

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
YOUR CHILD ENTERING

KINDERGARTEN

2025 - 2026





Entering kindergarten is an exciting adventure for your child and your family. Kindergarten is the foundation for developing new skills and future learning. During the kindergarten year, students will develop independence, confidence, relationships, behaviors, and attitudes that will ensure a positive school experience. We want this transition to be a smooth and happy one.

Union County Public Schools is dedicated to providing a strong curriculum that is aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the North Carolina Essential Standards. Our goal is to engage children in the learning process, provide them with a sense of accomplishment, and help them develop a love of learning.

Mutual understanding and confidence between teachers and parents are essential to the happiness and sense of security of the kindergarten child. Educating a child must be a collaborative effort between home and school. Neither group can be as effective without the help of the other, and we look forward to joining with you in the educational journey of your child.

This booklet has been designed to provide information and answers to help you prepare your child to begin school. It also suggests some ways you can assist your child in adjusting to school.

We look forward to partnering with you as your child enters this new phase of life. Welcome to Union County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Dr. Susan Rodgers

Assistant Superintendent of Academics

A Parent's Checklist

What do I need to bring with me to enroll my child in Kindergarten?

- A **birth certificate** to verify your child will be 5 years old on or before August 31. Birth certificates can be obtained from county officials in the county where the child was born.
- A **certified copy of the immunization record** that includes a doctor's signature or a clinic's stamp as proof the vaccines were given. The following immunizations are required by law for kindergarten enrollment:
 - 5 DTaP/DT doses (A 5th dose is not required IF the 4th dose was given after the child's 4th birthday).
 - 4 Polio doses – IPV (A 4th dose is not required IF the 3rd dose was given after the child's 4th birthday and was given at least 6 months after the 2nd dose.)
 - 2 MMR doses (the first dose should be given on or after the child's 1st birthday, with the second dose at least 28 days later and before entering school)
 - 3 Hepatitis B doses (the third dose must be given after the child is at least 24 weeks old)
 - 3 HIB doses (at least one given between a child's 1st birthday and his or her 5th birthday (It is not required after age 5).
 - 2 Varicella doses – Signed documentation and verification of disease must be from a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant and include the child's name and approximate date or age of infection.
 - 4 Pneumococcal conjugate doses (not required after the child's 5th birthday).
- **NC Health Assessment Transmittal Form** every child in North Carolina entering kindergarten in public schools shall receive a health assessment. The health assessment shall be completed no more than 12 months prior to the day of school entry. The parent, guardian, or responsible person shall have 30 calendar days from the first day of school to present the completed form. The form is available online and at any school.
- Two documents from the following list that provide **Proof of Residence**:
 - A notarized rental agreement or purchase agreement on a residence
 - Utility bills (telephone, gas, electricity) that list the correct name and address
 - A driver's license OR automobile registration
 - An automobile OR property insurance policy
 - An income tax W-2 form
 - A property tax bill



Prepare Your Child For Reading

Help your child gain an understanding of reading concepts by:

- Providing a wide variety of books and print materials for your child to look at and listen to while you read to them, including nursery rhymes and fairy tales.
- Taking your child to the library and helping him/her select and check out books.
- Helping your child learn how to open a book, turn the pages, look at the pictures and talk about what he/she sees in those illustrations.
- Talking about the parts of the book: cover, back, spine, words, and illustrations.
- Providing a special place for your child to keep his/her books and a place that is comfortable and quiet for him/her to sit and read them.
- Making reading with your child a part of your daily routine.
- Allowing your child to select the stories you read together (Remember that children love to hear their favorite stories read aloud to them over and over again!)
- Pointing out words you see every day (cereal and food labels, restaurant menus, STOP & EXIT signs).
- Telling your child the name of the letters on signs, buildings and other words you encounter.
- Telling your child the sound that the letters make.
- Bringing books for your child to read in the car when you are running errands.
- Letting your child see you as parents reading your own books, magazines or newspapers, too.
- Showing your child the words and teach them that pictures are drawings and words tell the story.
- Practicing closing the book and retelling the story from beginning to end using the character's name. Model for your child, then take turns retelling.

Visit the NC Department of Instruction site at bit.ly/homeliteracy for more resources.



Prepare Your Child For Writing

Your child's first attempt at writing may be scribbles. Encourage and praise this work! He/she is practicing communicating in this way. Drawings are also a means of communication through writing. Learning to communicate on paper is a way to share thoughts and ideas. It helps children make connections between the printed and spoken word.

Parents can help their children with writing by:

- Inviting your child to tell you about drawings or to "read" his/her notes.
- Praising efforts. Respond to the message, not how it looks.
- Providing a space for writing and materials to use (crayons, pencils, paper) and a place, such as the refrigerator, to display your child's writing.
- Letting your child see you write and telling your child why you are doing it (grocery list, note to your spouse, etc.).
- Helping your child learn to write his/her first name or part of it with proper upper/lower case letters (example: Sara, not sara or SARA).
- Try making name/words with letters out of a magazine.
- Helping your child draw the familiar story as they/you retell it. Example: One cloudy day (draw cloud) I (draw self) was in my bed (draw bed) reading a book (draw book).
- Teaching your child to write horizontal, vertical and slanted lines.
- Having your child draw basic shapes: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, heart and diamond.
- Teaching your child to draw a person using simple shapes with neck, shoulders, etc.

Prepare Your Child for Mathematics

Family members play an important role in their child's attitudes toward, and success with, mathematics. This award-winning guide summarizes what today's mathematics classroom is like, offers tips on how family members can help their children have a positive attitude and enjoy mathematics, and presents practical ways to discuss and do math at home together during everyday situations. Ideas are presented from the elementary and prekindergarten years all the way through high school. Visit <http://www.cgcs.org/Page/244> for more information. Also explore the benefits of early math experience at

<https://edsources.org/2021/benefits-of-early-math-experiences-add-up/663989>

"Everything depends on the quality of the experience which is had." - John Dewey

Help your child gain an understanding of number through:

- Playing board games and counting spaces as you move together.
- Playing blocks to visualize quantity.
- Recognizing numerals in the form of dots on dominoes and other items with dot configurations.
- Reading "counting books" with your child such as those by Eric Carle, Stuart Murphy, just to name a couple...
- Counting sets of objects with your child (e.g. number of plates for setting the table, number of cards for each player in a game, number of crayons in a small box of "8", and counting pennies in a bank, etc.)
- Listening to counting songs and rhymes such as: One, two, buckle my shoe; three, four, shut the door...

Help your child understand the physical world with geometric ideas (e.g. shape, orientation, spatial relations) and describe it with corresponding vocabulary by:

- Naming shapes in the environment and pointing them out to your child regularly (circles, squares, triangles, rectangles).
- Working with puzzles.
- Building blocks of all shapes and sizes.
- Providing materials that will help your child develop relationships, like longer and shorter, lighter and heavier, bigger and smaller (Legos, links, etc.).

Three Critical Areas for K math under the new North Carolina Standard Course of Study:

- Developing concepts of Counting and Cardinality to 100.
- Developing concepts of understanding of Operations and Algebraic Thinking.
- Identifying and describing shapes in space.



Prepare Your Child to be Independent

Preparing your child to be independent by:

- Ensuring they know their full name.
- Working with your child to learn to snap, zip, button, and tie so that he/she can take care of toileting needs and put on shoes and coats independently at school. If your child has not yet mastered all of these skills, help your child dress in clothing he/she is able to manage.
- Helping your child learn how to wash hands, use a fork and spoon, blow his/her nose, and use the toilet independently.
- Teaching your child to open snacks (crackers, juice boxes, chips, etc.) Lunch time is limited.
- Giving your child responsibility for simple jobs, such as setting the table, sorting socks, or putting away his/her toys and belongings.
- Providing your child with opportunities to make decisions. "What book would you like to read?"; "Do you want to wear your red shorts or your blue ones?"
- Giving your child 2 & 3 step directions and have them follow in order (Example: clap your hands, stomp your foot, walk to the door).
- Giving your child practice buckling and unbuckling their seatbelt or car seat on the right side of the car is beneficial for car riders.



Prepare Your Child for the First Day of School

The following suggestions will help you and your child get the school year off to a great start!

- Set a positive tone by talking about how much fun learning and school can be.
- Share fun and positive experiences you remember having when you went to school.
- Help your child adjust to schedule changes (if needed) by setting up a routine for going to bed and getting up earlier at least a week before school starts.
- Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast at home or arrives at school with enough time to eat breakfast provided at school.
- Consider allowing your child to ride the school bus on the first day. You could meet the bus at school and walk your child to class if you have a desire to do so.
- Label all of your child's personal belongings (coat, lunch box, etc.) ahead of time to avoid confusion at school.
- Place money being sent to school in a sealed envelope with the teacher's name, child's name, and what the money is for clearly written on the outside of the envelope.
- Make sure your child is dressed in clothing comfortable enough to play in during recess and easy for him or her to manage independently when they need to go to the restroom. Supply a change of clothes to be left at school for spills, accidents, etc.
- Identify a specific place at home where your child places his or her school materials (book bag, lunch box, etc.) to avoid looking for items in the morning.
- Set aside a special time each afternoon or evening to talk about your child's day.
- Communicate with your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns. Just remember it is best to make an appointment rather than simply trying to catch them during arrival or dismissal time.



Next Steps

Parents play a very important role in the educational success of their children.

The 5 R's for Parents

Make sure your child:

- 1. Gets plenty of REST**
- 2. Eats REALLY healthy food**
- 3. Attends school REGULARLY**
- 4. Has ROUTINES and a schedule**
- 5. Is READ to everyday**

These things are extremely important to the success of your child's educational experience and will help create a valuable partnership between parents, students, and teachers.

Open communication with your child's teacher is especially important. Be aware of what your child is learning in school and ask the teacher if there are things you can help your child with at home.

Let the teacher know you support his/her efforts.

Stay connected, and make sure notes are returned and "homework" is completed.

For additional school specific information, be sure to visit the school's website.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Union County Public Schools provides English as a Second Language (ESL) services in kindergarten through twelfth grade for students who have been identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). A language development plan is created to help support the linguistic and academic needs of the student in the classroom. ESL teachers and staff communicate and collaborate with teachers and school staff to ensure student success. Currently, UCPS offers dual language immersion in Mandarin Chinese and Spanish.

Eligibility and initial identification assessment takes place in Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment.

For more information, visit the UCPS ESL website at <https://www.ucps.k12.nc.us/domain/2859> or call 704-289-5460.



Dual Language Immersion

Union County Public Schools offers dual language immersion programs in 16 elementary schools. In immersion programs, students are immersed into another language through study of core academic content areas such as language arts, math, science and social studies.

The new language is the medium of instruction as well as the object of instruction. Language immersion programs are an exciting option for parents who want their children to have the advantages of a rigorous academic program while also learning two languages. These programs support bilingualism, biliteracy, cross-cultural awareness and high academic achievement. UCPS immersion teachers achieve rigor by using the NC Standards and the UCPS curriculum.

Rising kindergarten students are selected for the Dual Language Immersion program via a random lottery.

Preferences for admission are based on the student's home school. For additional information, visit the Dual Language Immersion website at <https://www.ucps.k12.nc.us/Page/6456>





Exceptional Children

Union County Public Schools provides special education and related services for children ages 3 through 22 who have been determined eligible for services by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Referral, evaluation, identification, and special education services are provided as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the North Carolina Procedures Governing Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities.

For more information, visit the UCPS Exceptional Children's (EC) Programs website at ucps.k12.nc.us/domain/107

Process to Transition Services from EC Preschool to Kindergarten

April - May Transition meeting with current Preschool teacher, Special Education teacher, and representatives from the schools under consideration for placement. Kindergarten registration will be completed at the transition meeting.

Questions are best answered by the Special Education teacher that is working with your child.

If your child is **currently receiving services** and you have unanswered questions, please contact the EC Department at 704-296-6370.

Directory

Dr. Andrew Houlihan

Superintendent
704-296-0766

Dr. Stacey Barber

Director-Student Assignment
704-296-1005

Dr. Laura Beachum

Director-Exceptional Children's Program
704-296-6377

Dr. Candice Boatright

Director of School Performance (Elementary)
704-296-3062

Brian Joyner

Director-Transportation
704-296-3015

Dr. Hema Lalwani

Director-Federal Programs
704-296-0823

Denise Lamar

Director-School Nutrition Services
704-296-3000

Sharronda Lee

Director-After School Program
704-290-1516

Jarrod McCraw

Assistant Superintendent
Student Support
704-296-9850

Dr. Renee McKinnon

Director-Elementary School Performance
704-296-9898

Shanna McLamb

Chief Finance Officer
704-296-5314

W. Colon Moore

Assistant Superintendent
Administration and Operations
704-296-8420

Michele Morris

General Counsel
704-296-5177

Jay Parker

Chief Technology Officer
704-296-3143

Casey Rimmer

Executive Director-K-12 Curriculum & Instruction
704-296-0834

Dr. Susan Rodgers

Assistant Superintendent of Academics
704-296-0840

Dr. Matthew Schleider

Director-Accountability and Research
704-296-5982

Tahira Stalberte

Assistant Superintendent Communications
and Community Relations
704-296-5188

Dr. Jennifer Topper

Director School Performance (Elementary)
704-296-3124

Dr. Jonathan Tyson

Assistant Superintendent of
School Performance
704-296-1002

Cathy NeSmith

Curriculum Assistant
704-296-0833

Union County Board of Education

Rev. Jimmy H. Bention, Sr. - Chairman
Matt Helms - Vice Chairman
Sandra Greene
Kathy Heintel
Rev. John J. Kirkpatrick, IV
Sarah May
Joseph Morreale
Todd Price
Barry Tucker

Materials provided by: Elementary Education
Layout and Design by: UCPS Communications
and Community Relations

UCPS
UNION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

400 North Church Street | Monroe, NC 28112
Phone 704-296-9898
Fax 704-283-8419
www.ucps.k12.nc.us