Kindergarten
in Kansas

A BOOKLET FOR FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7 YEARS OLD

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Revised October 2025

The Kansas State Board of Education vision sets our Kansans Can vision for education: Kansas leads the world in the success of each student. This vision for education calls for a more child-focused system that provides support and resources for individual success and will require everyone to work together to make it a reality. Kindergarten Readiness is one of five measurable outcomes that will move Kansas toward this vision because early childhood experiences lay the foundation for a child's future academic success. Thank you for the key role you already have played in learning and growing with your child.

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The Kindergarten Year: Turning School Readiness into School Success

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center

Kansas State Department of Education

PHOTO CREDIT: Topeka Public Schools USD 501

Dear families,

Congratulations! Your child soon will enter kindergarten - an exciting time for your family!

This booklet provides information on the following important topics, which can help your child prepare for kindergarten entry:

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Your school district can provide more information on your child's specific kindergarten experience. Building a relationship with your child's teacher and school can help enrich the experience and your child's success.

If you need additional assistance, such as finding your school district, learning more about state requirements or would like additional family engagement resources, please contact us:

1-800-CHILDREN
When it comes to raising your child, no question is off limits. Get judgement-free parenting support 24/7 in English and Spanish, as well as multiple other languages.

- Calling 1-800-332-6378
- Downloading the mobile app "1800CHILDRENKS"
- Emailing or texting 1800CHILDREN@kcsl.org
- Visiting 1800CHILDRENKS.org

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc
(866) 711-6711

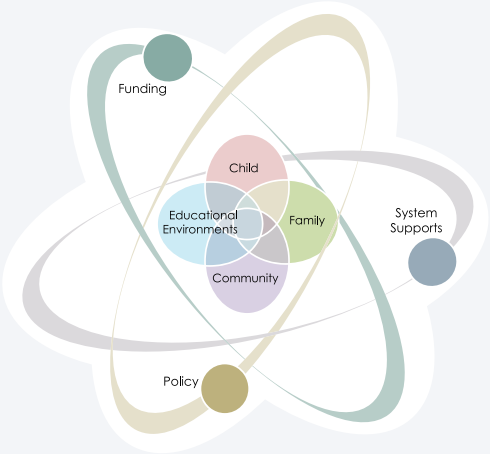
Kansas State Department of Education
www.ksde.gov
(785) 296-3201

Kindergarten teachers across Kansas are excited and prepared to help your child move toward success in school.

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

Kindergarten readiness begins at birth and occurs throughout a child's earliest years. You, as a parent (a person who is the primary caregiver who may or may not be a biological parent), are a child's first teacher. Every environment you create is a learning environment. The lessons and experiences you give your child impact their lifelong learning. School readiness is the result of the early learning years.

> *"School readiness involves more than just an individual child. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools and communities. Children are not innately ready or not ready for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school."*
>
> — Source: Maxwell, K., & R.M. Clifford. 2004. Research in Review: School Readiness Assessment. Young Children 59 (1): 42-46.



An essential building block for future achievement and academic success is school readiness. The years before kindergarten influence future success. Providing your child with healthy meals, physical activity and affection, as well as talking to them as much as possible, helps ensure your child has the skills to help him or her succeed.

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MARS
EARTH
URANUS
NEPTUNE

Kindergarten Entry Information

Are children **required to go** to kindergarten?

Kansas law does not require children to attend kindergarten. However, most Kansas children do attend kindergarten when they are age eligible. The decision to send (or not send) a child to kindergarten is made by the parents.

> "*Families sometimes consider delaying enrollment for a child who has a birthday near the cutoff date or because they think the child needs more time to mature.*
>
> *Research suggests that delaying kindergarten does not result in notable differences in academic skills within the first couple of years of school. Also, allowing more time may not necessarily result in more readiness without interventions to address developmental concerns.*
>
> *Research has also shown that children who are older than their classmates may have increased risk of social or behavioral challenges during adolescence.*"
>
> — Source: Mayo Clinic 2019

It is not the job of the child to be ready for kindergarten, but it is the responsibility of the system to be prepared to welcome and respond to each child in an intentional and appropriate way.

What are the **attendance requirements** once your child is in kindergarten?

Once your child enters kindergarten, regular attendance is required. Kansas law K.S.A. 72-3120 makes parents responsible for requiring a child who has reached the age of 7 and for whom they are responsible to attend school on a continuing basis until the child turns 18 or has received a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) credential.

School districts have policies for both "excused" and "unexcused" absences. Contact your local district for specific local requirements or if you have questions regarding absences.

What are the **age requirements to enroll** in kindergarten?

Children who are 5 years old on or before Aug. 31 of the school year and are residents of Kansas are eligible to attend kindergarten in public schools in Kansas (Kansas law K.S.A. 72-3118). If you moved to Kansas from another state and your child attended kindergarten before you moved, then your child is eligible to attend kindergarten in Kansas.

NOTE: If your child completed an accredited kindergarten in another state and, as a result, is ready to attend first grade, your child may still enroll in first grade in Kansas, even if he or she doesn't meet the Kansas age requirement.

The Kansas statute(s) can be accessed online at: http://ksrevisor.org/statutes/ksa_ch72.html

What are the **required documents** for enrolling in kindergarten?

DOCUMENTS FOR ENROLLING IN KINDERGARTEN:

- Birth Certificate

  If your child was born in Kansas, you can obtain a copy of your child's birth certificate from the Kansas Department of Vital Statistics by mail, priority mail, internet, telephone, walk-in or fax. Call 1-877-305-8315, available 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Spanish interpreters are available. Another option is to visit their website at: https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/1186/Birth-Certificate

  NOTE: If your child was born in another state, and you aren't sure who to contact for a copy of his/her birth certificate, the Kansas Department of Vital Statistics can provide you with that information. Please contact the agency using the information shared in the prior paragraph.

- Immunization Record (Vaccination)

  The following vaccines are required by the Kansas Immunization Law for entry into school:

  - Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTap/Tdap)
  - Poliomyelitis (IPV/OPV)
  - Measles, Mumps and Rubella
  - Hepatitis A and B
  - Varicella (chickenpox)

  Students who are not completely immunized and who haven't previously claimed religious or medical exemption may be excluded from attending school. This exclusion will exist until the child completes the series of immunizations or provides a medically approved exemption or postponement (Kansas law K.S.A. 72-6262).

  NOTE: The Kansas Certificate of Immunization lists specific requirements for spacing between doses. This document can be found online at: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/imz-schedules/child-adolescent-age.html. Check with your doctor or the district's health services personnel or the county public health department for current requirements.

- ## Kansas Health Assessment (physical) Requirements

  Kansas law requires that **ALL** students under 9 years of age who are entering a Kansas school for the first time must provide the results of the child's health assessments to the school within 90 days from the time the student enrolls. The health assessments must have been conducted within the 12 months prior to the student entering school.

  NOTE: At the conclusion of the 90-day period allowed for compliance with the health-assessment requirement, the school district may exclude students from the school until the health assessment has been completed and the results have been presented to the school. Many schools and communities provide free health screenings during summer months. Check with your local district or county health department for more information.

- ## Consent Forms

  You will be asked to sign consent forms for a variety of reasons, including giving permission for your child to attend a field trip, to be photographed or possibly for the school to obtain academic records. Your school will provide explanations for each consent form. As the parent or guardian, you will determine if you give consent for each request.

The Kindergarten Transition

Building a Partnership with your Child's Teacher:

Being a part of your child's education begins at birth and does not stop with kindergarten! Get to know your child's teachers and school staff. Have frequent conversations about what your child is doing, learning, excelling in and where he or she needs more help. You bring important information that helps ensure a happy and successful kindergarten year. The following section has helpful tips to stay engaged in your child's education.

Helping children transition into kindergarten:

As you know, kindergarten is a big step. Transition efforts should start, if possible, the spring prior to your child's entrance into kindergarten. Most schools have a day (kindergarten roundup) where you can bring your child in for a visit and learn more about the school.

The goals of your transition efforts should include:

- Familiarize your child and yourself with the teacher, classroom and school.
- Provide the teacher opportunities to get to know your child and plan more effectively before he or she becomes a member of the class.
- Provide opportunities to become acquainted with the new teacher, class and school policies and procedures, as well as future classmates and their parents.

Participating in kindergarten roundup is an easy way to accomplish these transition goals, which, in turn, help the classroom teacher be ready for your child.

Kindergarten Entry Snapshot:

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (**ASQ-3**), and the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (**ASQ:SE-2**)

Kansas elementary schools are partnering with families to better understand kindergartners' development by using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3), and the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2). These questionnaires provide a snapshot of a child's development. In NO way are these questionnaires used to determine eligibility for entry into kindergarten. Since you know your child best, you complete both versions of the questionnaires. Knowing more about your child's skills and strengths will help you and your child's teachers support your child's growth and success in kindergarten.

The following is a list of skills typical for children entering kindergarten:

- Plays short games (five minutes) beginning to end.
- Can put on his/her coat.
- Pays attention to directions.
- Recognizes numbers and colors.
- Likes to read, sing, tell stories and take turns in conversation with others.

Kansas Early Learning Standards

What should children **know** and **be able to do**?

The Kansas Early Learning Standards describe the skills and knowledge that young children, ages birth through 5, should know and be able to do. However, knowledge and abilities vary greatly, and children develop at different rates. Your child may have some skills and not others, and this is okay. You know what your child can do, and you can help him/her develop new skills.

One of the best activities is **reading**!

Reading every day helps children learn new words, ideas and activities. Talking with your child about the pictures helps him or her learn how he or she relate to the story. Soon, they will make up their own stories. Reading to your child also helps him or her learn to read a book from front to back, left to right, and more. Singing, chanting, rhyming and storytelling are all important and fun ways to learn. Reading activities done at home prior to kindergarten are an indicator of reading success in school. When reading with your child, point to the objects on the page and discuss what is happening; follow the words on the page with your finger as you read; and have your child turn the page. These are all activities which support reading. Rhyming is an important skill for children who are learning to read. Books with repetition and rhyming words are a great way to engage young children, and they are fun to read!

Children **learn best through play**.

All children want to explore, experiment and practice what they know and understand. As children experience their world through play, they learn to respond thoughtfully and sensitively to their environment. Music, movement, dramatic play, games and art teaches children how to share themselves and their creativity while developing a deeper understanding of relationships between objects and people. Learning about their world also includes participating in their family and community through social interaction. Children learn there are ways to behave and that expectations may differ according to the environment (home vs. grocery store).

For more detailed information, the Kansas Early Learning Standards are available on the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) website:
https://kels.ksde.gov

BEFORE your child begins kindergarten:

- Your child's school may offer home visits before kindergarten starts. The teacher may contact you to set up a time to meet. Home visits give your child the chance to meet the new teacher in his/her own environment. This can reduce anxiety later, strengthen the sense of home-school connection and allow the teacher the opportunity to get a firsthand sense of your child's home environment.
- Ask the teacher the best way to access information about the classroom and school. Share with the teacher your preferred method of communication.
- If possible, plan a visit to the school that includes spending time with the teacher, exploring the classroom and playing on the playground.
- Some schools offer summer camps to help children transition to kindergarten. Be sure to watch for notices of such programs, and enroll your child early.
- Let the teacher know about your child's interests and strengths. Be specific. It will help the teachers know how to engage your child in the early weeks.
- Share any concerns or special considerations regarding your child, such as certain fears or food allergies.
- The teacher and other staff members may use various assessments to collect information on your child's skills, abilities and knowledge. Assessments of knowledge of letters, numbers, understanding of stories and social skills will help teachers be prepared to meet your child's needs — leading the way to a successful kindergarten year. Other screenings include vision and hearing.
- If your child has attended preschool, encourage communication between kindergarten and preschool teachers, particularly if your child has special needs.
- Read books to your children about starting school (kindergarten) and have relaxed discussions with your child to prepare him or her for this exciting adventure. See the end of the booklet for a suggested book list.
- Create a school routine weeks ahead of school to practice waking up early, getting ready for bed and going to bed on time. Remember eating a healthy diet, getting plenty of physical activity and regular sleep are all important elements in a routine.

Once your child **BEGINS** kindergarten:

- Young children may initially experience separation anxiety or shyness, but teachers are trained to help them adjust. Remain calm and positive if your child cries at drop-off. Reassure your child that he/she will be okay and that you will be back soon. If your child struggles for a month, meet with the teacher and school psychologist to develop a plan for transition time.
- During the first few weeks of school, you and your child's teacher(s) should share information about how you both think your child is adjusting. Let your child's teacher know the best way to communicate with you: by phone, text or email.
- If possible, volunteer in the classroom at least periodically throughout the year. Doing so helps children feel that their school and family life are linked. Being in the classroom is a good way to develop a relationship with your child's teacher and classmates. You will also get firsthand exposure to his/her classroom environment and routine. Most kindergarten teachers welcome even occasional parent help, but be sure to ask first.
- Check daily for notes and flyers in your child's backpack. These include important information from the school.
- Spend time talking with your child about his/her school day, asking about new friends or highlights of the day. Listening and acknowledging your child's feelings and experiences will help build confidence.

Supporting learning **BEFORE, DURING** and **AFTER** kindergarten:

- Establish a schedule at home and stick to it. Children benefit from structure, and this can help them better adjust to the kindergarten schedule.
- Work with your child on content related to colors, numbers, letters, etc., through books and games. It is important to make the experience fun and playful. Preschool and kindergarten teachers are excellent resources for ideas.
- Provide experiences with books, rhyming, singing, coloring and cutting, paying attention, and sharing and sitting. Again, preschool and kindergarten teachers can provide suggestions for fun and interesting ways to provide these experiences.
- Learn the classroom routines and regularly discuss them with your child. When appropriate, practice the routines at home. For example, you can help your child practice waiting his or her turn, raising his or her hand, asking to go the bathroom and asking a classmate to play.
- Plan to spend quiet one-on-one time with your child during the first weeks. Keep the family schedule simple to allow for your child's adjustment.
- Arrange play dates with a new friend (or friends) from school. Strengthening social bonds with classmates helps your child build a sense of familiarity and comfort in school.
- Be aware of differences in your child's development and avoid making comparisons to siblings and other children.
- Limit television and video game time and increase book experiences. Take advantage of screen time with learning apps, read aloud children books online, art, music and movement. Remember excessive screen time is unhealthy. In 2020, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) created the following recommendations on screen time to help your family determine appropriate time frames for your child to view content on a screen (phone, tablet, computer, television):

Child's age	Screen time
Until 18 months	Limit screen use to video chatting along with an adult.
Toddlers (18 months to 24 months)	Limit to watching educational programming with a caregiver.
Preschoolers (ages 2 to 5)	Limit noneducational screen time to about one hour per weekday and three hours on the weekend days.
Elementary aged children (ages 6 to 10)	Encourage healthy habits and limit activities that include screens.

Additional Questions You May Have

Question	Answer/follow-up
What if I think my child needs extra help?	Talk first to your child's kindergarten teacher to get his/her thoughts and understandings of your child's learning style and skills.
Where do I find out about kindergarten roundup?	Call your neighborhood school and ask. If you are not sure which school is your child's school, call the district administration center. It should be in the phone book or you can find it online here: https://www.ksde.gov/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/School-Finance/School-Transportation-Safety/Kansas-School-District-Maps.
What if I can't afford the school supplies?	Talk to your child's teacher to see if there are community resources to help. There are many communities that provide school supplies at the beginning of the school year.
When is the first day of school?	You will get a lot of information from kindergarten roundup. If you cannot attend, call your child's school and ask.
What if I miss kindergarten roundup? What if we move to a new school during the summer?	Many children miss roundup. Call your school and see if there is a time you and your child can visit school to see his/her classroom, meet the principal and the teacher. This will help you and your child feel more comfortable for the kindergarten year.
What about lunch? Does my child get breakfast? What if I can't afford breakfasts or lunches?	Your child may or may not be at school during lunchtime. Check with the school about the length of the kindergarten day. Full-day kindergarteners will have the opportunity to eat lunch at school. Many schools also make breakfast available to students. Check with the school to find out if breakfast is available. Free and reduced-price meals are available for families that qualify. If you interested in applying for free or reduced-price school meals, ask for an application from your school office.
What about before- and after-school programs?	This should be information that is provided during kindergarten roundup. You can visit the school district website or call your school's office for more information.

Question	Answer/follow-up
Where do I learn about transportation?	This should be information that is provided during kindergarten roundup. You can visit the school district website or call your school's office for more information.
How will I check my child's attendance record, grades/progress reports, pay for meals, etc.?	School districts use a variety of systems to track data, process payment for various things, such as meals, and organize classroom parties. The school's administrative assistant can help you navigate these systems, as well as your child's teacher.
How do I know my child is safe?	Communication is key, especially with your child's teacher. Ask the teacher what the best way to communicate with him/her is during the school day so if safety concerns arise or you need reassurance, you know how to contact him/her.
What do all of the acronyms mean?	There are many acronyms used in education. Do not hesitate to ask what they mean. Here are just a few examples: **EC:** Early Childhood **ECSE:** Early Childhood Special Education **EIS:** Early Intervening Services **ELL:** English Language Learners **ESSA:** Every Student Succeeds Act **FAQ:** Frequently Asked Questions **FERPA:** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act **IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act **IEP:** Individualized Education Plan **KDHE:** Kansas Department of Health and Environment **KSDE:** Kansas State Department of Education **LEP:** Limited English Proficient **MFL:** Migrant Family Literacy **MTSS:** Multi-Tier System of Supports

Checklist for Entering Kindergarten

Requirements for Public School Attendance	✗	Notes
My child will be 5 years old on or before Aug. 31.	☐	
Birth certificate.	☐	
Copy of health assessment within last 12 months (exam).	☐	Date:
My child's immunizations are up to date.	☐	
Copy of my child's immunizations.	☐	

My Child's School	✗	Notes
I have a copy of, and understand, the attendance policy for my child's school.	☐	
School district phone number.	☐	Number:
I know which school my child will attend.	☐	School Name: Phone Number: Address:
I know my child's teachers.	☐	Name:
I have a list of the school's entry requirements.	☐	
I have filled out an enrollment form.	☐	

My Child's School	✓	Notes
I have a copy of the school calendar and know when school begins, ends and when breaks are scheduled.	☐	
I know the hours my child will be in school and where to pick him/her up.	☐	Hours: Where:
I know about before- and after-school programs.	☐	Contact: Where:
I know about bus transportation.	☐	Bus number: Time to meet bus:
I know about the lunch program.	☐	Free and reduced-price meals are available for families that qualify. If you interested in applying for free or reduced-price school meals, ask for an application from your school office.
I know about kindergarten roundup.	☐	Date: Time:
I have completed forms so someone else can pick my child up in case of an emergency.	☐	Person: Emergency information:
I know about the PTA/PTO or other parent organization at the school.	☐	Contact: Meeting times:
I have received a copy of the school's handbook.	☐	

Resources

Books:

"Countdown to Kindergarten" by Alison McGhee

"Mrs. Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten" by Joseph Slate and Ashley Wolff

"The Night Before Kindergarten" by Natasha Wing and Julie Durrell

"Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!" by Nancy Carlson

"Welcome to Kindergarten" by Anne Rockwell

Online resources:

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center:
www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc

Kansas State Department of Education:
www.ksde.gov

National Association for the Education of Young Children:
www.naeyc.org

PTA's National Standards for Family School Partnerships:
www.pta.org/nationalstandards

1-800-Children Supporting Parents powered by Kansas Children's Service League:
www.1800childrenks.org/

For more information, contact:

KSDE Early Childhood
(785) 296-6602
Amanda.Petersen@ksde.gov

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