

Robert Munsch Public School  
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# Welcome to Kindergarten

A purple line-art illustration of three children holding hands in a circle. On the left is a boy with short hair, wearing a t-shirt and shorts, with his right arm raised. In the center is a girl with curly hair, wearing a dress. On the right is another boy with short hair, wearing a t-shirt and shorts, with his right arm raised. They are all smiling and appear to be in a joyful, celebratory mood.

## **THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

Children's early learning experiences have a profound effect on their development. These early interactions directly affect the way connections are made in the brain. Early learning experiences are crucial to the future well-being of children, and establish the foundation for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will affect later learning and behaviour.

Before they go to school, children have been learning in a variety of environments - in their homes and in childcare and community settings. Children arrive at school with different backgrounds and experiences and at different stages of development. Positive early experiences with school are of paramount importance to young children. Children thrive within classrooms that meet their physical and developmental needs and that provide a secure, respectful, and nurturing environment.

To give each child the best start possible, it is essential that Kindergarten programs provide a variety of learning opportunities and experiences that are based on assessment information and the strengths, needs, and interests of the children. Although Kindergarten programs are critical in laying the foundations for success in learning, the Kindergarten years are also an important time in children's total development. Teachers, early childhood educators, members of the community, and families should work together to provide challenging and engaging learning experiences that will build children's confidence, encourage them to continue to see learning as both enjoyable and useful, and provide a strong foundation for their future intellectual, physical, and social development.

### **The Kindergarten Staff**

## QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY PARENTS

### ***1. Why is my child in a blended class of Junior and Senior Kindergarten students?***

The York Region District School Board supports the organization of blended JK/SK classes because these programs more closely resemble the neighbourhood and home where children of various ages play and learn from each other. Research summarized by Theilheimer (1993) in the article, "Benefits of Mixed-Aged Grouping for Children, Parents, and Teachers" points to the following benefits of blended classrooms:

- they support children's varied stages of development;
- they invite cooperation and other forms of pro-social behaviour;
- they minimize competitive pressures;
- they encourage a wide range of activities in which varying levels of skills can be applied;
- they provide leadership and tutoring opportunities for the SK students;
- they provide modeling of more complex learning behaviours for the JK students; and
- they enable students to have greater continuity in their programming as a result of spending two years with the same teacher.

### ***2. How can teachers deliver the program to both JK and SK students?***

In any given classroom, the children will demonstrate a range of abilities because children develop their knowledge and skills at different rates and in different ways. It is the role of the teacher to ensure that the environment and the resources provided in Kindergarten are appropriate for meeting the needs of all children. Children will participate in a variety of whole group, small group and individual learning activities through the use of classroom learning centres. Here children can work at their own level to acquire new concepts and consolidate skills.

### ***3. Will my child go on a bus to school?***

The York Region District School Board policy states that children in Kindergarten to Grade Three who live greater than 1.2 kilometres from school shall be entitled to transportation. These students are picked up and dropped off at a point near to their homes as designated by the Board's Transportation Department. For school bus stop information please visit [www.schoolbuscity.com](http://www.schoolbuscity.com). Upon arrival to school, a staff member meets all students in the bus loop.

All new junior and senior Kindergarten student registrants are encouraged to participate in a School Bus "Safety" Program whether they ride the school bus each day or for school trips. A video will be shown and procedures for safely riding a school bus

reviewed, along with an information session for parents, followed by a school bus ride. Learn instructions for getting on, and off a school bus safely and other useful tips such as staying out of the danger zones. Your participation in this program with your child is vital to ensure a safe and enjoyable year of school bus transportation. We want to provide expert training on how to stay safe while on, or around a school bus and to alleviate first time jitters while being in the comfort of Mom and Dad. Student Transportation Services of York Region and your local School Bus Contractor, will be running a "First Time School Bus Riders Safety Program", in your area because they **CARE ABOUT THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD**. Please visit [www.schoolbuscity.com](http://www.schoolbuscity.com) in August for event dates and locations.

#### ***4. What will my child learn in Kindergarten?***

The Ministry of Education and Training has published a curriculum document entitled *The Early Years program* is available at

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten.html>.

Individualized programs are designed for those students who require modifications or accommodations to their regular classroom.

#### ***5. How can I help my child to learn?***

Parents play a very important role in their children's education. Studies have shown that the single most important factor in a child's school success is the amount of reading he/she did with his/her parents throughout the pre-school years. Sharing books together for 10-15 minutes a day is a wonderful way to spend quality time with your children and to start them on the road to lifelong learning.

#### ***6. What is outdoor play?***

Children require daily physical activity. This physical activity is provided through formal physical education classes held in the gymnasium and through outdoor activities. During these outdoor activity sessions, children develop large muscle coordination and skills, and appreciation for the out-of-doors, a sense of wonder about the world of nature and important social and cooperation skills. Teachers may structure this time by providing children with challenges such as "How many different ways can you find to get across the playground equipment?" or they may encourage students to independently explore and experience their surroundings.

#### ***7. My child still has accidents from time to time. What is the procedure if this happens at school?***

Accidents naturally happen when children become involved in activities and forget to use the bathroom. Parents are asked to send an extra set of clothes (including socks and underwear) to school for this purpose. If a child becomes wet, he/she will be

asked to independently change in the class bathroom since teachers are not permitted to undress children. Wet articles will be placed in a plastic bag and put into the child's backpack. If a child becomes soiled due to a bowel movement, a caregiver will be contacted to come to the school to assist the child. In some cases, a child may be taken home and returned to school after getting a change of clothing.

**8. *What happens when my child gets sick or hurt at school?***

When a child becomes ill or hurt at school, a caregiver is immediately contacted. Details about the situation are given so that a decision can be made as to whether the child remains at school or is picked up. We ask that you do not send a child who is sick to school. Rest at home will speed your child's recovery and prevent the spread of germs to others.

**9. *I understand that the school is a nut safe school, but my child loves peanut butter. Why are the allergic children not isolated for the lunch period instead of keeping all nut products away from the school?***

It is our responsibility as a school community to ensure the safety of all of our students. We understand the difficulties associated with providing a nut safe environment and appreciate the inconvenience that it creates for all of us. The problem with isolating a student who has nut allergies for lunch is that the student will return to a contaminated area after consuming his/her lunch. There are also many areas of the school that are shared by students such as the computers, library, lunch tables and the manipulative toys which could have traces of nut products left on them. Finally, there are students who are airborne anaphylactic and can go into shock just by inhaling the air where nut products have been consumed, or the breath of a child who has consumed a product that contains or may contain nuts.

**10. *If my child loses something, where can I find it?***

It is important to label your child's possessions, including their clothing. Each classroom has a lost and found bin for all unlabelled items. If an item goes unclaimed, it is placed in the school lost and found bin.

**11. *What can I do to ensure a smooth transition into school for my child with special needs?***

Register your child at their home school and arrange a transition meeting with the principal. If you are working with Early Intervention Services, invite the Early Interventionist to attend the meeting. It is important that all information is shared with the school in order to plan your child's school program. If you require support, contact Early Intervention Services at (905) 830-9487 or 1-800-703-KIDS.

## 12. *How can I prepare my child with special needs for entry into Kindergarten?*

- Visit the school over the summer and take pictures of the school. Review the pictures often over the summer.
- Establish home routines that will ensure that your child is well rested and prepared for the school day.
- Teach your child how to dress him/herself, use the washroom and feed him/herself (if appropriate).

## 13. **What's new with the Full Day Kindergarten program?**

Children attend school every day. Two educators (Kindergarten Teacher and Designated Early Childhood Educator) work as a team to support your child's learning and development in the six learning areas. The Ministry's Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten Program is a two-year continuum and addresses learning in:

- Personal and Social Development
- Language (Literacy)
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Health and Physical Activity
- The Arts

## **ATTENDANCE AND SAFE ARRIVAL**

The school office needs to ensure the safe arrival of all our students. We kindly ask all parents/guardians to please call the attendance line and leave a message regarding your child's absence or late arrival to school. The answering machine is available 24 hours a day.

Parents/guardians will be contacted to confirm a child's absence if we have not been notified. In the event that you can not be reached, your emergency numbers will be contacted.

## **Incident Weather/Bus Cancellation/School Closing**

In the event of bus cancellation or school closing due to bad weather or plant breakdown the following radio stations will provide information:

CFRB 1010

CHFI 98.1

CHUM 1050

CKEY 680

CFTR

**Please Note: If the busses are cancelled in the morning, they are automatically cancelled in the afternoon. Parents transporting their children to school must also arrange transportation home after school.**

## A FEW LAST HELPFUL HINTS

The following list of suggestions will help your child develop independence while at school. We hope that you find the suggestions helpful.

### School Bags

When selecting a school bag for your child, please consider the following points:

- Ensure that the bag is large enough to easily place a large library book or duo tang inside. Your child will often carry home paintings, crafts and library books. Small bags can make this task very challenging!
- Backpacks are easy for your child to carry to and from school. Over the shoulder bags are often awkward for young children to manage.
- Top loading backpacks with zippers are usually the easiest way for a young child to independently pack and unpack their bags. Clips and buckles are often difficult for small fingers to press. Have your child practice opening and closing the backpack before you purchase it.
- Label your child's backpack with his/her name on the inside

### Snacks and Lunches

The lunch hour is from 12:00 - 1:00 with a snack break at 9:50. All children in the program are welcome to stay at school for lunch.

Children are encouraged to make healthy choices for their daily snack (e.g., fresh fruit and vegetables or crackers and cheese).

- Lunches and snacks may be sent to school in reusable containers, sandwich bags or lunch bags. Please be sure to label all containers that you send with your child's name.
- Non-spill, reusable drinking containers and traditional drinking boxes are both great ways to enjoy a drink. Drinks that come in pouch style packages tend to be messy and are often very difficult for Kindergarten children to open (water fountains are available if your child is still thirsty).

## Clothing

We will be spending time outdoors each day. Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Help your child to become familiar with routines such as putting on and taking off his/her coat, shoes and boots. Please spend some time teaching your child how to independently do up his/her zippers, buttons and shoelaces.

- Please **label all clothing** such as jackets, extra sweaters, shoes, boots, mittens and snow pants with your child's name.
- **Velcro shoes** will allow your child to independently put on his/her shoes each day. Many children are not ready to tie shoelaces and need help several times a day to keep them safely tied.
- We recommend that your child has a pair of **indoor shoes** that can be put on when coming in from outdoors. Running shoes are preferable because they can also be used as gym shoes. These shoes should be labelled with your child's name.
- Please send a complete set of **extra clothes** (including socks and underwear) to school for your child. Each item of clothing should be labelled with your child's name.

