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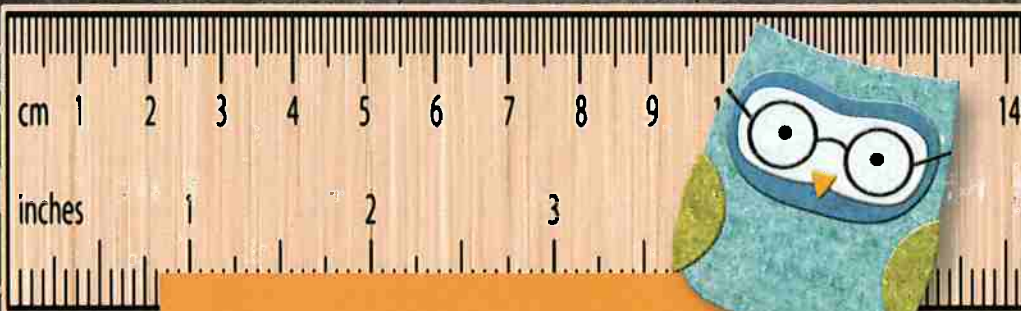
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# St. James School Kindergarten Handbook 2017/18

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SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

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TEACHER

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to St. James Kindergarten, it is a fun and wonderful place to be! I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and share with you some of the basic information in regards to routines and procedures in Kindergarten.

Next year will be my fifth year teaching Kindergarten here at St. James. I graduated from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, IA with a degree in Elementary Education with a Reading endorsement.

I grew up on a farm south of Washington and graduated from Washington High School. I have two boys, Eli will be in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and Ian will be in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

I want to share that I think it is important to keep lines of communication open and would hope that you would contact me anytime you have a question. Email is probably the easiest way to contact me as I check it throughout the day. The school phone number is 653-3631 and my extension is 113. Each week I will send out weekly newsletters to keep you informed of what is going on in class. The school also sends weekly newsletters via email.

Students will take turns bringing morning snack for one week at a time. Some snack suggestions are: yogurt, string cheese, fresh fruit, cereal, pretzels, granola bars. Preferably items low in sugar and fat. I will plan snack accordingly, so that your child has snack the week of their birthday (or half birthday for summer months.) Your child can bring any snack of choice at that time. Please alert me of any food allergies that your child has. I do ask that any snack that needs "prepared" is done so before bringing it in (such as slicing apples, peeling oranges, slicing cheese and bologna, etc.)

We have rest time daily after our noon recess. Your child needs to bring a towel to rest on, we lay down for about 20 minutes with lights off listening to music. It is not required for children to sleep, it is just a time for each child to rest before we begin our afternoon. Rest time doesn't last all year, we will begin to phase it out when children show they are ready.

We begin our year with learning basic routines and rules, learning about our room and getting a basic feel for where the class is at academically.

Throughout the year students are assessed formally and informally and we use all of our assessments to try to best meet the needs of students.

Students participate in the Reading Buddies program with a higher level grade to provide a multi-age learning experience that is highly rewarding for both groups. This program is based off of the Martha Speaks series and incorporates videos, books and projects to introduce new vocabulary.

Kindergarten is a very exciting year, full of learning and I look forward to experiencing it with you and your family.

As I mentioned earlier, please feel free to contact me with any questions. I am looking forward to another fabulous year in Kindergarten!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Arbogast". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".



## KINDERARTEN PROGRAM

The kindergarten program at St. James Elementary is designed to develop a child's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas; physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. Curriculum and instruction are designed to develop a child's self esteem, sense of competence, and positive feelings toward learning.

Each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth. Curriculum and instruction are responsive to individual learner differences and planning is done accordingly.

The primary focus in kindergarten is literacy, taught in a wide variety of ways. Literacy centers are used daily and are based on the Daily 5 method. Students move through 3-4 centers at this time and do various literacy based activities. Small groups are taught at this time and we do guided reading during these groups and it is a time to reinforce skills being taught or go back and reteach a skill that a child may need more time with. While a small group is working with the instructor the other students work on a variety of reading and writing activities around the classroom.

Other learning centers are implemented on an as needed basis. Content areas may focus on math, social studies, or science. Learning centers may also focus on fine motor skills. During this time students engage in hands on activities to foster independent learning.

The goals of our literacy program are in alignment with the Iowa Core. Our reading series incorporates all aspects of reading. There is a strong focus on phonics, sight words, vocabulary, fluency, and writing. In the primary grades we focus on "learning to read" and later in school shift to "reading to learn". The biggest portion of our day is spent on literacy; in whole group, small group and one on one instruction. Assessment of student progress is ongoing and determines the curriculum and instruction for future lessons.

Mathematical concepts are also taught in a variety of ways and will also be in alignment with the Iowa Core. Math is taught by direct instruction, group work, writing activities, hands-on learning, and independent exploration. Number recognition, patterns, shapes, time, money, measurement and simple addition and subtraction are some of the areas covered in the curriculum.

Our Social Studies curriculum is a combination on Bringing History Home and our current text book. Bringing History home focuses on making history relevant to each child's own life. Students learn vocabulary and explore their own pasts. They are asked to bring in "artifacts" to share and make a time line of their life in one of the units. From our text book we explore values, social living and respect for individual differences.

The Science program is also a combination of two different curriculums. VAST Science kits are used and are a wonderful, hands on way of teaching Science. There are three kits available for kindergarten and the students absolutely love them. They learn about

inquiry and investigation and get to be "scientists". These are part of the Iowa Core also. In addition to the kits, we do some thematic units on life science and earth science.

Our religion program stresses the world God made for us and emphasizes the wonders of it. The children have many opportunities to pray together and learn songs and prayers. Students will also become aware of the church, people of the church, and special religious holidays. Christian values are integrated into all subjects and aspects of our day.

Multi-age activities are incorporated frequently at St. James. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students partner up with kindergartners weekly and do a buddy reading program. The program focuses on vocabulary, writing and reading. Students also attend weekly mass with a multi-age school family and participate in school "family days" throughout the year.

Parent involvement is extremely important in a child's education. I look forward to working with you and being partners in your child's education. Don't hesitate to contact me, anytime, with any questions, comments or concerns you may have.

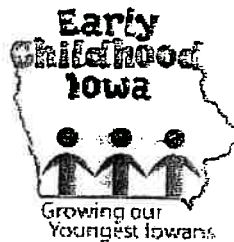
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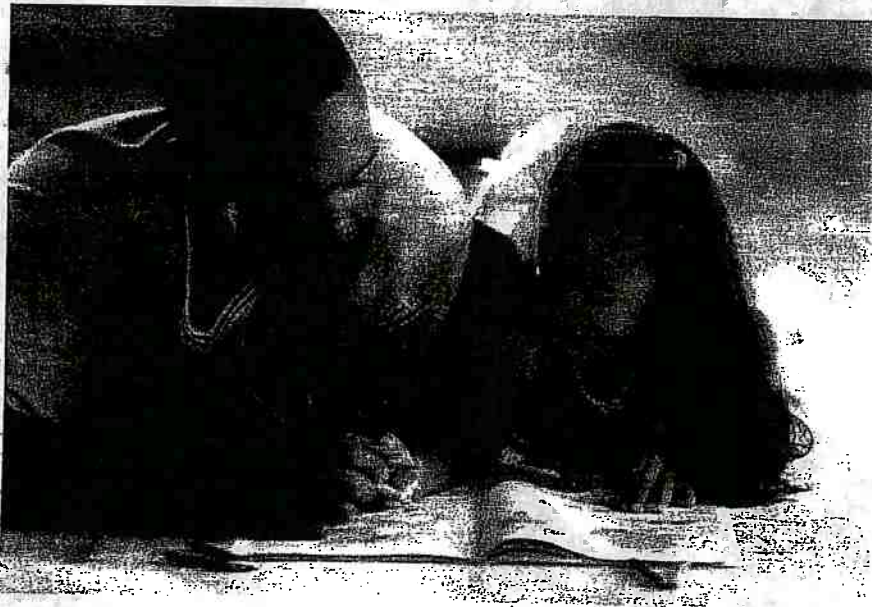
# Getting School Ready in Iowa

I want to be ready for kindergarten. How can the kindergarten be ready for me?



A guide for families and early care, health,  
and education providers caring for children who  
will be attending kindergarten in Iowa


*Children begin to learn as soon as they are born, and they keep learning every day. Although children develop at different rates, every part of development is important and contributes to learning. All areas of development are connected and influence children's success in school and life.*



Children benefit when their families are involved in their learning and development. Learning is strengthened when families, early care and education providers, schools, and other community partners work together for the well being of children.

Helpful hints are provided in this guide to help you prepare a child to be a confident and successful learner. This document provides evidenced-based information and is aligned to the Iowa Early Learning Standards.





## Social and Emotional Development

**Children entering kindergarten should be ready to take care of themselves and work independently.**

Look for me to:

- Hang my coat on a hook
- Put on and take off shoes
- Handle toileting needs
- Pick up toys and put them in appropriate places
- Follow a daily routine

**Children entering kindergarten should be ready to make friends, solve problems with others, and show empathy.**

Look for me to:

- Join one or more children in play
- Separate from caregiver and adjust to new settings
- Interact with familiar adults
- Begin to recognize and respond to others emotions
- Use words and phrases to state feelings, needs, and opinions
- Take turns easily and with minimal help
- Show interest in others
- Approach others positively

**Children entering kindergarten should have experiences through play to become confident learners.**

Look for me to:

- Be flexible and imaginative in play
- Play for a period of time
- Stay focused on a task when faced with a challenge
- Try to figure things out
- Seek and/or accept help when needed
- Apply knowledge and experiences to new situations

## Language and Early Literacy Development

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**Children entering kindergarten should understand and use conversation and language for a variety of purposes.**

Look for me to:

- Follow directions
- Start and take part in conversations
- Ask and respond to questions
- Use a growing vocabulary

**Children entering kindergarten should engage in early reading experiences.**

Look for me to:

- Point to pictures and words
- Recognize and name some letters, especially those in my own name
- Say and sing rhyming words
- Sing nursery rhymes
- Guess what will happen next in a story
- Show an interest in written language by asking, "What does that say?"
- Recognize print associated with restaurants, store names, logos, and stop signs
- Pretend to read stories using the book and my own words

**Children entering kindergarten should engage in early writing experiences.**

Look for me to:

- Use scribbles, shapes, and pictures to share my thoughts or ideas
- Begin to copy or write my own name
- Use a variety of writing tools (pencils, crayons, brushes, chalk, paper of different sizes, and colors) and materials
- Tell others about the meaning of my drawings and writing



## Math Development

**Children entering kindergarten should be able to identify, sort, classify, and create patterns.**

Look for me to:

- Identify primary colors
- Describe simple shapes and textures
- Predict what comes next in a pattern
- Talk about how shapes fit together to form other shapes

**Children entering kindergarten should understand amounts, including the use of numbers and counting.**

Look for me to:

- Count objects - such as cups - when setting the table, so they match the number of chairs at the table
- Recognize and name some numerals (1-10)
- Compare different amounts using words like "more" or "less"

**Children entering kindergarten should use language to talk about math.**

Look for me to:

- Use words that show order such as "first, second, next, last, yesterday, tomorrow"
- Begin to copy or write my own name
- Describe people or objects using words like "big, little, short, tall, long"
- Use words that show placement such as "up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside"



