



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



WELCOME TO  
KINDERGARTEN

A GREAT  
PLACE TO  
GROW!



# Welcome to Kindergarten!

Starting Kindergarten is an exciting adventure for children and their families. It is a new beginning for you and your child. Children will develop relationships, independence, confidence, and the behaviours and attitudes that will ensure their success in school.

## What is Full-Day Kindergarten?

All of our schools offer a Full-Day Kindergarten experience that provides a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for all children.

Kindergarten is a two-year bilingual program consisting of 50% English instruction and 50% French instruction. It is available to any child turning 4 years old on or before December 31.

Every child develops at their own pace and the Kindergarten program is designed to reflect that. The two-year Kindergarten program is optional. Students must start school in the year they turn age 6. They can however start in the first year or the second year of Kindergarten. You decide what is best for your child.



## The Learning Environment

The Kindergarten program is designed to ensure that the unique strengths, needs and interests of every child are addressed. The program is flexible and open-ended, allowing for extension or revisiting of learning expectations.

Planned, purposeful play forms the basis of a program that addresses the subject areas outlined in the Kindergarten curriculum. Developmentally appropriate expectations are embedded in learning activities which may include large or small group educator-led instruction and child-centered inquiries. Learning centres including sand, water, blocks, dramatic play and technology harness students' natural curiosity allowing them to learn at their own pace.

The focus of the centres is inquiry-based and co-constructed with the students drawing on their learning needs and interests. During play, our educators observe, monitor, document and assess children's progress towards achievement of the learning expectations. Feedback is provided on an ongoing basis.

During the regular school day, children are involved in many different kinds of activities designed to help them explore, discover and grow.

If you have any questions, talk to your school principal or Kindergarten educators about how to ease your child's transition to school.

# What Does Play-Based Learning Look Like in the Classroom?

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's Kindergarten program provides children with educational activities appropriate for young learners, taking into account their physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs. The young child's natural world is one of curiosity, exploration and imagination and the richest gains are likely to occur when these capacities are promoted in a play-based, inquiry-focused classroom. Children investigate and develop an understanding of their world through play. Play provides the context in which the educator observes the children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual interactions within a classroom setting, assesses their stages of development aligned with the curriculum, and supports and encourages experiences to further their growth.

## Great Beginnings Start with Caring Staff

Your child will thrive under the guidance of teachers and early childhood educators. Educator teams work together to plan for and provide meaningful learning opportunities for your child. With qualified educators in the classroom, there is more opportunity for individual and small group instruction. Recognizing that each child is unique, our team of educators develops learning activities that address individual strengths and interests.

The role of each educator team is to help nurture your child's:

- ♦ independence
- ♦ initiative
- ♦ creativity
- ♦ ability to make decisions
- ♦ social, emotional, physical and intellectual development
- ♦ ability to learn from and relate to others
- ♦ self-regulation

## What are the Learning Expectations in Kindergarten?

In Kindergarten, the learning expectations are connected with four "frames." Children are exposed to integrated learning experiences in English and French which are designed in the way that children naturally learn.

### 1. Belonging and Contributing

Belonging and Contributing focuses on children's sense of connectedness to others, and understanding how people relate to one another and to the world around them. Children develop their abilities to form relationships and contribute to a group, a community and to the natural world. The Arts provide a vehicle through which children can express their growing sense of self. Early learners have access to a wide variety of materials, resources, experiences and open-ended activities allowing them to express themselves and foster their imagination, creativity and diversity. Through their sense of personal connectedness to various communities, the learning in this frame also relates to children's early development of ideas around citizenship.

## 2. Self-Regulation and Well-Being

Children learn about understanding their own thoughts and feelings, and managing their emotions and impulses. They learn to see and respect that others may have different thoughts and opinions. Children learn ways to deal with distractions and become aware that their actions have consequences. This frame focuses on children respecting themselves and others and promoting social, emotional, mental and physical well-being in themselves and others. Physical activity will be a regular part of your child's routine at school. An active lifestyle fosters positive attitudes, mental health and well-being.

## 3. Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours

Literacy behaviours are the various ways in which children use language, images and materials to communicate ideas and emotions. Language skills such as speaking, listening and concepts of print are explored in Kindergarten through responses to words and stories, games, music, stories, and discussions. A focus on oral language development supports children's learning in second languages. This builds the necessary emergent literacy skills required as they begin to read and write in English and French.

Mathematics behaviours are seen in the ways children use numbers and patterns during play and inquiry. These activities can include counting, sorting, patterning, measuring and collecting data to make graphs. Children are provided with opportunities to explore these concepts in a variety of ways, such as the use of math manipulatives, sand and water and dramatic play.

What children learn in connection with this frame develops their ability to think critically, understand and respect different points of view and to process various kinds of information.

## 4. Problem Solving and Innovating

Children's desire to explore the world out of natural curiosity, to make meaning of the world by asking questions, testing theories and solving problems is the focus of this frame. Children develop the habit of applying creative, analytical and critical thinking skills in all aspects of their lives through hands-on investigation, focused and free exploration, observation, questioning, and predicting. Children will develop their awareness of the natural and built environment and the need to care for and respect the world around them. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is committed to fostering the technology skills required of 21st century learners. The learning in this frame supports children in working together to solve problems and develop innovative ideas in many contexts, including math, science, the arts, and their relationships with others.



# Your Child's Introduction to Kindergarten

Once your child is registered in Kindergarten, you and your child will have an opportunity to meet the educator team. This is your opportunity to share information about your child including preschool and health history including allergies, developmental milestones, and pertinent details relating to your child's history in your family.

The emphasis is on creating a relaxed, joyful transition from home to school and creating a climate of warmth and comfort. The teacher will not assess your child's academic readiness for formal learning. Children who are entering kindergarten and the Extended Day Program for the first time may experience a staggered entry where they attend their first day as part of a smaller group whose needs can be better met on that busy day.

## Alternative Elementary Programs

With strong community support and parent involvement, the Alternative elementary program is based on a concept of student-centred learning and this philosophy translates into all aspects of a student's experience at school. The program provides students with opportunities to meet Ministry expectations with flexibility to allow greater concentration in areas of their own interest and aptitudes. An Alternative elementary program from Kindergarten to Grade 8 is open to everyone.

For more information please visit our website at [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca) or contact one of our Alternative Elementary Schools.

## French as a Second Language (FSL) Instruction

All children in Junior and Senior Kindergarten receive 50% of their instruction in English and 50% in French. They learn through songs, rhymes, movement, stories, and a variety of other activities. Following the two-year 50/50 bilingual Kindergarten program, our child-centred Core French, Early French Immersion and Middle French Immersion programs continue to develop students' communication skills in the French language. Programs focus on the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The programs promote an appreciation of French culture in Canada and around the world.

## English Language Learners

We celebrate the rich diversity of culture and experiences represented in our student population. Understanding that some students may enter school speaking a language other than English, we offer ESL (English as a Second Language) support at both the elementary and secondary levels.

We also offer ELD (English Literacy Development) support at both the elementary and secondary levels to assist students designated by the Family Reception Centre as requiring ELD support. Visit our website for more information. If needed, you can use the "Google Translate" feature on our board website to translate all of the information on the site into a wide range of languages.



# Extended Day Programs

Extended Day Programs offer before and after school childcare (for a fee), for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6. The programs are led by registered Early Childhood Educators.

The program is developed to complement the regular school day. Structured and non-structured activities offer children opportunities to learn through play. Your child will be in familiar surroundings with staff and friends they have been with during the day.

The Extended Day Program operates from 7 a.m. to the start of school and from the end of school until 6 p.m. Parents may register their child for the morning, afternoon, or for both. The program will run on all instructional days and be available for professional activity days.



Registration for Extended Day Programs on non-instructional days and holidays (5 days at the Christmas Break, March Break and summer) will be done by separate registration. For more information on our Extended Day Programs please visit our website at [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca).

# Taking the Bus

Taking the bus to and from school will be a safe and fun experience for your child. For some children and even parents, they will be nervous about going on the bus for the first time. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) provides transportation services for our schools. You can help make the transition easier by practising walking to the bus stop and telling your child about the bus ride in a positive and exciting way. You will get information about your bus stop location and schedule from your child's school before the start of school. Make sure to arrive at the bus stop location at least five minutes before the scheduled arrival, so that your child is ready to board the bus.

Explain that once at school, a trusted person will take them to the Kindergarten area so that they can meet and play with new friends. At the end of the day, be sure that someone is always at the bus stop to greet your child, otherwise the driver will return the child to his/her school.

Every year, OSTA holds a School Bus Safety Day in August. We encourage parents to visit the OSTA website at [www.ottawaschoolbus.ca](http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca) to find out more about school bus safety and about bus cancellations during severe weather conditions. You can also subscribe to their mailing list or follow them on twitter @OttSchoolBus to receive notifications of bus cancellations to your handheld device or personal computer.

# What do you need to do to register your child?

## Proof of Age

In order to register for Kindergarten you will need to bring either a birth certificate, baptismal certificate, registration of birth card or passport to your local school. Registration cannot be completed without one of these forms of identification.

## Student Immunization Records

You will also need to bring your child's Ontario health card and immunization record. Ottawa Public Health requires proof that your child has all immunization required for his or her age.

All children attending school in Ontario must be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella, unless there is a valid exemption. All immunization information is forwarded to Ottawa Public Health and is NOT kept at the school.

Please remember to contact Ottawa Public Health to update your child's immunization information with any vaccinations given after registration. Call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744 or update your child's information online at [www.ottawa.ca/health](http://www.ottawa.ca/health).

## Proof of address

Bringing in at least two of the following is a good way to provide proof of your address: property tax bill, assessment notice, purchase of sale agreement, rental agreement for a separately assessed unit, utility bills or driver's license. Utility bills and licenses must be accompanied by one of the other pieces, such as a rental agreement.

## Registration Form

When you register your child at one of our schools, you will be asked to complete a registration form. This form is available at your local school, on our website, or at the board office at 133 Greenbank Road. For more information, visit our website at [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca).



## Make an Appointment with the Family Reception Centre

Our Family Reception Centre welcomes families new to Canada. We do so in an inviting, respectful, and inclusive manner. Through our intake and assessment service, we advocate for each student so that their diverse, educational and academic needs can be met. In addition, our multicultural liaison officers provide relevant settlement information.

The Family Reception Centre provides a supportive beginning for students and their families so that they can commence their educational journey on a positive note and strive for personal excellence in learning.

### Family Reception Centre

202-300 Rochester Street, Ottawa, ON K1R 7N4

Phone: 613-239-2416

FAX: 613-239-5990

[www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca)



## Special Education

The OCDSB offers a range of special education programs, designed to enhance educational success and nurture a sense of belonging for all our students. We are committed to working with you and your child to ensure that all the learning needs of each child are met through ongoing communication, cooperation, active participation and sharing of responsibility.

By letting your school know as early as possible about any special requirements your child has, our staff will work with you to develop an individual education plan that can address your child's specific learning needs.

## Parents as Partners

We believe in a strong partnership between school and home. An active role in your child's education is vital. There are many ways for you to be involved and support your child's education.

**Attend parent-teacher interviews** — This is an opportunity to discuss concerns and successes and to share ideas about your child's learning.

**Volunteer** — Children, educators, and parents gain from active parent volunteer programs. Volunteers enrich the Kindergarten program in many ways.

**Join or attend School Council** — All elementary and secondary schools have a school council. Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active part in this advisory group. To volunteer or find out more about your school council, speak to the principal or the Kindergarten educator.



**Participate in school events** — There are many opportunities to participate in events that help build your child's involvement in their community – and yours!

**Stay informed** — Through the school year, your child's educator and the school will send home information about important school events, issues and upcoming activities. Check the school website regularly. Most schools also have social media accounts you can follow as well to keep up to date on the great things happening in your child's school. It is important that you read everything and return forms promptly.

**Contact Staff** — Feel free to talk to the staff at your school. Communicating is so important. These caring individuals are able to provide you with support, guidance and information.

## Monitoring Your Child's Progress

We know that all parents are eager to know how their child is doing in school. Our team of educators will keep you up-to-date on how your child is progressing academically, socially, emotionally and physically.

Parents of all kindergarten students will receive a written report sharing initial observations of their child's learning in the fall, and additional written reports about student progress in the winter and the spring.

### Parent-Teacher Interviews

The parent/teacher interviews are an important time to share ideas and information with your child's teacher. You can also discuss ways to help your child develop their strengths and overcome challenges. Here are some tips that will help you get the most out of your time with the educator.

### Be prepared

Think about what you want to know and understand about your child's school experience. Review the written report and write down key questions you want to ask.

### Ask yourself questions

Focus on what you want to get out of your parent-teacher meeting by asking yourself questions. For example, "What methods are being used to teach my child?" or "What can I do to get involved in my child's learning?"

For more information on Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting please visit our website at [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca).



# Helping your child get ready for the big day!

There are many ways that you can help to prepare your child for a smooth transition to school.

Read to your child regularly. Select a variety of books of different lengths and different subjects. Relate the pictures to the story and encourage active listening.

Talk with and listen to your child about daily activities — what he/she is doing; what you are doing. Asking and answering questions with your child provides authentic opportunities for rich language development.

Encourage other adults in your child's life to emphasize the positive aspects of school; new friends, a caring teacher, and opportunities to learn, grow and have fun. Find out the educators' names and use them when discussing school activities.

Recognize that it is sometimes just as difficult for you to face the separation from your child as it is for your child to be separated from you. These feelings are normal and they will pass as you and your child grow accustomed to a new routine. Encourage a relationship with your child's teacher and early childhood educator.

Discover the route your child will travel to and from school and obtain information on walking distances. Dress rehearsals will build your child's confidence and help establish safety-conscious routines.

If your child is walking to school make sure they are accompanied by an adult. If your child takes the bus, they are met on arrival at and departure from school by the teacher or school supervisor. Children must be met by an adult when they are dropped off following their day at school. Visit the school.

Expose your child to music, rhythm and rhyming activities which help the development of reading skills.

Establish consistent routines such as bedtime, getting up at a certain time, getting dressed, using the washroom independently and so forth.

Help your child to develop fine motor skills. Fine motor skills are those skills involving the small muscles of the body and include such activities as drawing, cutting and gluing, as well as handling playdough, building towers of blocks, stringing large beads on a string, catching a beanbag or large ball.

Discuss personal safety, busing and strangers. Be sure children know their name, address and telephone number.

Label all your child's belongings in an inconspicuous place; indoor and outdoor clothing, shoes, boots, snack container, drink container, and backpack.

Prepare your child for successful experiences. Provide opportunities at home with situations that challenge your child to manage alone when toileting, dressing, tidying, and eating. Self-help skills contribute to children feeling good about themselves and help them realize they can solve their own problems and be supported while doing so.

Review the calendar with your child. Circle the day on which your child starts school. You may also wish to mark gym and library days, class trips, birthdays and special occasions.

# Our Community of Character

We are committed to providing learning and working environments where all individuals feel safe, valued, respected and welcome. We believe our role is to look for opportunities for character development, respect for diversity, parent and community partnerships and citizenship development. Our "Community of Character" is a set of ten attributes that provide a standard of behaviour we believe are the foundation for excellence and equity in education. Our character attributes are the stepping stones to building our community of character.



**ACCEPTANCE:** I reach out to include others. I accept others for who they are. I am gentle with myself and others when mistakes are made.

**APPRECIATION:** I am grateful for all that I have. I am thankful for the support that others give me. I am generous in recognizing the contributions of others.

**COOPERATION:** I work with others to make a peaceful community. I am willing to listen to others' ideas and suggestions. I compromise and negotiate to solve problems and differences of opinion.

**EMPATHY:** I am compassionate, caring, and kind. I am a true friend. I will walk in your shoes in order to understand you. I am slow to judge and quick to forgive.

**FAIRNESS:** I make decisions based upon the whole picture. I treat others the way I would like to be treated. I am just.

**INTEGRITY:** I behave ethically and honourably. I am honest, loyal, and trustworthy. I am truthful and courageous. I stand up for what is right even when it is hard. I am a person of my word and people who know me understand that.

**OPTIMISM:** I believe that challenges are opportunities. I choose to see goodness. I have hope for our future.

**PERSEVERANCE:** I will work hard and I will not give up. I will finish what I begin and I will not give up. I will care enough and I will not give up.

**RESPECT:** I honour myself and others through my words and actions. I support our diversity of beliefs. I treat our world and everything in it with dignity.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** I am accountable for the decisions I make. I realize that my decisions impact my community. I honour my commitments.





Published by Communications and Information Services in collaboration with  
Curriculum Services and the Early Learning Program — January 2017



133 Greenbank Road • Ottawa, ON K2H 6L3 • Phone: 613-721-1820  
Fax: 613-820-6968 • Website: [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca)