

Helpful Hints



For
Kindergartners
& their family

Dear Parents and Future Kindergartners,

Welcome to school! This is a very exciting time in your lives. We have gathered some information, activities, and suggestions together in this booklet to make your entry into Kindergarten easier. There are games to play, a list of some good books that you might want to read together, some things that your Kindergarten teacher would like you to be able to do when you come to Kindergarten, and a list of things that you will do when you come to Kindergarten Screening. We would like to introduce you to Starfall, which is free interactive website. It is fun and will help prepare your child for Kindergarten. The website address is <http://www.starfall.com/>

We are looking forward to meeting you at the screening. Most of you will get to meet your Kindergarten teacher then. You will also get to meet and talk to some other people that work in our school buildings. See you soon!

M.S.A.D.#55 Teachers & Staff

KINDERGARTEN SCREENING

There will be stations set up in the room for your child to visit. Below you will find a brief description of the stations.

1. Early Screening Inventory
2. Speech/Language
3. Dental
4. Vision/Hearing
5. Lead Screening/Immunization Screening
6. Literacy Screening

Early Screening Inventory

The Early Screening Inventory is a process used to gather information about all children who will be entering school for the first time. It takes approximately 15-20 minutes to administer to each child and it assesses the following areas:

Fine Motor Development: Fine motor development refers to the child's facility for small muscle manipulation, which affects tasks such as drawing and cutting.

Gross Motor Development: Gross motor development refers to the child's ability to use the body and to perform large muscle tasks, such as running and jumping.

Receptive and Expressive Language: Receptive language refers to the child's level of understanding spoken language. Expression has to do with the child's oral communication of ideas and concepts.

Cognition: Cognitive development refers to the child's level of understanding concepts. Key to this area are the abilities to solve problems, to remember, to sequence, to interpret shapes and symbols and to recognize similarities and differences.

Speech/Language

As part of kindergarten screening, your child will receive a brief speech/language screening. The screening will give us a general idea of your child's receptive/expressive language development. It will also measure speech sound development. Many speech sound errors are age appropriate for kindergarten age children and should not concern you.

Please notify us on screening day, if your child has a hearing loss, a history of ear infections, or other pertinent medical problems.

Dental Screening

The Center for Community Dental Health will be providing your child with a dental health oral assessment.

The screening is a very quick procedure that will only take a few minutes. We will be looking in your child's mouth and making sure teeth are being brushed, and that there are generally no major dental problems.

Each child will receive a new toothbrush and sticker for their effort. We really appreciate your cooperation and support. Thank you.



M.S.A.D. #55 DISTRICT DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood. It affects 85% of children. Dental problems can affect a child's classroom performance. Children suffering from dental problems have difficulty concentrating. Most dental problems can be prevented with simple measures like fluoride, dental sealants, proper tooth brushing, flossing, and diets low in sugar.

Our School Oral Health Program provides a safe and effective way to improve the oral health of our students at a low cost.

The five basic parts of the program are Dental Health Education, Weekly Fluoride Rinse Program, Dental Screenings, Dental Sealants, and School Based Dental Clinic.

Dental Health Education offers students in grades kindergarten through grade 4 a monthly 30 minute oral health class. Students are taught proper tooth brushing and flossing techniques, proper nutrition, as well as other dental health topics.

Students in grades kindergarten through grade 4 are eligible to participate in a Weekly Fluoride Rinse Program. Research has shown that participating children have at least 35% fewer cavities.

WEEKLY "SWISH": A weekly fluoride rinse is given to students. This type of fluoride protects the teeth that are already present in the mouth.

DAILY TABLETS: A daily fluoride tablet helps strengthen developing teeth that are under the gum line.

Is it alright to take both tablets and fluoride rinse? The answer is yes, each type works in a different way to help strengthen the teeth.

Dental Screenings help to identify students who need dental care. The results can motivate parents to seek dental care for their children. The results of the screenings also help identify areas of the dental health curriculum that could be enhanced.

Free Dental Sealants are offered to all 2nd and 3rd grade students. Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings that are painted into the deep grooves of the molars. They help to prevent cavities from forming on these teeth. The use of fluoride and sealants together can prevent nearly all tooth decay in children.

A registered dental hygienist visits our elementary schools to place dental sealants. She uses portable equipment that can easily be set up in the school.

We offer a School Based Dental Clinic. A registered dental hygienist from Prevention Partners is available once or twice a month to see students who are Mainecare eligible. This clinic provides students with oral health education, dental cleanings, dental sealants, fluoride treatments, and other dental health services. The clinic does not have a dentist.

Hearing Screening

School Administrative District #55 is offering hearing and vision screening tests as part of Kindergarten registration.

To assist us in making this screening a pleasant experience for your child, please explain to her/him in advance that the screening will be given. The following might help you to explain the visual and hearing screening tests.

Sounds (similar to those you hear on a musical flute) will be beeped into earphones. Your child will be asked to raise his/her hand if he/she hears a "beep" and then to put his/her hand back on their lap when the sound stops. This will be repeated many times during the screening. This procedure is called "pure tone" screening. Because "raise your hand if you hear a beep" doesn't adequately detect middle ear problems such as those commonly associated with colds, allergies, and upper respiratory infection, we are going to use both "pure tone" screening and impedance screening this year.

Impedance testing is a simple new procedure that objectively detects middle ear problems. This is a comfortable procedure for your child and, unlike pure tone screening; it requires no response by your child. It also is not affected by background noise.

This new screening procedure is more accurate and objective. This means that your school can detect ear problems which can lead to hearing loss and/or serious learning problems. This is very important since proper hearing is essential to language

development and therefore, learning. Even slight or fluctuating hearing loss can cause serious educational problems. This new procedure can prevent that from happening.

Vision Screening

The Shellen “E” chart will be used to screen your child’s vision. This is an effective test for myopia (nearsightedness) and amblyopia (lazy eye).

Your child will be asked to show with his/her arm how the E is pointing, i.e., up, down, to the right and to the left. Both eyes will be screened first. Then the right eye and finally the left eye.



RIGHT



LEFT



UP



DOWN

Lead Screening

Community Health Services will be providing you with a questionnaire to determine whether your child has had exposure to lead.

Immunization Screening

Community Health Services will help you determine what immunizations your child must have before starting school.

Maine State Law requires the following immunization requirements:

**5 Doses of Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus (DPT)
(4 doses if the 4th dose was given after the 4th birthday).**

**4 Doses of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV)
(3 doses if the 3rd dose was given after the 4th birthday).**

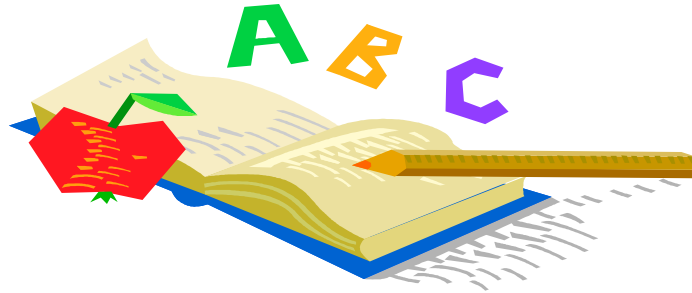
2 Doses of Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR)

1 Dose of Varicella (Chickenpox) Vaccine

If a child does not have the required immunizations, he/she will be excluded from school on the first day of school.

Literacy Screening

The Literacy assessment consists of a Letter Identification assessment and a Concepts About Print assessment. Your child will be asked to identify and name the capital letters; and demonstrate ten concepts about print, such as cover of the book, where to read, left to right progression, etc. Children are not expected to be reading at this time in their development. This assessment will give us an idea about your child's literacy experiences.



So, What Is Title I?

Title I is a Federally funded program intended to make sure all children are successful in school from the start. Studies show that the quicker we catch children at risk, the more successful they are in school. With that in mind, we carefully look at the whole district scores from kindergarten screening, especially the letter identification assessment and the book handling skills assessment. Most children entering kindergarten know at least 10 of the 26 capital letters and know basic book knowledge such as front cover, what to look at when you read, first part and last part, looking from left to right when you read. Most children are able to write their name. Children whose scores are low are identified as children eligible for one on one tutoring through Title I. The kindergarten program is intended as a short term program designed to accelerate learning and help children catch up to their classmates. This is the third year we have offered Title I tutoring at the kindergarten level and data has shown the program to be very effective in helping children make the gains they need.

Some things a child might do in a Title I class are: Letter work – recognizing capital and lower case letters, knowing the sounds they represent and writing letters. Word work – building a sight vocabulary and building a writing vocabulary. Reading books and understanding how books work.

During the year, Title I and the classroom teacher continues to assess progress of all students in kindergarten. If a child is doing well in Title I and the classroom, they may be placed on monitor and not continue with the program. If a child is not receiving services but testing shows that they are slipping behind, Title I may be recommended.

Finally, children are assessed at the end of the year to see if they would benefit from continuing in Title I in the fall or should be released from the program.

Suggestions for Incoming Kindergartners

Recite the ABC's

Identify upper case letters

Count from 1 – 10

Write his/her name

Identify basic colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black and white)

Identify basic shapes (circle, square, rectangle, and triangle)

Identify basic concepts (in/out, on/under, front/back, up/down, on/off, and top/bottom)

Zip, snap, and button his/her own clothes

Knows nursery rhymes

Identify the front/back of a book

Use scissors appropriately



DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Children naturally love to play and explore the world around them. Play is an important way that children develop the muscles and skills they will need when learning to read and write in Kindergarten. Not only do they need strong bodies for proper posture, but also as a foundation for their arms, hands, and fingers to properly develop. Plenty of practice is needed in using their hands so that when they are learning to use a pencil and scissors at school, their hands and fingers will be ready!

Here is a list of some activities which will encourage proper muscle development in your child:

Large Muscle Activities

Bike, scooter, and wagon riding

Playground – climbing, swinging, running, jumping, etc.

Swimming and water play

Walking, running, and hiking

Snow play – sliding, skiing, building forts, etc.

Ball games – bouncing, catching, kicking, throwing, etc.

Dancing

Chores – raking, sweeping, carrying wood or trash or groceries, gardening, washing car, etc.

Small Muscle Activities

Crafts

Cut and paste holiday decorations, cards

Origami

Painting, coloring, and finger painting

Play dough/clay

Model building

Water/sand play

Stenciling

Stamp and inkpad pictures

Carpentry Projects

Chores

Cooking – measuring, stirring, pouring, decorating

Dusting

Sorting cans or laundry

Watering plants

Wiping table or counter

Games

Pickup up sticks

Operation

Blocks – Legos, Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs

Jacks, marbles, etc.

Mazes, dot to dot

Paper dolls

Card Games

Peg board games

Lite Brite

Puzzles

Five Step Problem Solving Process

1. STOP AND THINK

2. GOOD CHOICE OR BAD CHOICE?

3. WHAT ARE MY CHOICES?

4. JUST DO IT

5. DID I SOLVE MY PROBLEM?...GOOD JOB!

What Can I Do to Help My Child Develop Literacy Skills?

1. **Read to your child daily.** Follow the print with your finger and talk about the cover, the illustrations, and the print.
2. **Talk about the books you read together.**
Ideas to discuss: Characters – Why do they do things in the story?
Predictions about what will happen.
Connections with their own lives.
3. **Ask your child to retell the story that you just read.**
Listen for some of these things:
Characters, problems, solutions, beginning, middle, and end.
4. **Develop Concepts.**
Up, down, over, under, on, in, and beside.
5. **Practice following 2 step directions.**
Example: Put the fork down and take the cup to the sink.
6. **Practice listening skills.**
Have your child repeat what you said.
7. **Practice answering questions.**
Who, what, where, when, why, and how.
8. **Read, say, and practice rhymes.**
9. **Help your child practice, identify, and write his/her name.**
10. **Provide a writing center in your house** with writing materials – crayons, markers, paper, journals, and books.
11. **Have your children write when you write.**
Grocery lists, letters, checkbooks, etc.
12. **Practice identifying capital letters.**

Speech & Language Development: 4 To 6 Years

When your child starts a conversation, give your full attention whenever possible. Make sure that you have his or her attention before you speak. As your child learns new words, the pronunciation may not be correct. Acknowledge, encourage, and praise all attempts. Show that you understand the word or phrase by fulfilling the request, if appropriate. Pause after speaking. This gives your child a chance to continue the conversation.

Continue to build vocabulary. Introduce a new word and offer its definition, or use it in a context that is easily understood. This may be done in an exaggerated, humorous manner. “I think I will drive the vehicle to the store. I am too tired to walk.”

Talk about spatial relationships (first, middle, and last; right and left) and opposites (up and down; on and off). Offer a description or clues, and have your child identify what you are describing: “We use it to sweep the floor” (a broom). “It is cold, sweet, and good for dessert. I like strawberry” (ice cream).

Work on forming and explaining categories. Identify the thing that does not belong in a group of similar objects; “A shoe does not belong with an apple and an orange because you can’t eat it; it is not a fruit.”

Help your child follow two-step and three-step directions; “Go to your room, and bring me your book.” Encourage your child to give directions. Follow his or her directions as he or she explains how to build a tower of blocks.

Play games with your child such as “house.” Exchange roles in the family, with you pretending to be the child. Talk about the different rooms and furnishings in the house.

The television also can serve as a valuable learning tool. Talk about what the child is watching. Have him or her guess what might happen next. Talk about the characters. Are they happy or sad? Ask your child to tell you what has happened in the story. Act out a scene together, and make up a different ending.

Take advantage of daily activities. For example, while helping in the kitchen, encourage your child to name the utensils needed. Discuss the foods on the menu, their color, texture, and taste. Where does the food come from? Which food do you like? Which do you dislike? Who will clean up? Emphasize the use of prepositions by asking him or her to put the napkin on the table, in your lap, or under the spoon. Identify who the napkin belongs to. “It is my napkin.” “It is Daddy’s.” “It is John’s.”

While shopping for groceries, discuss what you will buy, how many you need, and what you will make. Discuss the size (large or small), shape (long, round, square) and weight (heavy or light) of the packages.

This information is provided by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

Why Read Aloud?

(Goals for Story Boost Students)

- Reading aloud develops an awareness of print, its form and function, the relationship between speech and print, and book handling skills.
- Reading aloud builds familiarity with story patterns and story language. Familiarity with stories allows for prediction.
- Reading aloud promotes language development, helps to build the child's vocabulary, expands the child's understanding of the world, and helps link new concepts to the know.
- Reading aloud creates pleasant associations with books ... enjoyment, pleasure, and fun. These associations will eventually lead the child to seek out books on their own.



GUIDELINES FOR STORY-READING SESSIONS

(20-35 minutes)

These guidelines were adapted from those developed by Lesley Morrow in her 1988 study of low SES four-year-olds' responses to one-to-one story readings in school settings (Reading Research Quarterly, XXIII (1), Winter 1988, pp. 89-107). They reflect the research on interactions between adults and children during story reading events. The kinds of interactions represented in the guidelines are those that have been demonstrated to elicit the most responses in read-aloud situations.

1. Preparation

- a. Settle in comfortable, out-of-the-way spot and invite the child to look at 3-4 books (preselected by reader).
- b. Introduce each book briefly. Include title and nature of story. Invite the child to choose one of the books for story reading. Put others aside.
- c. Briefly discuss title, author, and book cover with child, giving some background information and/or predicting what will be in the story.

2. Reading Prompting

- a. Invite the child to comment or ask questions throughout story.
- b. If child does not do this, scaffold questions and responses (providing a model).
- c. Relate responses to real-life experiences when appropriate.
- d. Give encouragement and positive reinforcement for child's responses.

3. Retelling

- a. Go back to the beginning of the book. Encourage child to turn pages, "reading" or retelling story and/or sharing further comments and questions.
- b. (Alternative) Invite the child to examine selected photocopied illustrations from the story, put them in order reflecting the sequence of the story, and retell the story.

Book List

Criteria for books used in read-aloud sessions:

- 1.) Recommended by at least 2 children's literature experts as high quality.
- 2.) Recommended by teachers.
- 3.) Story grammar framework of Stein & Glenn followed.

OR used in studies by others following these same criteria. (#1-10, Morrow; #11-14, Martinez and Teale)

1. Eastman, P.D. *Are you my mother?*
2. Zoltow, C. *Mr. Rabbit and the lovely present.*
3. Flory, J. *The Bear on the doorstep.*
4. Hurd, R. *Under the lemon tree.*
5. Hawkesworth, J. *The lonely skyscraper.*
6. Keller, H. *Cromwell's glasses.*
7. Slobodkina, E. *Caps for sale.*
8. Anderson, K. *What's the matter, Sylvie, can't you ride?*
9. Keats, R.J. *Jenny's hat.*
10. Fujikawa, G. *Jenny learns a lesson.*
11. Wager, *Ira sleeps over.*
12. Gackenback, *Harry and the terrible whatzit.*
13. Lionni, *Alesancer and the windup mouse.*
14. DePaola, *Strega Nona.*
15. Wells, R. *Shy Charles.*
16. G'ag, W. *Millions of Cats.*
17. Freeman, D. *Corduroy.*
18. Freeman, D. *A pocket for Corduroy.*
19. Keats, E.J. *Whistle for Willy.*
20. Keats, E.J. *Goggles.*
21. Zion, G. *Harry the dirty dog.*
22. Mayer, M. *There's a nightmare in my closet.*
23. Lionni, L. *Swimmy.*
24. McClosky, R. *Blueberries for Sal.*
25. McPhail, D. *Fix-it.*
26. Mayer, M. *There's an alligator under my bed.*
27. Havill, J. *Jamaica's find.*
28. Asch, F. *Happy Birthday Moon.*
29. Voist, J. *Alexander and the terrible horrible no good very bad day.*
30. Littledale, F. *The snow child.*

A B C D E F G H I J K

L M N O P Q R S T U V

Q X Y Z






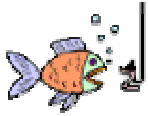
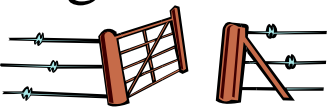



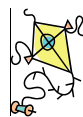















a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o

p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Blank handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

ALPHABET CHART

<p>Alphabet</p>	<p>a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z</p>	<p>A a  apple</p>	<p>B b  bear</p>
<p>C c  cat</p>	<p>D d  dog</p>	<p>E e  elephant</p>	<p>F f  fish</p>
<p>G g  gate</p>	<p>H h  hat</p>	<p>I i  igloo</p>	<p>J j  jack-in-the-box</p>
<p>K k  kite</p>	<p>L l  leaf</p>	<p>M m  moon</p>	<p>N n  nest</p>
<p>O o  octopus</p>	<p>P p  pig</p>	<p>Q q  queen</p>	<p>R r  ring</p>
<p>S s  sun</p>	<p>T t  turtle</p>	<p>U u  umbrella</p>	<p>V v  vacuum</p>
<p>W w  window</p>	<p>X x  x-ray</p>	<p>Y y  yo-yo</p>	<p>Z z  zipper</p>

Alpha

(Recognizing Letter Shapes and Names)

It's Bingo with a twist! Make two Alpha cards, one for you and one for your child. Lay out all 52 letter cards so you and your child can see them. Write a different letter in each square of your Alpha card. Help your child do the same. Turn the cards facedown in a pile. Turn over the top card and ask your child to say the letter's name. Look for the letter on your Alpha card, and if it is there, place a marker over it. Have your child look for the letter on his or her card. Play the game until you or your child covers five letters across, vertically, or diagonally. The first person who covers five letters shouts *Alpha!* And wins the game!

Materials needed: Two Alpha Cards
 Letter Cards
 Markers (Pebbles, pennies, paper squares, etc.)

The Uppercase Alphabet

Cut out and use these cards (or other flash cards) for alphabet activities.

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z		

Alpha Card

A	L	P	H	A
		Alpha Free Space		

ABC Book

(Recognizing Letter Shapes and Their Sounds)

This fun activity can be completed in short, 10 to 15 minute sessions over several weeks. Staple or tape blank sheets of paper together to form a 26 page booklet. Help your child place the letter cards in alphabetical order on a table, grouping uppercase and lowercase cards together to form pairs. Guide your child in copying or pasting copies of each pair of letters near the top of a book page. Choose a letter and book page. (Ask your child's teacher the order in which letters are introduced in school. Introduce letters in the alphabet book at the same time they are being introduced in school to reinforce learning.) Invite your child to cut out two or three magazine pictures that begin with the same sound as the chosen letter. For example, your child might cut out a flower and a flag for the letter *F*. Have your child glue the pictures on the book page. Continue with each letter of the alphabet in later sessions. When finished, invite your child to "read" the book to you. Your child might even like to read the book to the rest of the family, his or her class at school, or grandma and grandpa!

Materials needed:

- Stapler or tape
- Blank Paper
- Letter Cards
- Crayons or markers
- Magazine Pictures
- Scissors
- Glue



The Uppercase Alphabet

Cut out and use these cards (or other flash cards) for alphabet activities.

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z		

The Lowercase Alphabet

Cut out and use these cards (or other flash cards) for alphabet activities.

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h
i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p
q	r	s	t
u	v	w	x
y	z		

Developing Mathematical Concepts: Activities for Pre-Schoolers

- Count out snacks, such as crackers, saying, “Here are two crackers, one two.”
- Let child choose how a sandwich should be cut – rectangle, triangle...
- Discuss which is smallest, which is biggest.
- Recognize shapes in their world, some signs are rectangles, squares, triangles, etc.
- Sort toys and groceries as they are put away:
Hot, cold, round, square, soft, hard, boxes, bags, etc.
- Practice recognizing and discussing patterns, talking about daily routines, repeating nursery rhymes, reading predictable books.
- Practice following directions.
- Sing motion songs with directions, such as Hokey Pokey.
- Use spatial visualization – doing puzzles, directions such as “turn around”, “put the box over the bear”, etc.
- Use objects to role-play.
- Let students draw and count.
- Provide books and stories with numbers and patterns.
- Practice putting things together and taking them apart.
- Practice using the terms: same as, taller than, shorter than, over, under, etc.
- Talk about what your child is thinking and doing. Provide activities that help them communicate through language, pictures, and symbols.

Shopping Suggestions for entering Kindergarteners

Some parents have asked for suggestions about things to buy for their entering Kindergartener. The following are suggested but not required:

- Elastic waist pants
- Backpacks that will accommodate a 9" x 12" folder, snow clothing, a change of shoes (for winter and Physical Education classes), a lunchbox/snack box and library book.
- Glue sticks
- Plain pencils
- Crayons
- Watercolor markers
- Shoes that children can get on and off independently
- Easily fitting boots

