



STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

KINDERGARTEN

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It is my sincere hope that you will find this program overview helpful in understanding the curriculum and areas of emphasis of your child's grade level. While it is impossible to capture all the "richness" that goes into the daily education of our students, the overviews are designed to introduce the basic concepts and content standards.

The most important experiences are those that provide the opportunity to grow and be challenged. Many processes related to critical thinking and problem solving that are vital to student success happen every day. Another important aspect to our program is to continually evaluate, assess and improve the quality of the programs in the district. To that end, these program overviews have been reviewed and upgraded by teacher representatives in the district.

Our partnership with the parents of our district is paramount to the establishment of a desirable overall goal of success for every child. We will continue to maintain high expectations for our students and ourselves and we look forward to continued collaboration in the learning process of our students.

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OVERVIEW FOR KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten provides your child with a wealth of multi sensory, hands-on experiences and establishes the foundation needed to develop intellectual competencies and self-esteem. The curriculum is organized to provide a balanced program of readiness and developmental activities.

This pamphlet reflects the average expectancy at this grade level. Due to the range of abilities and motivation among students, some children will exceed these expectations, and some children will not be able to achieve all of them.

Our goal is to help children develop an interest in, and enjoyment of learning which will serve as a foundation for continued success.

THE KINDERGARTEN CHILD

Every child is an individual who grows and develops at his/her own rate. Children in the same grade may differ widely from others in their group. There are, however, general characteristics and needs which apply to most children in kindergarten.

The Kindergarten Child May Be:

- Strengthening large motor skills, e.g., hopping, jumping, catching, throwing, galloping and skipping
- Strengthening fine motor skills, e.g., proper grip of writing tools, cutting and tracing
- Interested in other children, yet individualistic
- Vulnerable to colds and childhood illnesses
- Anxious when family routines or daily routines change
- Growing rapidly
- Losing first teeth

The Kindergarten Child Will Be Developing:

- Increased reasoning power
- The ability to make independent choices
- The ability to plan and carry out plans and short term projects
- The ability to speak clearly and to use new words
- The ability to relate experiences, listen to and retell stories
- The ability to share toys and take turns in play
- More defined interests and ideas
- More patience
- A lifelong love of learning

The Kindergarten Child Needs:

- To feel secure and loved
- To have encouragement, approval and acceptance from adults and peers
- A few special friends
- A happy environment
- Opportunity for exercising large muscles
- To increase vocabulary
- Alternate periods of rest and activity
- Ten or more hours of sleep each night
- Nutritious meals and healthy snacks
- Opportunities for self-expression and individuality
- Greater independence in feeding, dressing and using the toilet

Parents Can Help By:

- Talking with your child and listening to what he/she has to say; taking advantage of time spent in the car, on walks, and in daily routines like cooking and laundry
- **Reading aloud daily to your child.** Demonstrate that books are not the only kind of reading; magazines, packages, store signs, letters, road signs, labels, etc., are other sources. Let your child see that you enjoy reading
- Notifying the teacher of problems at home that cause emotional stress for a child (e.g., divorce, loss of pet, death in family, etc.)
- Making your mornings as unhurried as possible. Allow enough time for your child to eat breakfast, brush teeth, comb hair, wash hands and face, and dress in clean clothes. Prepare whatever you can the night before
- Helping your child to understand that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process
- Providing an emotionally safe environment in which your child can take risks
- Showing interest in your child's activities/acknowledging good work and behavior
- Inviting other children to your home (providing group play)
- Helping develop unselfish attitudes, consideration, and respect for others
- Showing your child when and how to use 911 in an emergency
- Reinforcing health and safety concepts (re: electric outlets, medicines, traffic, poison, strangers, etc.)
- Teaching your child to say no to themselves and others in dangerous situations
- Choosing limits that fit your child's age and establishing consequences and rewards
- Reinforcing kindergarten skills in a fun and natural way, e.g., card games, puzzles, board games, and cooking
- Focusing on process--not products--by creating open-ended activities
- Helping instill the attitude in your child that children are at school to learn and the teacher is there to help. Avoid discussing concerns about school or the teacher in your child's presence
- Allowing your child to develop a feeling of independence
- Teaching your child the correct names of people and things
- Encouraging your child to follow directions and to pay attention
- Monitoring time devoted to TV, video, and other passive entertainment

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Language Arts program encourages the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking and the learning of language skills in meaningful context. Emphasis is on the use of significant literary works, rather than texts and workbooks, to provide instruction and promote love of language for all students at all levels of ability. Oral reading is a part of the program. In kindergarten, your child should learn to:

- Follow simple directions
- Understand concepts of print
- Understand phonemic awareness
- Utilize vocabulary and concept development
- Identify and name initial letter sounds
- Verbalize ideas and personal experiences in complete sentences
- Increase vocabulary related to all subject areas
- Memorize and recite nursery rhymes, poems, and finger plays
- Listen to, comprehend, discuss, and appreciate literature
- Dictate sentences or stories to an adult and illustrate them
- Rhyme words
- Use and distinguish between telling and asking sentences
- Experience environmental reading (e.g., labels, signs, packages, etc.)
- Print first name with correct upper and lower case D'Nealian letters
- Name, recognize, and write letters using D'Nealian manuscript formation
- Read and write directionally; left to right, top to bottom
- Use some temporary or phonetic spelling
- Decode and recognize words

MATH

Throughout the year, students in all grades are involved in units of study that are organized around recurring mathematical topics. By the end of kindergarten, students will understand:

- Number relations and operations: (1) develop concept of number (2) count and compare numbers to ten and beyond
- Explore shapes
- Count, compare, describe and sort objects
- Develop sense about properties and patterns
- Utilize problem solving and critical thinking
- Be exposed to time concepts (yesterday, today, and tomorrow, calendar skills and time to the hour)
- Explore measurement concepts (length, size, and weight)
- Graphing and analyzing data
- Estimate objects

Manipulatives provide hands-on experience for learning and understanding mathematical concepts. Math manipulatives include pattern blocks, unifix cubes, teddy bear counters, building blocks, scales, rubber stamps and an endless supply of exciting materials to explore. The manipulative experiences help guide the child to understand abstract concepts.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies program develops individual, social and cultural awareness. It prepares students for responsible citizenship, exposes them to cultural observances and celebrations, and allows them to make the vital connection among past, present and future.

In kindergarten students will learn how they, as individuals, relate to other individuals in the past and present. They will have opportunities to share, take turns respect the rights of others and learn how to take care of themselves and their possessions. They will begin to celebrate the cultural differences among themselves and others. The themes revolve around: individual and peers, school, homes and families, the community, present and past. Students will learn to make choices and to accept responsibility for those choices. They will recognize that school is a place to work and learn, they will learn the role of rules in their school and classroom, and they will demonstrate responsible civic behavior in class. Students will come to appreciate their uniqueness and worth as human beings.

SCIENCE

Science is presented as an exploratory, discovery, activity-based program. Kindergarten students develop scientific thinking processes in:

- Observing (using the senses to get information)
- Communicating (talking, drawing, demonstrating)
- Comparing (similarities and differences)

This is done through the study of four Grade Level Concepts including Earth, Life, Physical, and Environmental Sciences.

EARTH:

Our universe is interactive and constantly changing.

Grade-Level Concepts and Sub-concepts

There are many observable changes on the Earth.

- Weather changes all the time.
- The seasons have observable patterns.
- Season affect the environment and living things.

LIFE:

Living things are diverse, interdependent and evolving.

Grade-Level Concepts and Sub-concepts

Living things have characteristics that can be observed and described.

- We gain information about the world around us through our five senses.
- Stories sometimes give plants and animals attributes they do not really have.
- Living things have characteristics that distinguish them from nonliving things.
- Plants are a group of living things that have major, common parts.
- Animals are a group of living things that have major, common parts.

PHYSICAL:

The interactions of matter and energy shape our world.

Grade-Level Concepts and Sub-concepts

Matter has properties that can be observed and described.

- Matter can be categorized by its properties such as size, shape, color, magnetism, texture, weight, and buoyancy

ENVIRONMENTAL:

People are dependent on the Earth's dynamic natural systems and can participate in responsible actions to enhance or protect the quality of the environment.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Self-expression through the use of various media is a central objective at this grade level. Art in kindergarten is creative, exploratory, and related to other areas of study. Art, music, drama, and dance are often integrated into the curriculum. Students learn simple dances, dramatize literary selections, sing in a group, view theatrical events and multi-cultural performances, use rhythm and movement, and learn art appreciation and skills.

Visual and Performing Arts instruction is supplemented by grants through the Council of Music and Art and through site fund-raising activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Emphasis is placed on psychomotor and locomotor activities, safe habits of procedure, fair play, and a desire to participate and to strengthen positive personal relationships. Activities help the child become aware of and develop his/her own physical capabilities, develop body image, balance and coordination.

Example of activities are:

- Warming up before exercising
- Jumping, hopping, galloping, skipping, climbing, balancing, tumbling.
- Bouncing, catching, and throwing balls.
- Bending, stretching, swinging and swaying.
- Creative rhythms and rhythmic movement
- Game skills

HEALTH

In health, the emphasis is on issues that relate to kindergartners on a personal level in safety, health, and hygiene. Topics include nutrition, sleep, exercise, avoiding the spread of germs, and safe practices at school and at home. The health program also includes at least three hours per year of Substance Abuse Prevention education (drugs, alcohol, and tobacco) which focuses on making healthy choices and developing refusal skills.

HOMEWORK

District policy and regulations require an average of 15-20 minutes of homework daily in kindergarten, Monday through Thursday. This takes the form of reading to your child, plus activities to extend, reinforce, or review classroom experiences.

The purpose of homework in kindergarten is to initiate the process of taking an assignment home, completing it, and returning it to the teacher at school. You will be informed if your child is having problems meeting homework requirements.

Parent participation in homework will be solicited in most assignments (reading to your child, helping to memorize your home address and phone number, etc.) You may need to modify the assignment so that it is a pleasant experience for your child.

The District Code of Conduct

- Be Safe.
- Be Responsible.
- Be Respectful.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

Open communication between parents and teacher is essential to each child's educational and developmental progress. Each teacher has a system for communication to parents so that they can keep abreast of what the class is learning and their child's individual progress. In addition, the teacher will contact parents on an individual basis as the need arises.

Parents are encouraged to send a note, phone the teacher at school, or make an appointment for a conference, whenever they have a concern, and to let the teacher know about significant changes or events (new glasses, loss of a pet, family emergency, change in living arrangements, etc.), that might affect the child's ability to learn.

Standards-based report cards are issued in December, March, and June. A parent-teacher conference is held in October/November and will include a progress report card. Mid-trimester Progress Reports are also issued in January and May.

REPORTING TO TEACHERS

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the classroom teacher in writing of changes in after school care or transportation. Children will only be released to adults designated on the emergency card. If someone else is to pick up your child, you must give the teacher written permission.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Teachers assess student progress regularly using a wide variety of tests and other strategies, including teacher observations, student tasks and projects, and required district assessment. Information from these various assessments helps teachers provide the kinds of learning experiences that will help all students make significant progress toward the district's standards.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

All kindergarten students must have a doctor's written report of a Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP) examination done between March and September of the year they enter school, and must have up-to-date immunizations. Hepatitis B vaccine, a 3 dose series, as well as a second MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) is now required for kindergarten entry.

All students must have an oral health assessment (dental check-up) within the 12 months prior to entering Kindergarten or first grade, whichever is his or her first year in public school.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The Dixie School District provides resource specialists for Special Education, English as a Second Language, counseling and psychological services. The district also offers an enriched learning program for gifted and talented students. Specialists in P.E., art, music and computers enhance the educational experience at various sites. School bus transportation is available at parent expense.

DISTRICT TESTING SCHEDULE

Testing	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dixie/State Standards Testing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STAR Testing: CA Standards Test (CST) and California Achievement Tests, 6 th Edition (CAT/6)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program				X	X	X	X	X	X
State Physical Fitness						X		X	
State Writing Assessment					X			X	
CA English Language Development Test	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

NOTE: Additional testing for various programs occurs throughout grade levels as needed.

DIXIE ADOPTED BASIC TEXTBOOKS

Subject	Publisher
LANGUAGE ARTS	Houghton Mifflin, Zoo Phonics
MATHEMATICS	Harcourt
SCIENCE	CA Science, Pearson Scott Foresman, Project Learning, SEED
HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE	Harcourt

California Academic Content Standards for Language Arts, Mathematics, History/Social Science, and Science can be found on the Internet: www.cde.ca.gov or at the Dixie School District Office.