recognize his/her own name?
- ✓ Write his/her own name?



Parents are their child's first and most important teacher and are the best judge of their child's readiness. You may opt to give your child "the gift of time" to grow and mature both socially and academically.

How Parents Can Help

Parents are a child's first teacher. Your involvement is critical to your child's success in school. Studies have shown that when parents are involved, children feel better about themselves and learn more. Here are some ways that you can help.

1. Make sure your child is well-fed and well-rested for school.
2. Encourage your child to behave in positive ways.
3. Take time to read with your child each day.
4. Set a special time to be with your child when you read to them, write down their stories, or just talk.
5. Create a positive attitude toward school.
6. Establish habits of regular and prompt attendance.
7. Label all personal items, such as sweaters, jackets, raincoats, backpacks, and lunch boxes.
8. Read school notices and respond to them if requested.
9. Pack nutritious snacks and encourage your child to eat a good breakfast and lunch.
10. Encourage your child to share their school experiences at home. Asking specific questions about their day will encourage more discussion (e.g. What was your favorite activity today?).
11. Develop responsibility and independence by teaching your child to pick up belongings, to do simple tasks around the house and to follow instructions the first time they are given.
12. Allow your child opportunities to play with other children.
13. Help your child learn to respect the rights and property of others.
14. Show an interest in your child's work by visiting the classroom and talking about the work brought home.
15. Share an interesting hobby or collection with your child's class.
16. Encourage your child by praising his/her efforts and accomplishments.
17. Take your child to places of interest and talk with him/her often throughout the day about what he/she is experiencing.
18. Always keep your child's emergency information up to date.
19. Help your child learn to print his/her first name.
20. Support your child's school by reviewing and reinforcing your school's discipline plan with your child.
21. Teach your child to put on a jacket, fasten it, tie shoelaces and zip zippers.



Westminster School District

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www.wsd.k12.ca.us