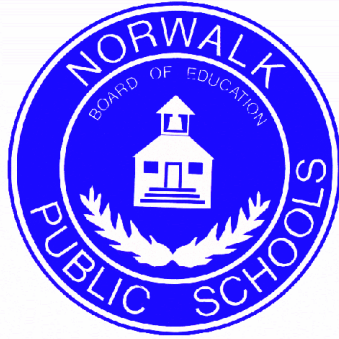


**Norwalk Public Schools
Norwalk, Connecticut**



Kindergarten Handbook





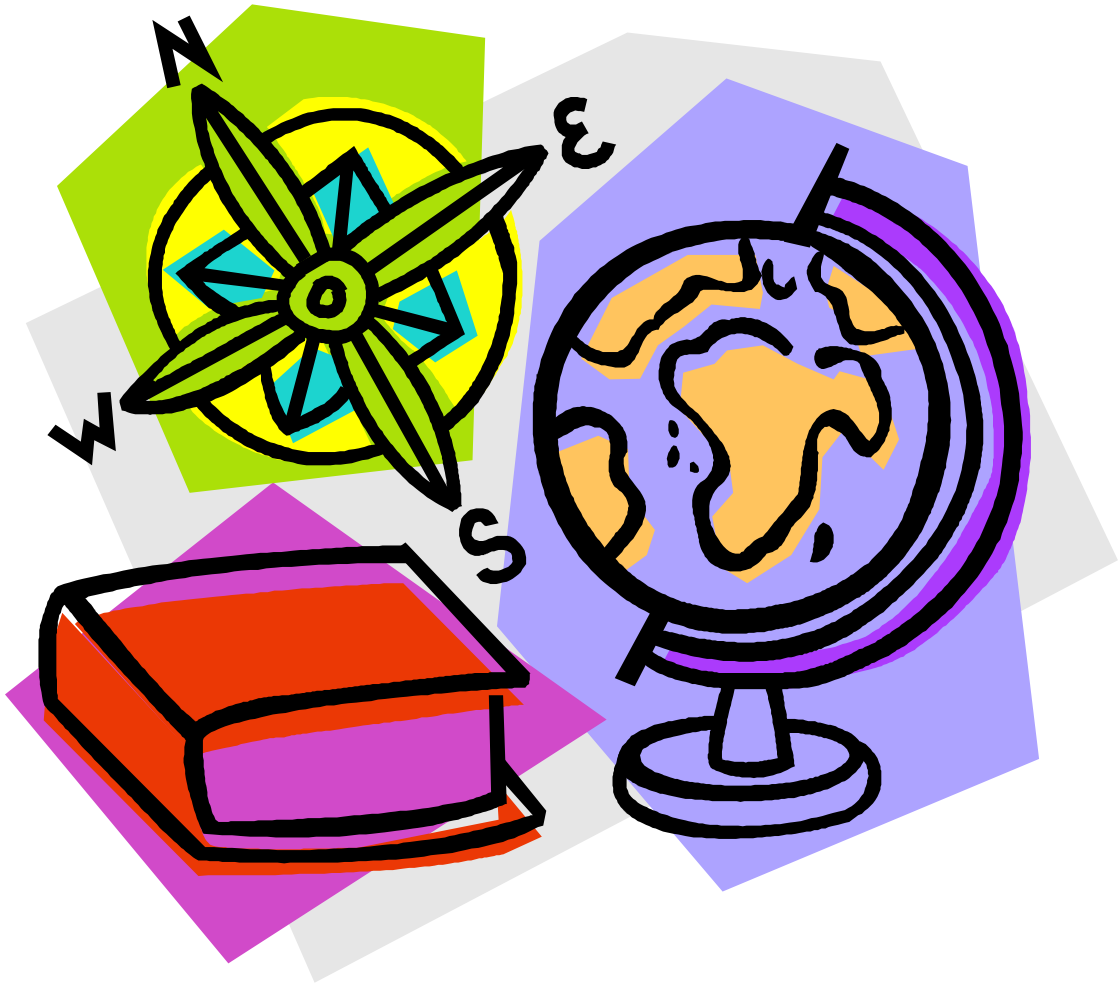
A Message from the Norwalk Superintendent of Schools

Welcome to the world of kindergarten. We are so happy to have you and your child in our schools. We are very proud of our kindergarten program because we believe that it focuses on the most important treasure we have -- your child. We have build a program that is designed to help your child (and you!) learn about himself or herself, other people, and the world around us. We want your child to explore, to play, to ask questions, to think, to wonder, to smile, and to come home every day excited about, "What I learned in school today." We hope this handbook is helpful to you. Please stay in close touch with us. Kindergarten should really be a child's garden. We hope your little one will enjoy it.

**Salvatore J. Corda, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools**

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1. PHILOSOPHY OF THE NORWALK BOARD OF EDUCATION

In light of the diversity of social, economic and cultural background of our student population, it is the responsibility of the Norwalk Public Schools to:

- **Provide each student the opportunity to obtain an education according to his or her needs and abilities.**
- **Promote a mutual support for the education of the child among school, staff, parents, students and community.**
- **Provide an environment in which each student exerting his/her best effort can develop at is/her own rate physically, mentally, emotionally, aesthetically and socially.**
- **Provide a school environment that fosters self-respect, respect for others and favorable recognition of individual and cultural differences.**
- **Provide each child, to the best of his/her ability, with the basic skills in reading, communication and computation, as well as skills in how to learn, how to solve problems and how to organize information in order to use it.**
- **Provide students the opportunity to learn additional skills appropriate to the individual to prepare them for the future; to enable them to make responsible decisions, work constructively with others, develop lifelong health habits, function effectively as a good citizen, continue to learn and quality for higher education or employment.**
- **Provide an environment which fosters creativity, encourages imagination, exploration and innovation.**
- **Provide each student an opportunity to strive for and experience success in his/her endeavors.**
- **Promote continuing improvement of service to students through staff development, in-service training, sharing of new ideas, analysis and evaluation of programs, goals and achievements.**

We believe that school, staff, parents and the community share equally in the responsibility for maximum student growth.



2. KINDERGARTEN READINESS

The Norwalk Public Schools' Kindergarten program is based on the belief that young children learn best by being involved in the learning process. A kindergarten program that instills learning through individual discovery will engage both teacher and student while nurturing a love for learning in the kindergarten child.

Readiness for kindergarten depends on your child's personal and social development, physical development, cognitive development and creative expression/aesthetic development.

Children at five are at different stages of development and learn at different rates. Therefore, your five-year-old may or may not possess all of the following characteristics and behaviors.

- Demonstrates book awareness
- Listens to stories with interest
- Able to look at pictures and tell a story
- Able to retell a story
- Recognizes some letters of the alphabet
- Recognizes some matching sounds (i.e. ball, baby, bike)
- Has had some exposure to rhyming words
- Demonstrates some spatial awareness (i.e. top, bottom, under, over)
- Refers to himself or herself by first and last name
- Knows address and phone number
- Attempts to print or copy first name
- Uses letter-like approximations to write words/ideas
- May recognize some common words (i.e. stop)
- Able to pay attention for short periods of time to adult-directed tasks

- Follows simple directions
- Beginning to manage transition from one activity to the next
- Recognizes colors
- Beginning to understand one-to-one correspondence while counting (i.e. counting beads while he or she is stringing them, counting cups, plates, etcetera for snack)
- Beginning to sort objects by one or more attributes (i.e. color, size, shape)
- Beginning to recognize simple patterns and duplicate or extend them
- Uses words to express feelings and speaks understandably
- Uses multiple-word sentences
- Able to put on and take off outer clothing and learning to tie shoes
- Uses the bathroom independently
- Able to identify some body parts
- Able to separate from parent
- Recognizes authority
- Sees adults as helpers
- Walks a straight line
- Hops, jumps, marches, climbs stairs
- Throws a ball
- Draws simple pictures
- Has some ability to cut with scissors
- Has some ability to paste
- Beginning to control pencils and crayons
- Completes simple puzzles (i.e. five pieces)
- Follows classroom and playground rules
- Understands that actions have both cause and effect
- Is learning to maintain self-control
- Shares with others
- Learning to work independently in a small group
- Tolerates frustration, can accept change



3. HOW TO REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN

- 1. Contact your local school. If you need help in determining which is your school, call the Board of Education at #854-4000.**
- 2. Bring a certified birth certificate with a raised seal or other official evidence of your child's date of birth (such as a passport) to your school. Your child must be 5 by December 31 to be registered.**
- 3. Complete and bring with you the Enrollment Form the school will provide you after you contact them. Include documentation of your child's social security number.**
- 4. Answer the Developmental Questionnaire in writing and bring this paper with you to the school.**
- 5. Complete and bring the Home Language Survey to the school.**
- 6. Provide two (2) proofs of your residence in Norwalk:**
 - a. A mortgage deed OR a signed lease with your landlord's name and telephone number.**
 - b. A recent utility bill such as telephone, electric, or gas.**
 - c. A driver's license is NOT an acceptable proof of residency.**
- 7. The completed State of Connecticut Health Assessment (blue form) showing evidence of a physical exam done within one year before entering school:**
 - a. Your child must have received a tuberculin test and the results recorded on the form within one year of entering.**
 - b. Your child must show adequate immunization:**
 - I. 4-DPT (the last dose given after the 4th birthday).**
 - II. 3-Polio (OPV and/or IPV – the last dose given after the 4th birthday).**
 - III. 2-doses Measles containing vaccine upon entrance to Kindergarten.**
 - IV. 1-dose of Mumps and Rubella vaccines given at age 1 or older.**
 - V. 1-HIB (given at age 12 months or older is required if the student is NOT age 5 at time of entry).**
 - VI. 3-HBV (Hepatitis B) if born after January 1, 1994.**
 - VII. 1-dose of varicella or proof of immunity if born after January 1, 1997.**

Completed forms with all requested documentation must be hand-delivered to the office of the school your child will be attending.



4. List of Norwalk Elementary School Addresses, Phone Numbers and Hours

School	Address	Telephone	Start time	Closing time
Brookside	382 Highland Ave.	899-2830	9:20	3:25
Columbus	46 Concord St.	899-2840	9:20	3:25
Cranbury	10 Knowalot La.	846-3600	9:20	3:25
Fox Run	228 Fallow St.	899-2860	8:45	2:50
Jefferson	75 Van Buren Ave.	899-2870	8:45	2:50
Kendall	57 Fallow St.	899-2880	9:20	3:25
Marvin Beach Road	15 Calf Pasture	899-2890	8:45	2:50
Naramake	16 King St.	899-2900	8:45	2:50
Rowayton	1 Roton Ave.	899-2940	9:20	3:25
Silvermine	157 Perry Ave.	899-2950	9:20	3:25
Tracey	20 Camp St.	899-2960	9:20	3:25
Wolfpit	Starlight Dr.	899-2980	9:20	3:25

5. THE KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

The kindergarten curriculum is developmentally based and includes the disciplines of art, language and literacy, mathematics, music, physical education, computer skills, science and social studies. As children practice with real situations and objects, an ability to think abstractly and solve problems gradually emerges.

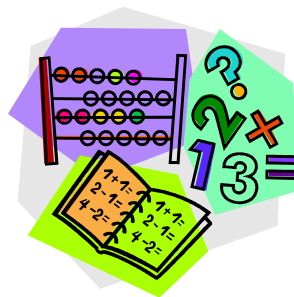
Many subjects are integrated within each planned and play activity. During play, children gain confidence, internalize knowledge, test ideas, try on adult roles and life situations, and practice new skills.

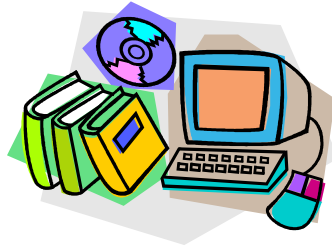
During the kindergarten year, teachers identify each student's abilities and developmental level, and plan for appropriate experiences to stimulate further growth.

In all aspects of the program, the student's developing literacy is supported and encouraged. Children's interests are used to help the student speak, listen, write, read and think.

Young children come to school naturally curious about the world around them. The kindergarten science program serves to allow the child to observe, describe and classify the natural world.

Mathematics in kindergarten consists of opportunities to develop numeracy through manipulation of pattern blocks, unit blocks, unifix cubes, Cuisenaire rods, tangrams and attribute blocks to teach one-to-one correspondence, counting, sorting, classifying, grouping into sets, comparing, ordering, quantity and recognition of geometrical shapes. Children learn both to solve and pose mathematical problems using numerals as well as mathematical vocabulary.





Kindergarten classrooms include a computer center. Children are allowed to experiment with the operation of the computer and learn mouse skills and preliminary word-processing. Appropriate software supports other mathematical and literacy learning.

A multicultural approach to society introduces children to the social studies content of the curriculum. Children learn about families, communities and community helpers. They develop preliminary map skills and chart reading skills.

Music is enjoyed in kindergarten with the objective to introduce children to melody, rhythm, tone and interpretation.

Physical Education helps to develop gross motor ability in children. Children are given the opportunity to exercise and learn the rudiments of some sports where they learn teamwork and physical skills.

Art is integrated into the kindergarten curriculum and is also offered as a creative enrichment to their week. Children are given a variety of materials to use to create two- or three-dimensional forms. Opportunities to cut, glue, draw with markers or crayons, and to paint at the easel help to reinforce curriculum goals, as well as develop fine motor, pre-writing skills.



6. DEVELOPING LITERACY

In kindergarten, children develop literacy through being read to and using a listening center to hear and follow along with books on tape. Children are given opportunities to converse with adults and children. They are encouraged to communicate in writing through journals. Literacy centers are set up in each classroom for children to freely choose their own books, or to write letters to peers, parents or teachers. Teachers and aides in the classroom help children to create their own books, by writing down the words the children dictate to them, and by encouraging children to use sound-based spelling. Teachers keep charts of answers to the open-ended questions they have asked. Questions may relate to topics supporting math, science or social studies curriculum.

Children are encouraged to learn to write. Their writing passes through predictable stages. You will first notice that your child scribbles,



an experimentation with writing, just as babbling was your infant's way of experimenting with speech. Gradually, children imitate writing by stringing lines together,



and then, by imitating letters in letter-like forms.



Children then learn to write letters of the alphabet. During the kindergarten year, children begin to write "words". A single letter often represents whole words.



(A little girl was going on a walk)

As your child learns that each letter has a sound, he or she may begin to try writing down the letter sounds he or she hears in a word.

T D L

(Turtle)

Gradually, your child will learn to recognize and use standard spelling and may begin to use spacing and punctuation.

(I like my turtle)

During all these preliminary stages of writing, it is important to encourage your child with praise. Avoid correcting your child until he or she asks for your help. The more confidence you have in your child, the more confidence your child will have in his or her own ability to learn to read and write.





7. WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO: READING, WRITING AND MATH

Families can support their child's learning by trying some of the following ideas:

- Have your child help you sort and put away the silverware. Sorting and classifying helps children learn to group into sets. You can ask, "If we have to each of forks, knives and spoons, how many do we have in all?"
- Take your child grocery shopping with you. Ask him/her to find their favorite cereal or snack by looking at pictures or letters on the packaging. Talk about the importance of eating healthy food.
- Use the calendar to identify numbers, days of the week and months of the year.
- Emphasize concepts of time: day, night, bedtime, mealtime, yesterday, today and tomorrow.
- Go on a shape hunt. Ask your child to point out objects that are shaped like circles, squares, rectangles or triangles.
- Cook with your child. Have your child pour liquid into a measuring cup. Let your child help to mix while you count the number of stirs.
- Guess how many steps it is to the kitchen from another room, then walk and count them together. How close were you?

At home, some of the most important things you can do to develop childrens' ability to read and write are:

- **Read to them**
- **Talk to them**
- **Listen to them**
- **Allow your child to choose what he/she wants to read**
- **Provide a cozy place to snuggle up with a wonderful book and someone who loves them.**
- **Be sure to take your child to the library and select books of interest to him/her.**
- **Show your child that you are interested in reading. Borrow books for yourself from the library, too.**
- **Let your children “read” you stories by describing the pictures. Don't forget to share your own stories. Great cultures have been passed on through the generations by the stories told around the campfire and the dinner table. You have your own families' living history to share. If you share it with love, you give to your children an irreplaceable pride in their heritage and an unshakeable self-worth.**



Your child's success in school is directly linked to his or her ability to read.



8. THE HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

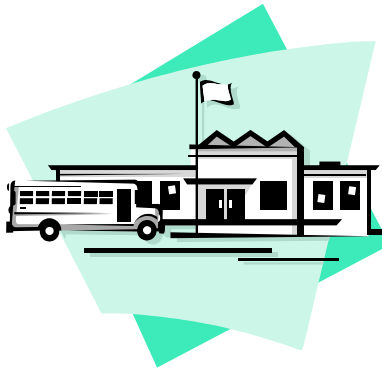
Children get the most out of the school experience when they realize that their families know, respect and support the work the teacher is doing in the classroom. The best way to accomplish this is to go to school, meet the teacher and work together to plan the best strategies to help your child succeed. You have opportunities to meet and work with the teacher at the scheduled Parent Conferences in November and March. Take advantage of the knowledge other parents have and go to PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) meetings, activities and events. Your school will provide you with a newsletter or a monthly calendar of events, which is also printed in local newspapers.

Some things you can do at home that will support what the teachers do in school are:

- Establish a regular routine for getting up, getting breakfast and going to school. Do the same in the evening. Be sure to establish a regular bedtime with quiet time before for bathing, reading, storytelling, music or just talking things over, so your child can relax into a restful sleep.
- Be firm and kind. Decide what's essential and gently insist on it. Repeat your request calmly until you get cooperation.
- Every behavior has a logical consequence. Whenever possible, use consequences, rather than punishments, to teach appropriate behavior.
- Use time out to regroup and take a breather. Give *yourself* a time out when you are too angry to be kind or patient. Never use time out as a threat.

- **When in doubt, try praise.** Find something positive about your child's behavior and praise him/her.
- **Be involved.** Attend PTO meetings and Parents Conferences. Check your child's backpack **EVERYDAY** for notices from school!





9. SCHOOL PROCEDURES

State law requires children to attend school consistently. Please arrive and pick up on time. *If your child is absent, a written excuse is required.* If you foresee a special need to have your child dismissed early, please telephone the school and write a note to the child's teacher with specific information about the change in schedule.

If your child needs to receive any medication while in school, State Law requires there be a medication form on file signed by a physician and parent or guardian. An adult must bring all medications to the school nurse. Medications must be in pharmacy prepared containers and labeled with the child's name, name of the drug, strength, dosage, frequency, physician's name, and date of the original prescription. No more than a 45 school day supply of a medication for a student shall be brought to school. Parents should contact the nurse for necessary forms and information when medication needs to be administered at school. The school nurse must be notified immediately of any changes in medication.

Parents will be notified immediately if the nurse feels that a child is too sick to stay in school. It is important to have emergency numbers that are current in order for the school to contact you in case of emergency.

All schools offer a hot lunch program for the children. Those families of children requesting either free or reduced-price lunch must complete an application in order to receive a lunch ticket for those children who qualify. Any child may purchase a weekly lunch ticket from the school on Monday mornings. Students may also purchase milk/juice tickets, ice cream tickets, or parents may choose to send a lunch in from home. It is strongly recommended that lunches brought from home include an ice pack to keep food at 40 degrees F. Please be sure to include food balanced for appropriate nutrition.

Visitors are welcome to the Norwalk Public Schools at all times with the knowledge and approval of the principal. All visitors must call in advance for an appointment or tour. In order to maintain security, each visitor is required to sign in at the office and obtain a visitor's ID pass.

If a concern develops during the course of the year regarding your child's progress or well-being within the school program, please refer to the following.

Ladder of Referral

Parents should first contact:

1. The Teacher
Then
2. The Social Worker or Psychologist
Then
3. The Assistant Principal (if applicable)
Then
4. The Principal
Then
5. The Director of Elementary Education
Then
6. The Assistant Superintendent
Then
7. The Superintendent
Then
8. The Board of Education



10. SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS, DELAYS AND EARLY DISMISSALS

In the event there is a need to revise the school day because unusually severe weather, parents are requested to listen to news broadcasts to determine if schools will be open, delayed, or remain closed. Closings and delays are announced on the Norwalk Schools information line: #854-4123. In addition to this line, several local radio and television stations broadcast the up-to-date status of the schools beginning at 6 a.m.

Occasionally, weather conditions will require the schools to close early. In this situation it is extremely important for all parents to listen to the radio stations listed below for the dismissal time. Unfortunately, it is impossible to call all of the parents and give them the information. Early dismissals are kept to a minimum.

You can tune to the following radio or television stations for information regarding the status of school cancellations, delays and early dismissals:

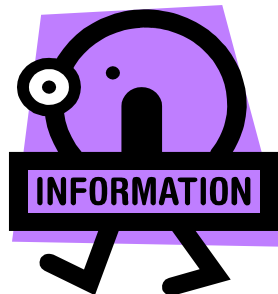
RADIO STATIONS

WICC - 600 AM
WLAD - 800 AM
WFAS - 1230 AM
WMMM - 1260 AM
WNLK - 1350 AM
WSTC - 1400 AM
WEFX - 95.9 FM
WKHL - 96.7 Fm

WEZN - 99.9 FM
WEBE - 107.9 FM

TELEVISION STATIONS

WTNH - Channel 8
Cablevision News 12



11. Things Needed for School

- **Comfortable clothes** - clearly labeled with your child's name - for indoor and outdoor experiences.
- **Sneakers** for gym and safe outdoor play.
- **A backpack or bag** to carry projects, snack or lunch between home and school.
- **Correctly completed emergency information cards** - keep current, with local emergency numbers!
- **Check with your child's teacher** to find out if you need a rest towel, and extra clothes (labeled).
- **A healthy snack.**
- **A healthy lunch or lunch money.** Ask your teacher about the purchase of milk or juice.
- **Tell the teacher** if your child is called by a nickname.
- **Joy in your child, and trust in your child's teacher!**



12. Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a place where your child will continue to:

- Get along with others
- Listen
- Follow directions
- Exert self-control
- Use words politely to communicate needs
- Get dressed by himself or herself
- Use the bathroom independently
- Share
- Take turns
- Run and play
- Develop a love of reading and learning
- Explore and connect skills



KINDERGARTEN IS A PLACE TO GROW

NOTES

If I Had My Child To Raise All Over Again

**If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd finger-paint more, and point the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.
I would care to know less and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.
I'd model less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.**

--Diane Loomans



