

Welcome to

# Kindergarten



# *Making Kindergarten a wonderful school beginning*



*From that anxious first day of school in kindergarten to the excitement of high school graduation, Durham Public Schools (DPS) welcomes you. Your school system offers choices for families interested in a variety of instructional approaches, ensures the safety of every child, and focuses on high student achievement to fully prepare your child for success in life.*

*The first step in this 13-year school experience is the kindergarten year—a year that is filled with new and exciting experiences for children and their families. Dottie, our kindergarten mascot, is warm and fuzzy, and that's exactly the approach that DPS takes to your child's kindergarten year. Our kindergarten program is focused on child-centered learning in an environment where every child is challenged. The emphasis is on learning, getting along with other students, listening and communicating, and developing a lifetime love of reading.*



## Choosing a School

DPS offers many school choices for your kindergartener. You can choose from your (1) *neighborhood school*, (2) *year-round elementary school (Easley, Holt or Pearson town)* or (3) *elementary magnet schools (which offer a specialized instructional focus such as Montessori, humanities, science and technology and others)*. Parents are invited to research and visit prospective schools during the month of February. Applications for magnet schools and transfer applications for year-round schools are available from the Office of Student Assignment and from all year-round and magnet school offices. To enroll in a magnet program, families must complete a Magnet School Application and return it in February by the date listed on the application (see [www.dpsnc.net](http://www.dpsnc.net) for specific deadlines). No late applications will be accepted.

## Enrollment

In February, Durham Public Schools hold open houses, inviting parents and children to visit schools and learn more about the particular aspects of each school. The official registration period for kindergarten is held during the first two weeks of April. During this period, all parents should register their child for kindergarten at the school he or she will attend. Contact your school office for further details.

## Readiness

Children who reach the age of 5 years old on or before October 16 of the school year may attend kindergarten. Children who are not 5 by that date but who attended school in another state during that school year also may attend kindergarten. Kindergarten is not mandatory, but most parents find that this is a very positive experience for their child. State law also provides that children who have reached age 4 on or before April 16 may enter kindergarten if: (1) *the child is presented for enrollment no later than the end of the first month of the school year*, and (2) *the Principal finds that the child is gifted and has the maturity to justify admission*. There is a great deal of developmental variation among young children. Our kindergarten program is designed to accommodate the varying developmental needs of young children. If you have questions about your child's readiness for kindergarten, please contact The Office of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction at 560-2554.





## What's Expected in Kindergarten

When you peek into a kindergarten classroom, expect to see children learning in a variety of ways under the supervision of highly qualified teachers and teacher assistants. In kindergarten, children learn academic skills such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. They also learn about getting along with each other, sharing, listening and talking. The kindergarten curriculum is designed to provide a variety of learning experiences and many opportunities for choices. Kindergarten children are generally very enthusiastic about learning and trying new things.

## Typical Day

Kindergarten classes are typically fairly small. The average DPS kindergarten classroom has one teacher and one teacher's assistant for every 20 students.

Elementary schools begin the instructional day at 9:00 a.m. and dismiss at 3:30 p.m. Before-school and after-school child care programs are offered at all elementary schools. Families should contact the Office of Community Education at 560-3816 for more information and registration for before- and after-school care.

Lunchtime for kindergarten children is generally between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Nutritional breakfasts, lunches and milk are offered by all elementary school cafeterias. Please check with your school for current prices. Kindergarteners also have a snack during the school day. Some schools provide the snacks, while parents send snacks for their children in other schools. Check with your school to find out how this is handled.



Kindergarteners enjoy recess every day, usually outdoors. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Getting messy is part of being a kindergartener. Most kindergarten classes begin the academic year with an afternoon rest or quiet time.

## Learning

The kindergarten program is designed to challenge children in all areas – academic, social, emotional, and physical. Reading is a key focus of kindergarten because reading is the foundation for all learning. Success in early reading builds a strong foundation for future academic success. The kindergarten reading program includes phonics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Students have many opportunities to read different types of books, and teachers



spend time reading many different books to the students. Students check books out of the Media Center and their classroom to read at home. Parents can support their child's learning by reading to and with their children every day.

Children also learn math and science through hands-on materials and thoughtful lessons. Teachers provide opportunities for creative expression throughout the school day, including literature, art, music and more.

## Paperwork Requirements

A copy of your child's birth certificate must be provided to the school during the registration period. Your child's Social Security card also is required. Parents must show

proof of residence in Durham County. This proof may include sales or rental contracts, new home construction contracts, or a Durham County tax statement.

Immunizations are required to be up-to-date. These include:

- **Five DTP** (must have one on or after 4th birthday)
- **Four Polio** (must have one on or after 4th birthday)
- **One Hib** (not needed after 5 years old)
- **Three Hepatitis B**

A health assessment by your child's doctor is also required. The assessment must be done no more than 12 months before school opens and documented on the Kindergarten Health Assessment Report Form (Form PPS-2K—a form that is available from your child's school office).

## Transportation

DPS provides safe and efficient bus transportation for students. Bus drivers are specially trained to ensure the safety of young children. If your kindergartener needs bus transportation, the bus routes are available at your school prior to the start of the academic year.



## *Beginning the Academic Year*

Families will receive a letter from the school principal prior to the start of the school year. The letter will introduce your child's teacher and provide all the necessary information about beginning kindergarten. It may also include a list of school supplies and give details of your school's Open House and staggered kindergarten start schedule.

## *Parents and Teachers Together*

Parent involvement is important to your child's success in school. Parents and other family members are welcome visitors and volunteers in the schools at any time. In addition, families are welcome to join their child for lunch, chaperone field trips, become an active member of your school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and find out more about the school's site based decision-making committee. Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled during the school year and may be requested at any time.

*Dottie* is looking forward to meeting you and your child soon!



## Contact Information

If you have questions about DPS kindergarten,  
please contact your elementary school Principal or  
the Office of Elementary Curriculum and

Instruction, at **560-2554**.

Thank you for choosing Durham Public Schools for  
your Kindergartener. We look forward to many  
years of learning together.



