

Welcome to Kindergarten

A Handbook for Parents



**Rutland Elementary School
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Kindergarten in Building for the Future

Parents are their child's first and continuing teacher. Your child will have learned more during the first five years of life than he or she will at any other time.

Parents have built the foundation upon which the learning process will continue. This booklet outlines the ways in which parents and the school can work together to provide a healthy, stimulating environment for your child. It's a partnership!

Welcome to Rutland's future Graduating Class of 2034!

Kindergarten Philosophy

Kindergarten is also about implementing a philosophy of learning. The Kindergarten Program supports the continuing growth of children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and their world. It provides a safe, joyful, caring environment where learning continues to grow. The program recognizes that children are individuals and every child is unique.

Kindergarten teachers understand the broad range of children's needs, their learning rates and styles, and their knowledge, experiences, and interests to help them learn to the best of their ability. In Kindergarten, children learn through active involvement and play and it is understood that children show their knowledge in a variety of ways.



The program views assessment and evaluation as important components of the teaching-learning process. Assessment and evaluation support the child's learning and they assist the teacher in making appropriate educational decisions. The program values teachers and parents as partners in the child's education. Teachers and parents work together to create for the child a climate of respect, success and joy, necessary for lifelong learning.

Kindergarten is

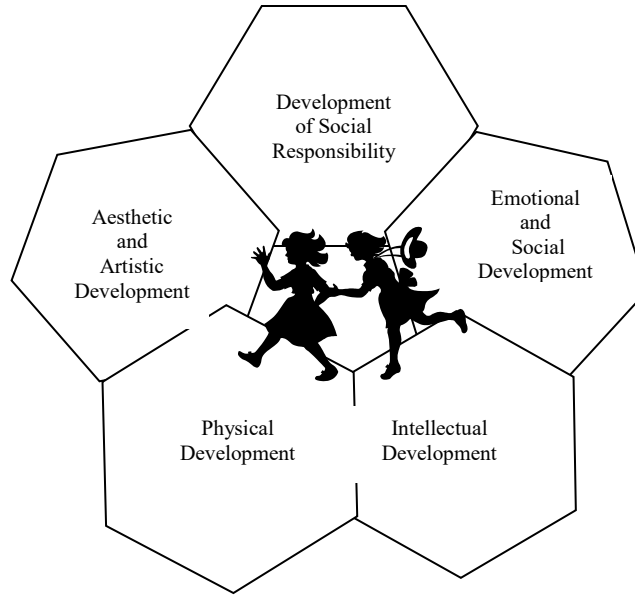
a unique opportunity for your child to experience the joys and challenges of beginning school in a positive, caring and stimulating environment.

The Kindergarten program follows the prescribed Ministry Curriculum. At Rutland Elementary your child will be exposed to a wide variety of experiences which include: Applied Design, Skills and Technologies, Career Education, English Language Arts, Physical and Health Education, Social Studies, Arts Education, Mathematics and Science as well as many other opportunities to explore and discover our community through field trips and more. Additionally your child will begin their journey through the Core Competencies including communication, creative thinking, critical thinking, positive personal and cultural diversity, personal awareness and responsibility and social responsibility. The core competencies along with literacy and numeracy foundations and essential content and concepts are at the centre of the redesign of curriculum and assessment. Core competencies are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long learning.

Learning Through Play

Play is the fundamental, natural, universal activity of children. The child learns through the process of play because of his or her inner drive to explore, experiment and discover. In Kindergarten the child is provided with high-quality play experiences that offer different types of play: observing others, playing alone and independently, playing with others, sharing and cooperating with others. Play is a facilitator of cognitive development, a way to combine and practice new concepts and thinking skills they have learned. So when your Kindergartner says s/he “played today”, s/he really did, but s/he played and learned in a very special way.

The Kindergarten program is developed around the following five areas.



Emotional and Social Development

At school, we provide experiences to help the child to:

- Develop a positive realistic self-concept
- Accept and express emotions in socially acceptable ways
- Accept and demonstrate empathy
- Accept challenge
- Feel pride in accomplishment
- Develop independence
- Enjoy living and learning
- Share
- Cooperate
- Respect and accept others
- Develop friendships
- Learn from others
- Anticipate consequences of actions



At home, parents can help by....

- Helping your child to accept emotions – anger, sadness, happiness, loneliness-and learn to live with them. Let your child know that everyone, including adults, experiences these feelings. (To feel angry is alright, but it is not alright to take out your anger by hitting someone).
- Allowing your child to make several attempts at accomplishing a task before helping. Encourage him/her not to run to you at every step. Give encouragement and praise in order to develop self-confidence.
- Allowing your child to have some time away from you and to plan some time of his/her own without parental guidance.
- Helping your child learn the importance of good manners (table and social) e.g. "please", "thank you", "excuse me", "you're welcome", etc.

Physical Development

At school by providing experiences to help the child to...

- Develop a wide variety of motor skills and maintain physical fitness
- Take care of and respect one's body
- Develop awareness of and practice good nutrition
- Develop appreciation and enjoyment of human movement
- Learn and practice safety procedures
- Work cooperatively in group activities and team games



At home, parents can help by....

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Teaching your child how to dress and undress using buttons, zippers, buckles, laces, etc., and how to hang up clothing.
- Helping your child learn how to hold a pencil, to color, to paint and to use scissors and other tools.
- Providing materials and opportunities for your child to experience a variety of arts and crafts activities.

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Providing opportunities for your child to throw and catch a ball, swing a bat, pump a swing, balance himself etc.
- Encouraging your child to tap and clap to music



Social Responsibility Development

At school by providing experiences to help the child to...

- Become a responsible citizen
- Cope with change
- Appreciate cultural identity and heritage
- Value and respect individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Respect and care for the environment

At home, parents can help by....

- Giving your child small jobs around the house: e.g. setting the table, putting toys away, etc.
- Instructing your child in appropriate hygiene and bathroom habits: e.g. blowing nose, covering mouth to cough, washing hands after using the washroom and before eating, etc.
- Watching T.V. with your child and talking about what is happening. Is it "real" or "make-believe"? Monitor the type and number of shows your child watches.

Intellectual Development

At School by providing experiences to help the child to ...

- Sustain and extend natural curiosity
- Develop the skills and attitudes necessary for independent learning
- Develop thinking processes and skills through experiences that engage children in critical thinking and creative thinking
- Develop the knowledge, concepts, processes, and skills of science, social studies, and mathematics
- Develop the knowledge, concepts, processes and skills needed to communicate effectively through listening, speaking, reading and writing



At home, parents can help by

- Taking your child along on short trips – to the mailbox, the store, etc. Research has shown that the important thing about these outings is that you talk with your child about what is going on at the time.
- Talking about the sequence of things, e.g. what do we usually do after breakfast? What happened first in the story, etc.
- Sorting objects into categories e.g. cutlery from the dishwasher, buttons, toys, laundry, money (coins), etc.
- Playing games with your child. Some games Kindergarten age children enjoy are “I Spy” (something with my little eye that is brown or begins with “s”) card games (Old Maid, Fish, Memory)

Aesthetic & Artistic Development

At school, by providing experiences to help the child to...

- Foster enthusiasm for the arts
- Explore, express, visualize, interpret and create
- Represent through a variety of forms
- Appreciate the interrelationships between the arts, society, and the environment
- Respond to the arts
- Think, learn and communicate through the arts



At home, parents can help by ...

- Providing your child with discarded clothing, hats, jewelry, etc. to encourage dramatic play
- Collecting old magazines, scraps of wallpaper, fabric, etc. for your child to cut and paste into designs
- While cooking or baking something in the oven, talk about kitchen smells. Let the child guess what is cooking. Ask how he/she can tell. When your child says that a food tastes good or tastes awful, suggest more specific words to describe the taste. It is sweet, sour, salty, spicy, tasteless, delicious or delectable?
- Provide modeling clay or playdough for your child.

"The Kindergarten Day"

Each day is somewhat different and no two classes are exactly alike but in general a child will have these kinds of experiences during his/her full day session:

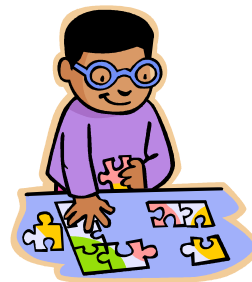
Group Time

Exchange of greetings and discussion on the calendar, weather and topics of interest.

Center Time

A period of free choice activities when he/she may use some of the following materials:

- picture books
- art materials
- puzzles, games
- peg boards
- beads for stringing in patterns
- construction toys and tools
- large and small blocks
- floor and table toys
- furniture and equipment for dramatic play in the Home Centre
- equipment for sand play
- equipment for science observations
- pets to care for
- music tapes
- computer time



Academic Time

A structured period which includes:

- listening to stories, poems and nursery rhymes
- telling and dramatizing stories
- telling about experiences
- helping to compose experience charts which the teacher prints
- planning trips

- discussing topics of interest
- discussing pictures and objects
- viewing and discussing films and filmstrips
- listening for rhyming words and beginning sounds in words
- listening to resource personnel who visit the class
- math activities
- science experiences
- computer activities
- enjoying music and rhythms



Movement Education

Informal games and large muscle activities take place in the classroom and during our scheduled gym time as well as outside weather permitting.

Lunch and Snack Time

When sending a lunch and snack to school with your child, remember that our school emphasizes good health and nutrition. Fruit and vegetables are a most suitable snack.

Work Time

At this time children complete directed work alone, in pairs or in small groups to develop the concepts presented. These include:

- alphabet letter practice
- sorting and classifying
- making charts or graphs
- math story problems
- patterning
- sequencing
- copying
- theme oriented work
- science experiments/activities
- basic readiness skills
- practice emergent reading/writing



Clean-Up

- Putting away toys and materials used during the free period
- Cleaning tables and floor as required

Kindergarten Gradual Entry (Beginning of September)

To facilitate your child's successful entry into Rutland Elementary, the first few days are planned to introduce pupils gradually to a carefully structured environment.

From Wednesday, September 8, through Tuesday, September 13 Kindergarten students will attend on a modified schedule in small groups. More information will be coming out shortly about which times your child will be attending on those days. Wednesday, September 14 will be the first full day of school for Kindergarten (8:30am-2:30pm).



Questions Parents Often Ask . . .

How will I know if my child is ready for Kindergarten?

Kindergarten has changed from when we were in school. Today, Kindergarten student spend 6 hours at school. Not all children are ready for Kindergarten at age 5 and you know your child best. If your child was delayed in reaching some of the earlier developmental milestones, such as crawling, walking or talking, that may affect his/her readiness for learning. In some instances, an extra year at home may be beneficial to your child's future academic success. Formal entrance into school may be deferred by one year. This is a difficult decision to make as once a child enters school, retention at the end of the year or in subsequent grades is not generally beneficial for the child. If you have any doubts about your child's readiness for school contact the Kindergarten teachers or school administration and we can set up a School Based Team meeting to discuss your concerns.



How will my child's individual needs be met?

Our Kindergarten teachers provide well-balanced educational programs, which support the development of the whole child. Programs and activities are designed to meet the varied needs of all children. Additional support services such as, learning assistance, gifted/enrichment, speech and language therapy and counseling, are available to all children if required.

Will my child learn to read in the first year of the Kindergarten Program?

Possibly. The British Columbia curriculum includes pre reading instruction. Our focus is on the alphabet letters and their corresponding sounds. Books are a vital part of every Kindergarten classroom. Language, in its written, printed and spoken forms, is as much a part of the early Kindergarten environment as water, clay, paint, paste and paper.

Will my child learn to print in Kindergarten?

Yes, there are formal printing lessons modelled and guided through the Handwriting Without Tears program.

How will my child's progress be determined?

In a variety of ways. The teacher will focus on your child by interacting, observing, recording and collecting samples that demonstrate growth. These may include drawings, paintings, emergent writing models.

All Primary students are assessed in literacy and numeracy using the Central Okanagan Public Schools Early Learning Profile screener. Formal report cards will be sent home three times throughout the year. These formal reports will provide parents with a very clear indication of how their child is progressing in relation to the expected learning outcomes for Kindergarten. Reporting will focus on early Literacy, Numeracy and Social-Emotional development.

Parent – Teacher conferences will be held twice throughout the year. Teachers collect work samples and make regular observations of every child.

Your child's teacher will contact you directly if they have any concerns about your child.

How much sleep does my child need?

At birth, a baby requires a great deal of sleep – at least 18 hours a day. This gradually decreases to about 7 or 8 hours every 24 hours by about the middle of adolescence. At Kindergarten age, a typical child requires between 12 ½ and 13 hours of sleep every 24 hours. Sleep is very important, since it is thought that growth hormones are released in children during sleep, and children who suffer long-term shortages of sleep will not grow as large, or as strong, as other children. As well, their brains are still developing and a large part of this development is thought to occur during sleep.

Disruptive sleep patterns may be the first indication of emotion problems. Parents should watch for unusual occurrences, such as recurring nightmares, frequent bed wetting, teeth grinding, sleep walking and night-time fears. Ongoing symptoms might indicate that a professional consultation is needed. Please touch base with our School Based Team if you'd like more information and support.

How can parents help their child develop age appropriate language and literacy skills?

There are optimum times during the pre-school years for language skills to be stimulated. In order for language skills to fully develop, children need to have opportunities to hear and practice language. Talk with your child about anything and everything. Model speaking in sentences and encourage him/her to also speak in sentences. Limit T.V. watching and the playing of video games, as these activities do not encourage your child to interact with others. Read to your child every day. Talk about what you are reading and point out interesting details in pictures. Tell your child stories and encourage him/her to add to the story. This stimulates their interest and enjoyment of books and stories.

What should I do if my child is not feeling well?

Keep them at home where they will be most comfortable. We do not have an adequate place to care for a sick child for the day as we have only 1 cot. It is very uncomfortable for sick children to have to sit in the office for long periods of time until a parent or other contact person can come to collect them. Children do not enjoy school or learn when they are ill. The good health of the other children will be affected if your child attends when ill.

Parents are asked to notify the school (by phone 870-5126) of their son/daughter's absence before 8:30 a.m. on the days in question. Please feel free to leave a message on our voice mail which is available 24 hours a day. Be sure to state the teacher, the child's name, and the reason for absence.

Emergent Reading, Numeracy and Writing

From time to time you may hear these terms used. This is a summary of information outlined below which may help to relate spoken and written language to your child's development.

Emergent Reading

Emergent reading describes the many ways in which children approximate actual reading as they play. This is a list of emergent reading behaviours. You may have noticed your child doing some of these.

- retell a story in their own words
- retell a story accurately (memorization is positive as it frees the child to focus on the match)
- point, but not to the right words
- point accurately
- make observations or ask questions about words or letters
- recognize repeated words or phrases
- recognize familiar words in new contexts
- predict words using cues that include letter sounds
- spell and sound out words
- actually read



Early Numeracy

Early numeracy activities focus on developing mathematical thinking and problem solving at an early age. We nurture positive attitudes towards math by creating opportunities that are, relevant, and achievable. The Kindergarten program focuses on four key aspects of numeracy:

- **Number Skills** – counting, reading and writing numerals, and recognizing quantities
- **Number Concepts** – sorting , comparing, ordering, patterning, estimating, quantifying, seeing part/whole relationships, joining, separating, grouping, sharing and representing
- **Visual-Spatial Thinking** – making sense of space, shapes, puzzles, structures
- **Attitudes** – developing an interest in problem solving, trying alternatives, recognizing various ways of getting to an answer, seeing oneself as capable

Emergent Writing

Emergent writing describes the many ways in which children approximate actually writing as they play.

This is a list of emergent writing behaviours. You may have noticed your child doing some of these:

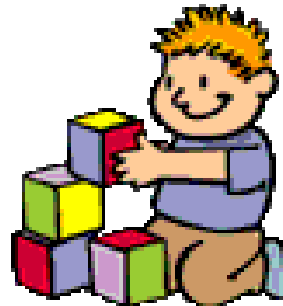
- scribble
- attempt to write some letters in their names
- make lines of zig zag
- make lines of partial circles and sticks
- make strings of letter-like forms
- make strings of actual letters
- write their names
- list words they know (eg: mom, dad, etc.)
- copy leaving no spaces (letters randomly placed on page)
- copy spontaneously, then ask you what their writing says
- invented spellings (kr for car, ct for cat)
- copy accurately, spaces between words, right to left direction
- actually write messages or thoughts



Communication

- Kindergarten newsletters will be sent home weekly with your child – these will help keep you informed of upcoming events, field trips and current theme-related activities.
- School newsletters and calendar of events are available on the school's website – parents can sign up on our website to receive a monthly reminder when the newsletter is ready.
- Parent helpers are very welcome. Please check with your child's teacher on how to sign up.

If you have made arrangements for someone else to pick up your child after school, please ensure that your kindergarten teacher is aware of this, **preferably in writing**.



Rutland Tidbits

- An additional handbook will be given out the first week of school regarding the school policies, Code of Conduct, illness and absenteeism, lost and found, P.A.C, report cards, school calendar, hot lunch program and a number of other items.
- School fees are collected the first two weeks of September. For kindergarten students the amount owing for School Supplies and the Cultural Fees is \$40.00.
- An additional Verification Form will also be sent home the first week of September, asking for any changes on your registration form and our information system. Emergency numbers or parent work numbers are of great importance to us if we need to contact you during the day if your child is ill or injured.
- Check out our online school calendar at www.rle.2323.bc.ca for the most up-to-date information.
- Are you new to our school? Consider getting involved with the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC is always looking for new members to help out. For more information, please contact rle.pac@sd23.bc.ca or the school office.

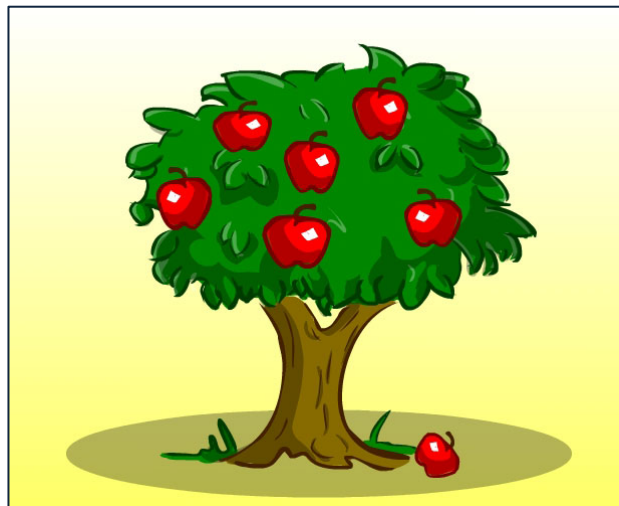
Your child will need:

- A nutritious lunch and snack each day. Snacks suggestions are any type of fruit, vegetables, cheese and egg, cold meats, etc. (No chips, candy, juice boxes, yogurt tubes, pop, cake, sweets, etc. please).
- A backpack, medium to large, not small. It will be used every day.
- A pair of non-marking inside running shoes.



CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

- If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
- If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
- If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
- If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
- If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
- If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
- If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
- If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
- If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
- If a child lives with acceptance, and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.



All I Ever Really Needed To Know I Learned in Kindergarten

Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do and not to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt someone. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup – they all die. So do we. And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living. Think what a better world it would be if we all – *the whole world* – had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon, and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had as a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

Robert Fulgham