

PREKINDERGARTEN ADMISSION

Northwest School Division Prekindergarten: Information and Guidelines

Prekindergarten Programs

- Prekindergarten is an early intervention, prevention program.
- Prekindergarten is **not** a universal program for all 3 and 4 year olds. **Space is limited.**
- Prekindergarten does not take the place of health services.
- Prekindergarten is a targeted program for our most vulnerable or at risk 3 and 4 year old children and their families.
- Children who have the opportunity to socialize with same age peers in other settings, including child/day care, preschool, play groups, etc. already benefit and may not need to attend prekindergarten. The space should be for a child living in vulnerable circumstances who will benefit most significantly from the program.
- The Ministry suggests a ratio of 8 children to 1 adult.
- Programs have been placed in schools where children living in the attendance area will benefit most significantly.
- Prekindergarten is play-based.

Prekindergarten Selection Process

- See Administrative Procedure 300, Admission of Resident Students. Note in AP 300 (#7) that children need to be 3 before starting prekindergarten.
- When selecting students, 3 year olds receive the same consideration as 4 year olds. Research shows that vulnerable children benefit greatly from attending prekindergarten for two years.
- The **PreK Application Form** guides the selection process. Based on the information and knowledge of the family, a team, which may include the superintendent, the school administrator and school-based educators, will review the application forms and select children to attend. Home visits serve to aid in the selection process.
- After selection has been completed, families will be notified of the decision and will be asked to make arrangements with the assigned teacher to meet, to complete school registration forms and also to introduce the child to the classroom setting. At that point the family will be given a start date for their child. Timeline will vary depending on when the application is received, first meeting with the family, committee meetings and transition needs of the child.
- Children do not need to be independent with toileting to attend prekindergarten. Toileting is included in the Interventionist's role description. The further along a child is in toilet training the quicker the transition into prekindergarten can occur.
- Prekindergarten families may be transient, prekindergarten is a continuous entry program. Therefore, a waiting list of 3 and 4 year olds will be maintained.

Prekindergarten Timeframes

- Prekindergarten is a 10 month, 2.5 hours per school day. Start and end dates for prekindergarten coincide with the regular school calendar.
- Home visits are part of the program. Home visits may take approximately one hour per session. Meadow Lake families will meet with the Interventionists for home visits. Rural schools will work directly with the PreK teacher.
- Home visits will be scheduled throughout the school year.
- **Prekindergarten has the same June end date as all elementary classrooms.**

Family Engagement

- Engaging families in positive ways is critical for learning success. A warm and welcoming space that draws parents into the classroom often includes a sitting area, books, culturally-diverse elements, documentation of children's work, and pictures of children and their families (at the children's eye level).
- Prekindergarten programs engage families through events that include home visits, family days or evenings, and family education events (literacy, nutrition, immunization, etc.). Prekindergarten teachers are expected to organize these family engagement events as part of the program.
- Home visits are recommended and encouraged
- Typically, family days/events occur monthly. Evening events including gym nights and family literacy events are gaining popularity.
- Family learning opportunities may be scheduled throughout the year.
- Parent/teacher/child interviews are required.
- *Family Engagement in Prekindergarten (2012)* for Philosophical Background, Expectations, and Key Practices (e.g.; Communication, Respectful Partnership, Home Visits, Goal Setting, and Child Development) that make a difference!

Quality Prekindergarten Programming

- Prekindergarten is holistic and focuses on the physical, social/emotional, intellectual, and spiritual domains. Children need to socialize and play, to be creative and become problem solvers, to be immersed in language and literacy, and to curiously interact with nature.
- **Essential Learning Experiences (ELEs)** have been identified by the Ministry of Education in four domains: Intellectual, Social-Emotional Learning, Physical, and Spiritual. ELEs serve to assist early childhood educators in planning for, monitoring, facilitating, scaffolding, and documenting the child development in prekindergarten.
- Three and four year olds need opportunities daily to run, dance, balance, climb, etc. to develop their gross motor skills. Scheduled gym time is important.
- Weather permitting, prekindergarten children need to play outside daily. To maximize play time and minimize dressing time, time outdoors may best be scheduled at the beginning or end of the morning or afternoon prekindergarten times.
- See prekindergarten documents Better Beginnings, Better Futures as well as Play and Exploration. Both teacher and administrator handbooks are in your schools or can be downloaded through the Ministry's website.

- The [Ministry website](#) outlines available resources, guides, supports, information, and professional learning opportunities.
- **Early Years Evaluation (EYE)** implementation dates: TBD
- **Transitions:** to ensure student and family success, a more in-depth transition plan that better addresses a student's pre-determined goals may be implemented on a case by case basis, when determined by division personnel.
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Nutrition

- Prekindergarten programs provide a nutritious snack daily along with another opportunity for communication and socialization.

Documentation of Students' Learning

- Documentation of student learning and portfolio assessment are the required methods of assessing the learning of prekindergarten children. Rather than a report card, documentation shows children actively engaged in the processes of learning, captures milestones, and supports reflection in determining next teaching/learning plans. Portfolio assessment is purposeful, guided by the **Essential Learning Experiences (ELEs)**, and shows what children can do over the course of the year.
- Teachers require quality classroom cameras/iPads for the documentation process.
- Cumulative folders are required for prekindergarten children.

Professional Learning for the Early Years

- Workshops will be held twice yearly.
- Additional professional learning opportunities can be accessed through [SPDU](#).