The Road to Kindergarten

The Office of Early Childhood Programs
Howard County Public School System
Information brought to you by the
Howard County
Transition to Kindergarten Workgroup

- Educational consultants
- HCPSS Office of Early Childhood Programs
- HCPSS Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers
- HC Office of Children & Families
- HC Library System
- HC Head Start

- HC Office of Children and Families
- HC Family Child Care Association
- The Judy Center at Cradlerock
- Variety of community-based, private child care/preschool programs
Topics

- School Readiness
- HCPSS Kindergarten Program
- Registration/Transition Information
Our workgroup believes...
All families want what is best for their children.
As a child’s first teacher, parents and families play a significant role in education, beginning at birth and beyond.
Going to kindergarten is a developmental milestone.
The transition to kindergarten is not a one-time event.
Not all children have the same readiness for kindergarten.
Schools must be ready for children and families.
Kindergarten is an important step towards success in college, career, and life upon graduation from high school.
Welcome to the **Class of 2035**

*HCPSS is here to support your family during your child’s educational journey.*

The following is county-level information that is relevant for all 42 elementary schools.

Once you register, you’ll learn specific information about your child’s school and eventually, their teacher.
What does “Ready for School” Mean?
“Ready for School” means...

Real-life experience

Early vocabulary and literacy exposure

Areas of competence and strengths

Developmentally appropriate activities

Young, curious minds
“Ready for School” means...

Real-life experience

- Take advantage of places in the area to visit!
  - *The Howard County Library, hiking trails, zoos, farmer’s markets, aquarium, and more.*

- These experiences will give your child something to draw upon and relate to during lessons in kindergarten and make the learning more meaningful.

- Children have plenty of opportunity to share “background knowledge” - that is, what they already know or have experienced related to a topic.

- Sparks curiosity for new learning
“Ready for School” means...

Early vocabulary and literacy exposure

- Back and forth conversation, combined with quality words, supports brain development and helps set the stage for readiness.
- Use authentic vocabulary related to those real-life experiences.
  - When you visit the grocery store, explain you are buying “golden delicious apples”. Discuss what golden and delicious mean. Can you think of or find other things that are golden or delicious? What other words mean the same thing?
- Your lap is the best app! Read real books and give your child a chance to turn the pages, predict what will happen, discuss the story, etc. Point out simple words in the text. Select books and subject-matter of high interest to your child.
“Ready for School” means...

**Areas of competence and strengths**

- Growth does not happen as a straight, upward arrow. It is better to visualize growth as an upward spiral.
- Remember there will be areas of strength and areas of need, and those are unique to every child. Teachers use this approach to support learning and move each child forward along their own unique developmental path.
“Ready for School” means...

Developmentally appropriate activities

- Workbooks and flashcards are not needed to support readiness. Instead, capitalize on your child’s interest and their everyday world.
  - Use magnetic letters to spell their name. Practice the names and sounds of the letters in their name. Spell the names of family members and friends. Find other things in the house that start with the same letter as their name.
  - Play with the sounds in words. Change the first letter to a new letter. What is the new word?
  - Count the number of steps it takes to get from the car to the front door, the front door to their room. How many rungs on the ladder at the park?
  - And more!
“Ready for School” means...

Young, curious minds

- It’s ok to ask questions!
- Demonstrate asking questions about things you are curious about. Say things like, “I wonder...”. Read books about the things you wonder, visit related places, practice using new words you learn, etc.
“Ready for School” means...

Children don’t have to come to school knowing everything. It means they have the foundational skills, knowledge, and behaviors that help them access new learning.
Support Readiness

Find resources and additional links on our website!

- Kindergarten Family & Community Resources
- Early Childhood Beginnings

Family and Community Resources

These resources have been created to provide parents with support in English / Language Arts instruction.

- Pre-Kindergarten
- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5

Curriculum for Grades K–12
HCPSS
Kindergarten Program
Our Vision

The Office of Early Childhood Programs strives to ensure that instruction at the kindergarten level:

- prepares students for success as lifelong learners by developing the academic, social and emotional knowledge, strategies, and skills needed to participate responsibly in a diverse and changing world;
- utilizes a child-centered approach to ensure that each child develops a love of learning;
- nurtures a positive school experience where all students contribute as members of the classroom community; and,
- supports an individualized approach so each student successfully acquires, demonstrates, and applies the skills and knowledge of the curriculum.
Every day in kindergarten...

- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Expressive Language Opportunities
- Social / Emotional / Behavioral Skill Development
- Interdisciplinary Instruction
Hands-on learning  
Mix of learning preferences: auditory, kinesthetic, visual, etc.  
Manipulatives (magnetic letters, dice, counters, etc.)  
Learning occurs in age-appropriate chunks of time.
Expressive Language Opportunities

- Ability to communicate using language
  - Learning to ask for help
  - Asking questions
  - Back and forth conversation
  - Staying on topic in a conversation
  - Expressing an opinion
  - Etc.
Social Emotional Skill Development

- Skills for life
  - Turn-taking
  - Working memory
  - Ability to control attention
  - Putting off favorite activities to prioritize important tasks
  - Friendship skills
  - And more!
Interdisciplinary Instruction

- Apply subjects and learning across the day
  - Listen to a read aloud about counting in math
  - Write an alphabet book about healthy habits in health
  - Use the Engineering Design Process to create structures in block center during play time
  - Etc.
### What Might a Day in Kindergarten Look Like?

#### SAMPLE SCHEDULE

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Arrival / Morning Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening / Morning Meeting or Circle</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Science / Social Studies / Health</td>
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<td>Recess &amp; Lunch</td>
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<td>Quiet Time / Take Ten</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>Related Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student-Selected Activities</td>
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</table>
Arrival / Morning Work
Children arrive by car, bus, or as a walker

Enter with other students

Learn to participate in arrival routines (e.g., unpack, gather materials) with independence
Opening / Morning Meeting
Opening / Morning Meeting

- Build classroom community
- Talk about the day to come
- Share stories, songs, updates, etc.
Language Arts
Language Arts

- Daily
- Mix of whole group (lessons with the entire class together), small group, and independent opportunities
- Children work in small groups on lessons targeted to meet their needs.
- Reading, writing, foundational skills, and more!
Science
Social Studies
Health
Science
Social Studies
Health

- 30-45 minutes, depending on the unit
- Specific unit of study for each subject area.
- Learn more at the Kindergarten Family & Community Resources site.
Lunch & Recess
Lunch & Recess

- 30 minutes each
- Lunch available at school or bring from home
- Staff members support children with making choices, opening containers, purchasing, etc.
- Go outside for recess as much as possible, so send children to school in weather-appropriate clothing
- Practice opening containers with your child.
Quiet Time / Take Ten
Quiet Time is not nap, but a chance to calm after high energy moments.

- *It is important for children to have down time and an opportunity to rest their brains.*

- Take Ten is movement, usually set to music. Includes dancing, songs, etc.
Mathematics
Mathematics

- Daily
- Whole group (lessons with the entire class together), small group, partners, and independent opportunities
- Children work in small groups on lessons targeted to meet their needs.
- Lots of games and hands-on materials like dice, dominoes, animal-shaped counters, etc.
Related Arts

- Art
- Music
- Physical Education
- Library Media
- Technology
Related Arts

- Daily
- Range from 30-60 minutes, depending on the subject
- Go to other classrooms (Art Room, Gym, etc.),
- Have different teachers for each
Student-Selected Activities
Student-Selected Activities

- Daily
- 30-40 minutes
- Time to play, make choices, bring learning to life
- May include blocks, painting, dramatic play, science table, etc.
Kindergarten Instruction = Differentiated Instruction

Designed to meet each child’s academic needs in each subject, moving them forward through individualized instruction and activities.
Registration/Transition Information
Check out the **School System Calendar** for early dismissals, closures, etc. so you can plan ahead!
Parents/guardians of enrolled HCPSS students DO NOT need to sign up for, or manage an HCPSS News account. If your oldest/only child is starting school in the fall, you will be automatically signed up for HCPSS News messages in early August from HCPSS and the school your child will be attending.

Subscription information comes directly from the Family File information parents/guardians complete in the HCPSS Connect system.

Community members or any non-HCPSS parent must sign up to receive email and/or text messages from the district and/or specific schools.
Follow HCPSS on various social media platforms.
Find your assigned school using School Information from the homepage. Look for **School Locator**.

- Children attend the school to which they are assigned.
- Bus service available if you live more than one-mile from school.
Once you use **School Locator** to find your school, use the **School Directory** to learn more.

Access the **School Directory** from the main page using **School Information** OR from the **Schools** option in the navigation bar.
- View school profiles, find contact information, etc.
- School times are unique to each school - this is important to know so you can arrange before and after-care, if needed.
Find out **Transportation** information via **Supports** in the navigation bar.

On the first day, it is recommended to send your child to school the way they will travel every day. Plenty of adults will help guide them and they get to experience the “newness” - and excitement, nerves, anticipation - with their classmates.
- Find **Food Services** information via **Supports** in the navigation bar.
- Information includes nutrition, pricing, online payment, etc.
Find **Before and After Care** information via **Supports** in the navigation bar.

If you need before and/or after care, **sign up early** *(check with agencies for specific dates)* - programs fill up quickly!
Find information about academics, look for resources, etc.
Visit Early Childhood Programs for Birth to Five information, including kindergarten readiness and more!
Find out more about readiness, what you can do the year before kindergarten, registration, and more.
Access **Enrollment** information here or from the homepage.

For students who are the right age but parents feel aren’t ready and want to wait, there is an option for a waiver.
Enroll
Enroll your student in the Howard County Public School System
The early admission application process is designed for students born within a designated window.

Those seeking school enrollment one year early can find application information here.

Learn more about Early Admission to see if your child qualifies →
### Step 3 – Gather Documentation

Having all your documentation prepared in advance of registration will keep the process moving quickly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Identification Documentation</th>
<th>Parent Identification Documentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student’s evidence of birth (birth certificate, passport/visa, physician’s certificate, baptismal or church certification, hospital certificate, parent/s affidavit or birth registration.)</td>
<td>• Parent picture ID: driver’s license, passport, MVA identification or other legal form of photographic identification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proof of parental relationship, custody, or guardianship. If applicable, bring legal proof of custody (court order).</td>
<td>• Signed original, current lease or deed with your address, valid dates, signatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any additional paperwork that may be necessary due to special living arrangements or circumstances.</td>
<td>• Current utility bill with name and address (non-cellular telephone, gas and electric, cable bill issued in the last 45 days.)</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Academic Documentation</th>
<th>Health Documentation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student’s most recent grade report, transcript, report card from last school attended at time of withdrawal.</td>
<td>• Student’s current proof of immunizations signed by physician. Learn more about the immunizations required for enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Documentation of Special Education (IEP), 504, Psychological Report, or related services.</td>
<td>Students who have never attended a Howard County public school have certain health documents to submit with their enrollment paperwork. Learn more about these forms and find additional forms for diabetic students, students with allergies, and student medications.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Required documentation for registration is listed here.
- Specific, updated information related to health documentation (immunizations, medication, allergies, etc.) can be found at the link.
After gathering the required documents, begin the online registration process.

- *Parents/guardians without access to a computer should call their child’s designated school for more information.*

Finalize registration with your assigned school. This final step confirms area residency, guardianship of the child and ensures that the registration process is completed correctly.
Kindergarten Registration Begins

March 7-11, 2022

You will need:

- Picture I.D. (driver’s license, passport, MVA identification or other legal form of photographic identification.)
- Signed original, current complete lease or complete deed with your address, valid dates, signatures.
- Current utility bill with name and address
- Child’s evidence of birth (birth certificate, passport/visa, physician’s certificate, baptismal or church certification, hospital certificate, parent/s affidavit or birth registration)
- Student’s current proof of immunizations signed by physician.
- Proof of parental relationship, custody, or guardianship.
Kindergarten Registration Begins

March 7–11, 2022

- Language support is available at the International Student Registration Center.

- Children already enrolled in a HCPSS school as a prekindergarten student DO NOT need to re-enroll for kindergarten. Parents will receive information from child’s current school and records will be transferred.

- If you are buying, building or leasing a home in another attendance area than where you live, contact the office that handles out-of-district requests at 410-313-6997.

- For any questions regarding residency, multiple family living arrangements, homeless students, or custody/guardianship issues, please contact the Office of Pupil Personnel at 410-313-6646 or 410-313-6822.
Kindergarten Registration Begins

March 7-11, 2022

- If you cannot register March 7-11, that’s ok, but you are encouraged to register early to receive information about upcoming kindergarten transition events, etc.
Events at YOUR School May Include

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample of School Events for Parents and/or Children*</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>- Visitation / Tours</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Parent Information Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Spring Picnic</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Summer Playdates</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Back-to-School Night</td>
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*Not all events listed occur at every school. Information about events specific to your child’s school will be shared when you register.*
Read Stories About School With Your Child!
Advice for Kindergarten Parents

- Become involved in your school - find ways to volunteer, join the PTA, go to school events, etc.!
- Sign up for email or text alerts!
- Get to know other parents!
- Never be afraid to ask questions!
- Know that it’s normal to feel a wide range of emotions!
- Share your excitement and curiosity with your child...but not your anxiety!
Have a great next stop in KINDERGARTEN!
Any Questions?

Please call the
Office of Early Childhood Programs
410-313-5693