

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About '*Getting Ready*' for Kindergarten



Annual Panel Discussion with
KLSD Faculty & Parent Representatives

Target Audience:
Katonah-Lewisboro School District Pre-School Parents

KLSD Pre-Kindergarten Panel Discussion

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

AGENDA

Welcome and Overview: Kerry Ford, Principal

Goals:

- To work collaboratively with the pre-schools and pre-school families to better support the transition to kindergarten.
- To share with parents how they can prepare as a family for kindergarten.

School Nurse: Lisa Kopf

Information will be shared on how we keep students healthy and safe at school.

Kindergarten Program: Gretchen Morfea & Jenn Noonan

Information will be shared about the development of preschool aged students in the areas of personal and social responsibility, literacy, and math concepts and numbers.

Service Providers:

Speech and Language Therapists: Melissa Palombini

Occupational Therapist: Lauri Griffin

School Psychologist: Dr. Marlee Schwartz

Information will be shared from the perspective of each domain.

Committee on Special Education

Pre-School Chairperson: Bridget Becker

Special Education Teacher: Paula DeFrancesco

KLSD SEPTO Representatives: Angela Garofalo & Liz Mailman

Information will be shared about the supports available to kindergarten students.

Website: <http://www.klsepto.org/>

Email: info@klsepto.org

IMES PTO Co-Presidents: Kathy Martin & Inna Rabinowitz

Information will be shared as to how pre-school parents can help to prepare themselves, and their children, for the transition to kindergarten.

Website: <https://www.imespto.org/>

Email: increasemillerpto@gmail.com

Q & A moderated by KLSD Public Relations Coordinator, Lenore Person

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About 'Getting Ready' for Katonah-Lewisboro Kindergarten

Kindergarten is chock full of exciting first experiences. There is a tremendous amount of truth in the familiar saying, "Everything you need to know you learned in kindergarten."

In the kindergarten classroom, students are introduced to many of the programs and instructional approaches that they will encounter throughout their schooling at KLSD. Students develop conceptual understandings and a mathematical foundation of skills through direct instruction, exploration, and hand-on experiences. A multi-sensory program, *Foundations*, along with Heggerty instructional resources and assessments, are used to develop students' foundational skills and language. Explicit lessons focus on carefully sequenced skills that include print knowledge, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, spelling, handwriting and vocabulary development in an engaging approach. In writing workshop, students express themselves using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing letters to share information, ideas and feelings. Daily reading opportunities include shared reading, read aloud, guided reading, and independent reading in "just right" books and decodable texts. Social emotional learning is also an important part of our Kindergarten program and classroom lessons relate to students' self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills. Developing shared norms and expectations reflected in our "Be Your Best" Code of Conduct includes the golden rule: Treat others how you wish to be treated. Finally, health and safety continue to be a priority as we teach our students how to make choices and decisions that help them learn and grow.

Children learn best when they are engaged in an active learning environment. We know that play is an essential part of learning and that children learn by doing. The KLSD kindergarten classroom provides an environment that allows children to learn at his/her own developmental rate.

Studies indicate that when parents/guardians are involved in their children's schooling, children are more engaged in school and achieve better learning outcomes. The initiative to involve families in the transition to kindergarten is a way of establishing this critical partnership.

The Katonah-Lewisboro School District (KLSD) is always looking for ways to improve practices to better strengthen the bonds between the preschools and the elementary schools. Hosting a panel discussion for pre-school parents is a proactive approach to involve and engage families.

The information included provides an overview of children's development and Kindergarten readiness from a variety of sources. Health and safety information from the health office is also included. We are hopeful that this resource answers potential questions

and outlines helpful strategies as you look for ways to support your children, and yourselves, through the transition.

In the spring of each year, the District invites incoming kindergarten parents/guardians to an orientation facilitated by the Principals and Kindergarten Teams at each of the three KLSD elementary schools: Increase Miller, Katonah, and Meadow Pond. On the evening of March 1, 2022 (Snow Date: 3/2), from 7:00-8:00 pm, parents are invited to attend Kindergarten Orientation at your child's elementary school. We ask that if you have a child eligible for kindergarten for the 2022-23 school year (your child will be five on or before December 1, 2022) that you contact the District Registrar, Mrs. Gail Weiss, at gweiss@klschools.org or (914) 763-7050. Please be sure to give your name, your child's name, your child's date of birth, and your address.

We look forward to welcoming our Kindergarten students and families next school year!

Increase Miller Elementary School
Jennifer Ferentini, Secretary

Kerry Ford, Principal
763-7100

Katonah Elementary
Maria Horton, Office Assistant

Cristy Harris, Principal
763-7700

Meadow Pond Elementary School
Lynn Licht, Office Assistant

Ashlyn Field, Principal
763-7900

CHILD DEVELOPMENT FOR THREE TO FIVE YEAR OLDS

While children pass through different developmental stages at different rates, the chart below provides a general sense of some typical interests, accomplishments, and characteristics of young children as they approach kindergarten entry.

Age	Physical	Social-Emotional	Cognitive
3 to 4 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have good control of their bodies (Stands on one leg, jumps up and down) • Can usually feed and dress themselves • Have all their baby teeth • Can ride a tricycle • Curious about the body and how it works • Draws a circle and a cross (4 yrs) • Dresses and undresses with simple clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses words to express emotions • Likes to make friends; Cooperative play with other children • Would rather play with other children than alone • Learn to share, although they may still argue about possessions • May have some fears such as fear of dark, strangers, being alone (3-5 yrs) • Shows a wide range in emotion • Shows concern for crying friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can name and sort objects • Begin cause and effect • Interest in science and nature • Begins to make up stories • Better memory • Improved attention span (up to 20 minutes) • Names some colors and some numbers • Understands the idea of counting • Draws a person with 2-4 body parts • Starts to copy some capital letters
4 to 5 Years Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy music, dancing, and singing • Can handle scissors, pencils, and crayons fairly well • Races around and loves to play, skip, and broad jump • Runs well and enjoys climbing • Prone to catching colds • Exhibits stable preference for the left or right hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels pride in accomplishments • Prefers to play with other children • Enjoys doing new things • Talk about what he/she likes or is interested in • More likely to agree with rules • Is aware of gender • Sometimes very demanding sometimes very cooperative • Shows more independence • Can tell what is real and what is make believe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns how to organize things (clothes, toys, etc) • Observant • Make believe play • Counts 10 or more things • Can draw a person with 6 body parts • Can print some letters and some numbers • Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes • Knows about things used every day like money and food

Speech and Language

Department Webpage Access: www.klschools.org

- Click on Departments on top, right of screen
- Click on Special Services from selection
- Click on Speech and Language

Expressive and Receptive Language

Hearing and Understanding at 4-5 years old:

- Understands words for order, like first, next and last.
- Understands words for time, like yesterday, today and tomorrow.
- Follows longer directions, like, "Put your pajamas on, brush your teeth, and then pick out a book."
- Follows classroom directions, like, "Draw a circle on your paper around something you eat."
- Hears and understands most of what is said at home and in school.

Talking at 4-5 years old:

- Says all speech sounds in words. May make mistakes on sounds that are harder to say like *l, s, r, v, z, ch, sh* and *th*.
- Responds to, "What did you say?"
- Talks without repeating sounds or words most of the time.
- Names letters and numbers.
- Uses sentences that have more than one action word, like *jump, play* and *get*.
- Tells a short story.
- Can hold a conversation.
- Talks in different ways depending on the listener and place. May use sort sentences with younger children or talk louder outside than inside.

What can I do to help?

- Talk about spatial relationships (first, middle, and last; right and left) and opposites (up and down, big and little).
- Offer a description or clues and have your child identify what you are describing (*I Spy with my little eye...*). Expand on your child's comprehension and expressive language skills by asking him/her to give you clues about something that he/she sees.
- Work on forming and explaining categories (fruits, furniture, shapes).
- Follow your child's directions as she or he explains how to do something.
- Give full attention to your child when he/she is speaking, and acknowledge, praise, and encourage him/her afterward.
- Before you speak to your child, be sure to get his/her undivided attention. Pause after speaking allowing him/her to respond to what you have said.
- Build on your child's vocabulary. Provide definitions for new words, and use them in context, for example: "This *vehicle* is riding on the highway. It is a car. A bus is another kind of vehicle, and so are trains and airplanes."
- Encourage your child to ask for an explanation if he/she does not understand what a word means.
- Point out things that are the same or different. Play games incorporating these concepts that he/she will encounter later in the classroom in reading readiness.
- Sort items into categories. Now try to sort them by pointing out more subtle differences between objects (e.g., rocks that are smooth vs. those that are rough; heavy vs. light; big vs. small). Again, have your child identify the object that does not belong in a given category, but now ask him or her to explain why the item does not belong.
- Expand on social communication and narration skills (telling a story) by role playing. Play house, doctor, and store using dialogue, props and dress up clothes. Do the same with dollhouse and its props, acting out scenarios and making the dolls talk.
- Read stories with easy-to-follow plots. Help your child predict what will happen next in the story. Act out the stories, and put on puppet shows of the stories. Have your child draw a picture of a scene from the story, or of a favorite part. You can do the same thing with videos and television shows, as these also have plots. Ask "wh" questions (who, what, when, where or why) and monitor his or her response.
- Give your child two-step directions (e.g., "Get your coat from the closet and put it on")
- Play age-appropriate board games with your child (e.g., Candyland or Clues)
- Have your child help you plan and discuss daily activities. For example, have him/her make a shopping list for the grocery store, or help you plan his/her birthday party. Ask him/her opinion: "What do you think your cousin would like for his birthday? What kind of fruit do we need to buy at the store?"

(This information can also be found on the website: www.asha.org)

Fluency

Between the ages of 18 months and 7 years, many children pass through stages of speech disfluency associated with their attempts to learn how to talk. Children with normal disfluencies between 18 months and 3 years will exhibit repetitions of sounds, syllables, and words, especially at the beginning of sentences. These occur usually about once in every ten sentences. After 3 years of age, children with normal disfluencies are less likely to repeat sounds or syllables but will instead repeat whole words (I-I-I can't) and phrases (I want... I want... I want to go). They will also commonly use fillers such as "uh" or "um" and sometimes switch topics in the middle of a sentence, revising and leaving sentences unfinished. Their disfluencies may increase in frequency for several days or weeks and then be hardly noticeable for weeks or months, only to return again.

What should you do if your child is experiencing dysfluent speech?

- Use shorter, simpler sentences when speaking to your child. Using too long of sentences makes what you say harder to understand, and the child may try to match your sentence lengths.
- Speak slowly and clearly when talking to your child. This provides a good model for your child and is more effective than telling your child to slow down.
- Allow pauses. After speaking, give your child time to respond to your statements. In addition, pause a second or so before responding to your child's questions or comments. Talking in a slow, relaxed rate and pausing between statements allows the child time to collect his/her thoughts and respond more fluently.
- Increase the situations in which your child is most fluent. If your child is more fluent during bedtime stories, extend this time by reading one more book at bedtime or provide other reading opportunities throughout the day. Success in one situation builds confidence and leads success in more situations.
- Reduce pressure to communicate. Limit the number of questions you ask your child and ask only one question at a time. Questions demand that your child respond immediately.
- Provide opportunities for your child to speak without competition and distractions from other family members. This allows time for your child to finish his/her statements and diminishes frustration.
- Watch for signs of emotional tension and frustration and try to remove your child from the situation, if necessary.
- If you are concerned, consult with a speech-language pathologist

(The Stuttering Foundation)

What sounds should my child be saying? *

Girls Boys

Birth	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years
	p,m,h,w,b							
	p,m,h,w,b							
	n							
	n							
		k						
		k						
		g						
		g						
		d						
		d						
		t						
		t						
		ing						
		ing						
		f						
		f						
		y						
		y						
			r					
			r					
			l					
			l					
			blends (st, pl, gr, etc.)					
			blends (st, pl, gr, etc.)					
			s					
			s					
			sh, ch					
			sh, ch					
			z					
			z					
			j					
			j					
			v					
			v					
			th (thumb)					
			th (thumb)					
			th (that)					
			th (that)					
						zh (measure)		
						zh (measure)		

* Adapted from Sander JSHD 1972; Smit, et al JSHD 1990 and the Nebraska-Iowa Articulation Norms Project

Occupational Therapists' Perspective

School based occupational therapy supports the development of skills connected to fine motor, gross motor, visual perception, self-care and following directions. These skills, as they relate to a child's accessibility to learning within the school environment, are primarily monitored by the classroom teacher. If there is a concern, parents are informed and become part of the remediation process.

The list of kindergarten readiness skills below offer guidelines for you to reference; specific skills should not be used as a determining factor for kindergarten readiness.

Fine Motor:

- Developing hand dominance (use of one hand the majority of time) to write, color and eat
- Holding a pencil with thumb, pointer and middle finger
- Drawing with some detail
- Writing their name
- Developing ease with using scissors to cut out a line and 6-inch circle

Gross Motor:

- Catching and throwing a ball
- Running, jumping and skipping (with coordination)
- Balancing (standing on each foot for 10 seconds)
- Alternating feet going up and down stairs holding onto the rail
- Safely negotiating playground equipment

Visual Perception:

- Copying shapes
- Finding hidden shapes
- Completing simple puzzles (also considered a fine motor skill)

Self-Care:

- Dressing, if not independently, then assisting
- Managing large fastening, zippers, buttons and snaps
- Opening lunch bag and snack packets
- Packing and unpacking a backpack
- Independent toileting

Following Directions:

- Naming and identifying colors
- Counting to 10
- Following multi-step directions

More than 50 Ways to Learn Letters Without Holding a Pencil

Adapted from: Handwriting- Not Just in the Hands (Maxanna Learning Systems)

- Use magnetic letters to sequence and match letters. Build words and sentences.
- Use felt letters or alphabet cards to sequence and match letters.
- Put plastic letters in a "feel bag" and let children guess what letter they are feeling.
- Paint letters on an easel.
- Finger paint letters.
- Write letters with your finger in: cornmeal, sand, pudding, foam soap, shaving cream, etc.
- Glue beans, noodles, cloth, cotton balls, miniature marshmallows, rice, or paper to make mosaics in the shape of letters.
- Follow the shape of the letter by "painting" with a paint roller (paint free of course!)
- Roll letters out with rolling pins.
- Hop or jump along the letter lines.
- Make alphabet cards for matching (visually or by touch) and trace with: colored (glitter) glue, string and glue, dry Jello and glue, puff paint, sand and glue, or cornmeal and glue.
Note: you can make the tactile alphabet cards by either cutting out alphabet shapes from cardboard or covering it with tactile media or by "writing" the letter with glue and covering that area with the tactile media.
- Write letters on: Magna-doodles, clay trays (Styrofoam tray with clay spread on it), black boards, dry-erase boards, or paper with sandpaper under it.
- Make body letters. Give several children a letter to make. Have the children use their bodies to form the letter. They may try doing this standing or lying on the floor. Have other children guess the letter.
- Sew letters by making your own lacing cards in the shape of letters or having the children sew their names onto colored burlap.
- Play "Guess a Letter." Give clues about a letter and have children guess the letter. "I am thinking of a letter that is short, and comes after d in the alphabet." Ask the children to tell the name and sound of the letter.
- Play "What Letter is Missing?" Sequence alphabet cards from A to Z. Remove several letters and have children guess what letter is missing.
- Play "That's Not Right!" Sequence alphabet cards but misplace several cards. Have the children find the errors and correct them.
- When children are ready to write letters on paper, have them write with crayons, markers, chalk, paint, grease pencils, colored pencils, vibrating pens and a #2 pencil.

Helpful OT and PT References:

www.lwtears.com (Handwriting Without Tears)

www.therapystreetforkids.com

www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com

www.theimaginationtree.com/40-fine-motor-skills-activities-for-kids/

www.childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/gross-motor-skills/

Letter School APP- fun way to practice letter and number formations

Parent Checklist: Helping My child Get Ready for Kindergarten

Always remember that you are your child's first and most important teacher. Every day your child is learning as you talk, play, and work together. While your child will develop at his or her own rate, your involvement will promote readiness. Also remember that **play is an essential part of learning**. Your child learns best when involved in activities that are interesting and fun!

Things I can do to help my child prepare for kindergarten:

- ☐ Provide a daily routine that includes regular times for meals.
- ☐ Establish a bedtime that gives my child eight or more hours of sleep at night.
- ☐ See that my child has opportunities for physical activity, outside when possible, every day.
- ☐ Help my child select clothing appropriate for indoor climate and outdoor weather conditions.
- ☐ See that my child has had required immunizations and current health examinations.
- ☐ Help my child develop independence in dressing, eating and personal hygiene.
- ☐ Interact frequently with my child each day by talking, listening and touching.
- ☐ Take my child to places such as the library, the park, the grocery store, and the post office.
- ☐ Provide toys, games and household objects that encourage exploration, manipulation and dramatic play.
- ☐ Provide opportunities to play with other children.
- ☐ Teach socially acceptable ways to disagree.
- ☐ Encourage social values such as helpfulness, cooperation, sharing, and concerns for others.
- ☐ Demonstrate common expressions of courtesy (please, thank you) and praise for using them.
- ☐ Establish reasonable limits for behaviors and hold my child to them.
- ☐ Talk with my child about our family, our culture and our values.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for my child to learn about other cultures in our community.
- ☐ Read to my child every day. Talk together about the pictures and the story.
- ☐ Provide books, magazines and other print materials for my child to handle.
- ☐ Provide opportunities to play alphabet games, read alphabet books, and talk about letter names and sounds.
- ☐ Provide pencils, markers, paper and encourage drawing and scribbling or writing.
- ☐ Invite my child to help with grocery lists, grocery shopping, sending cards.
- ☐ Read poems and sing songs together.

Source: Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County
(http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_Ready_School_Parent/)

Special Services

Information about Supports in Kindergarten

What are our guiding principles?

- All students can be successful learners.
- All teachers share responsibility for our students.
- All students are educated in the least restrictive environment.
- Teachers are able to provide instruction to students in their classrooms by differentiating instruction and offering appropriate modifications for diverse learners.

Intervention Process

- Kindergarten students are screened in the spring.
- Kindergarten students are benchmarked in the fall, winter, and spring.
- Teachers review student work, assessments and other relevant information to make informed instructional decisions.
- The building level Response to Intervention (RTI) Team monitors student progress and determines when there is the need for increased support.

Educationally Related Support Services

Building Level Supports:

- Response to Intervention Services (RTI)
- English as a New Language (ENL)
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Counseling
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Physical Therapy (PT)

What do you do if you have questions about your child's current progress in pre-school? Contact your pre-school teacher or CPSE Chairperson, Pediatrician or Early Childhood Direction Center.

KLSD Health Office

There is one full time nurse in each of our elementary schools. We oversee health appraisals, screen vision and hearing, maintain health records and are responsible for first aid, administering medications during school hours and managing medical conditions in the school population.

NYS law mandates that all students entering Kindergarten be fully immunized prior to the first day of school. A current physical is required to be submitted to the health office within 30 days of entry. In addition, NYS requests that a dental form be completed and submitted to the health office. All forms can be found on any of the school district websites under "health services".

Kindergartners are screened in school for vision and hearing according to NYS mandates. Parents will be contacted by phone and a referral will be sent home if the screening results do not meet state mandates.

The nurse should be informed of any special health history significant to your child in the school setting to ensure their safety. (allergies, asthma, diabetes, etc...). The school may also consult our district physician if questions arise related to the medical and safety needs of your child.

If your child is ill or injured and cannot remain in school, the nurse will refer to the Health Emergency Form that you should complete in Campus Parent. This form tells the school how you and the people you designate may be reached. Please be sure to inform those people that they have been listed.

Due to state mandates, both prescription and over-the-counter medications may only be administered to a child with a physician's order. All medication must be brought to the school by an adult in the original, labeled container. Children cannot carry their own medication in elementary school.

We are not a nut free district. Students may not share food and we no longer allow food from home to be sent in for birthday and/or holiday celebrations.

Parents may request that their child sit at a "nut awareness table". This year, due to Covid-19 protocols, students currently eat lunch at individual desks, distanced 6 feet apart.

The safety of all students is a priority in all our schools. The nurses welcome you and your children and are readily available to discuss any questions or concerns.