



# Kindergarten Snapshot

Orange Public Schools

Mary L. Tracy School  
Peck Place School  
Race Brook School  
Turkey Hill School

Dear Parents,

The Kindergarten classroom is an exciting place. Children are working on a variety of skills that spiral throughout the curriculum in all academic areas. This document provides you with a glimpse, or 'snapshot,' of the skills, knowledge, and concepts taught by year's end. Curriculum development is a continuously evolving process that requires ongoing commitment through professional development opportunities. As a Professional Learning Community, we strive to promote a safe learning environment. We encourage healthy living habits and good decision-making to ensure all students become productive and contributing members of our global society.

It is our intention that, in partnership with you and the community, we will instill in our students a love for learning. Please provide a variety of opportunities to reinforce these developing skills with your child in order to bridge the connections among school, home, and the wider community.

The Kindergarten Team

## A Typical Day

A typical day in the extended-day Kindergarten includes classroom and school-wide practices deliberately planned to help children develop their academic and social-emotional skills. An enriched curriculum includes integrated programs in both literacy and numeracy. Students are provided a combination of whole group, small group, and center-based instruction in these areas to help them become readers and writers and to develop a strong number sense. Specialized instruction is offered in the areas of art, music, library media, and physical education. Supervised lunch and recess provide additional time for students to develop positive relationships with others.

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The foundation of Orange's philosophy is currently grounded in the Connecticut State Frameworks in most curricular areas. The transition to the National Common Core Standards has already begun in Math, with the purchase of our new curriculum, and in Language Arts. The Orange curriculum expectations, however, extend beyond the State and National frameworks to include many diverse enrichment opportunities. The result is students who are richly involved in their learning, preparing them now and for the future.

## Language Arts Philosophy

Our Language Arts program is comprehensive and balanced. It integrates reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and thinking. Because of this integration, it serves as the foundation for all areas of the curriculum.

We recognize that children have specific needs, strengths, and weaknesses. They must be taught at their instructional levels, allowing them to meet their individual potential. On-going assessment of progress is ever present and provides valuable information which informs our instruction so that continuous progress can be made.

The program uses a variety of authentic, rich, and interesting texts to teach both word analysis skills and comprehension strategies. Skill and strategy instruction begins in Kindergarten and is extended and strengthened as children progress through the grades. Students are able to make connections from their prior experiences to a variety of authentic, rich, and interesting texts that motivate them to become critical and reflective thinkers. They participate in small and whole group book discussions, shared writing, guided reading groups, and independent reading and writing. Student are provided with opportunities to rhyme words and manipulate letter sounds through literacy games designed to enhance their decoding ability and their fluency. Through early opportunities and inventive spelling, children are taught to understand and to use the writing process to become effective readers, writers, and communicators who are reflective and critical thinkers. It requires students to become independent in literacy and develop a life-long love of language.

Learning to read and write is a developmental process. As children progress through the grades, literacy demands will naturally increase.

## Language Arts

Students will be able to:

- Recognize their upper and lower case letters and form letters correctly
- Write their first name with correct capitalization
- Demonstrate age-appropriate, fine motor ability
- Recognize high-frequency words
- Recognize rhyme and rhyming words
- Associate sounds with letters and give words for a specific sound
- Understand concepts of print, left-to-right, sentences, titles, and so on
- Retell a simple story and sequence the events, identifying the beginning, middle, and end
- Understand basic story elements, such as character, setting, and problem
- Draw and write to express ideas

## Speaking and Listening

Students will be able to:

- Speak in complete sentences to communicate ideas
- Respond verbally to questions
- Listen while others speak
- Listen to non-fiction and fiction stories
- View and respond to media

## Homework

Teachers assign homework for a variety of purposes: to practice and reinforce skills, extend and apply previously learned skills, prepare for a lesson yet to be presented, integrate skills, and establish independent responsibility. The Orange Board of Education's policy states that kindergarteners should receive 10 minutes of homework two days per week. In addition, children at every grade level should read for pleasure every night.

## Mathematics

Our curriculum is a problem-solving, applications-based program called *Math Expressions*. Our goal is to explore math both in the concrete and abstract using the investigative process. It is our philosophy that students learn problem-solving and reasoning skills through the use of manipulatives, mental math, and computation. The daily math focus is on one of the four major content strands: 1. Patterns and Functions (as in identifying an ABAB or ABBA pattern and sorting by color, shape, orientation, texture, size, and so on); 2. Working with Data (as in collecting real-life data and recording results); 3. Numerical and Proportional Reasoning (as in working with up to 30 objects in a set and quantifying 'more, less, most, least, longer, shorter,' etc., or simple addition and subtraction of objects); and, 4. Geometry and Measurement (as in identifying square, triangle, cube, prism and identifying shapes in real life.).

Mathematics for the kindergarten learner is a natural part of the world. Children will develop conceptual understanding and mathematical skills through meaningful experiences, actions, observations, and discussions. All Kindergarten teachers have *SmartBoards* to enhance math instruction. Examples of the instructional activities students in kindergarten experience include identification of numbers, counting and one-to-one correspondence, sorting and classifying objects by attributes, replicating patterns, and identification of shapes. They will begin the study of measurement and time and work with data and graphs as related to the world around them.

## Science

Our Science curriculum emphasizes a 'mind-on, hands-on' approach. Students learn through the inquiry and discovery model with an emphasis on problem-solving in the real world. Concepts explored in Kindergarten are:

- Daily weather conditions and seasons
- Rain forests
- Ocean life
- Living things and their life cycles
- Oviparous animals (animals that lay eggs)

## Social Studies

The newly-adopted Social Studies curriculum includes student learning activities that maximize student engagement and encourage interactive learning and higher-level thinking skills. Lesson designs are creative and innovative, allowing students to think critically, set-up and solve real-world problems, communicate with a variety of audiences, and use technology to learn information and convey their own ideas. Geography and beginning map skills are integrated throughout the curriculum at each grade level.

The Social Studies curriculum in Kindergarten is incorporated through the Language Arts program. It is focused on students' developing awareness and understanding of themselves and the others around them as members of a family and wider community. Concepts studied include: self-awareness, customs and traditions, school, holidays, and geography.

## Library

The Library Media Program promotes both the habit of reading for pleasure and the use of information for creative thinking and problem-solving. Students will learn how to select and use information, regardless of the format, in order to become effective learners .

In Kindergarten, students learn the rules and procedures for using a library, with a focus on book care and library manners. They learn the basic organization of a library. They are exposed to different genres of fiction and learn to select 'just right books' to take-out of the library. They learn to locate parts of a book, cover, title, author, table of contents, and so on. They listen attentively to stories and begin to use the Super3 problem-solving model.



## Physical Education

The Physical Education program has been developed in accordance with both National and State standards. Motor skills and physical fitness are developed in a sequential manner through a planned series of progressively developed activities. Students are instilled with the value of physical fitness activities as they relate to leading a healthful lifestyle.

Concepts introduced in Kindergarten include exploring the body and spatial awareness, demonstrating the ability to travel safely in different directions, jumping and landing, combining various locomotor (walking, running, hopping, skipping, galloping, sliding, leaping), non-locomotor (twisting, bending, squeezing, lifting, stretching, pulling, swaying), and manipulative skills (moving an object, as in throwing, kicking, rolling, bouncing, catching, dribbling (a ball)). Students learn proper chasing, dodging, and fleeing. They balance and transfer their weight, and practice fine motor skills by throwing and catching, kicking and punting.

In Physical Education, students are provided with experiences to both work and develop independently and to work cooperatively with a partner or in small groups. The concepts of fitness and personal and social development are introduced, practiced, and promoted as life-long activities.

## Music

Our Music program engages students in a variety of musical activities such as playing instruments, singing, critical listening, movement, and dance. Through these activities and performances, students will have opportunities for self-expression, creativity, cross-curricular connections, and appreciation for others. Fostering a life-long enjoyment of music is a common goal throughout the district. Some of the concepts explored are: pitch matching, high and low, loud and soft, up and down, fast and slow, steady beat, echo patterns, same/different; sing, whisper, hum, speak voices; simple rhythms using quarter notes and rests; and playing a variety of percussion instruments.

## Art

The Orange Elementary School Art Program provides students in Kindergarten with opportunities to create and respond with understanding to the visual arts. Students will gain a lifelong appreciation for the visual arts by developing art skills as well as an understanding of how the arts help express the human experience. Students will be introduced to the relation of the visual arts to history and cultures, will use a variety of art techniques and processes, will make connections to academic subjects, and will be able to evaluate their own and other's work.

Students in Kindergarten will explore the elements of art and principles of design including line, color, shape, form, texture, and pattern. Their individual creativity will be encouraged as they draw and paint with a variety of media including crayons, pencils, markers, brushes, as well as create three dimensional art using clay, and paper. Kindergarteners will be introduced to famous artists and art styles and basic concepts of color theory, symmetry, and perspective, as well as art processes like collage, printmaking, and hand-building. Safety and proper usage of materials will be taught in a fun environment where all students will feel challenged and supported.

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