

Eugene School District 4J

KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK



www.4j.lane.edu/kindergarten



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WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN, WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

In Eugene School District 4J, we know how important the kindergarten year is.

For many children, kindergarten is the beginning of their education and their first steps outside the familiarity of home. For many parents, it's the start of a relationship with their public school system.

Kindergarten is a full-day program in every 4J school.



Kindergarten students need a chance to start developing a love of learning. They need to feel comfortable in school as they learn basic skills and information, how to act around others, how to work in a group and how to listen and share. Parents need to establish regular, open communication with school staff so that students can get the most out of their education from kindergarten all the way through high school.

The 4J kindergarten program strives to give parents and students the right start in education by caring for and understanding each child's needs and each parent's concerns.

This booklet contains basic information about 4J and our kindergarten program. We encourage parents to contact their school whenever they have questions or concerns.

Welcome to kindergarten and to 4J schools. Working together, we can build a path to every child's future.

Dr. Gustavo Balderas
Superintendent, Eugene School District 4J



GETTING STARTED: KEY QUESTIONS

Is your child the right age?

To enroll in kindergarten, students must be 5 years old by September 1 of the school year.

If your child will turn 5 after September 1 and you wish to learn about the district's policy on early admission, visit 4j.lane.edu/kindergarten or call 541-790-7800.

Which school is right for you?

Every residence in the Eugene School District is in the attendance area of a neighborhood elementary, middle and high school. Most families send their children to their neighborhood schools, a choice which offers many advantages.

To find your neighborhood school, visit 4j.lane.edu/enroll or call 541-790-7571.

You may also transfer to a different neighborhood school or to one of the district's alternative schools. Requests are granted through an annual lottery, held each spring for the following school year.

Students who live outside of the district may apply to transfer to 4J.

To learn more about school choice and out-of-district transfers, visit 4j.lane.edu/choice or call 541-790-7570.

Does your child have special needs?

If you think that your child may need special education services, please contact the 4J Early Childhood Team at 541-790-6512.

The team provides evaluation services for preschool-age children and helps create a smooth transition into kindergarten for students with special education needs, speech or language delays and behavioral or academic challenges. The team can help determine if your child is eligible for special education programs and find the most appropriate program for your student.

Do you need child care before or after school?

Many 4J schools partner with local child care providers, which offer a variety of before- and after-school programs either in the school building or a short bus ride away. Call your school for information.



ENROLLING IN KINDERGARTEN

First call your school office to find out when to enroll and what forms are required. Many schools hold kindergarten enrollment and orientation events, sometimes called “Kindergarten Roundup,” in April.

You will need:

Enrollment forms: You can find many of the required forms online at 4j.lane.edu/enroll, or pick up an enrollment packet at the school.

Proof of age: A copy of your child’s birth certificate.

Proof of address: Bring both:

- Your current driver’s license or picture ID, and
- Your current month’s utility bill that was mailed to your home or other proof of residence.

For a list of documents 4J schools will accept as proof of identity and residency, see 4j.lane.edu/instruction/enrollment/residencyproof or call 541-790-7571. For questions about residency requirements for children who are homeless, in temporary living situations, or in temporary or emergency foster care, call 547-790-7220.

Record of immunizations: State law requires a signed Certificate of Immunization Status including the date of each immunization. Additional materials are needed to claim a medical or nonmedical exemption from one or more required immunizations.

Required immunizations include:

- polio
- mumps
- diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis (DTaP)
- measles
- rubella
- hepatitis A and B
- varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or disease

For more information about school immunizations, visit 4j.lane.edu/immunization or call 541-790-7216.

Medical exam: Students entering 4J schools for the first time should have a medical, vision and dental exam by a health care practitioner. If this is a financial hardship, please contact the school nurse or one of the district’s school-based health centers for an appointment: ▪ Churchill 541-790-5227 ▪ North Eugene 541-790-4445



LEARNING SKILLS FOR KINDERGARTEN

You are your child's first teacher. Your role as parent is crucial to your child's success in school.

There are many ways you can help your child get off to a good start in kindergarten. None of them take a lot of time. All can be done as a natural part of family life.

Get tips by text



Opt in to Ready4K text messages.

Ready4K! is a free text message service designed by Stanford University. It sends preschool parents research-based fun facts and easy tips to help children do better in school.

To sign up, text READY4K to 313131. You'll receive messages each week suggesting everyday activities to prepare your child for kindergarten. This service is completely free, except for standard text messaging rates as determined by your cell phone plan.

Build academic skills

Read to your child as often as possible. If English is difficult for you to read, read to your child in your native language. It's not the language but the reading that's important!

Look through magazines or books together. Your child should know how to hold a book, turn the pages and understand the sequence of a story—what happens first, next and last.

Practice letters and writing. Your child can sing the ABC song, learn to recognize letters and their sounds, learn to recognize written numbers from 1 to 10, learn



that words are read from left to right, practice writing letters and learn to write his/her first name.

Practice counting familiar things with your child — buttons, crayons, spoons, blocks. Practice identifying basic colors and basic shapes like circles, squares and triangles.

Practice using items your child will find at school, such as pencils, crayons, scissors and glue.

Teach your child basic information. Practice saying her/his name, your name, your address and phone number.

Build social skills

Teach your child to dress him/herself. Practice buttoning, zipping and snapping clothes and getting shoes and coats on and off.

Practice basic cleanliness skills—using the toilet without help, washing and drying hands after using the toilet, coughing and sneezing into the sleeve, nose blowing.

Have your youngster follow simple directions, like “Please go to the kitchen and bring me a glass from the cupboard.”

Teach your child common courtesies, such as using “please” and “thank you” and not interrupting others when they are talking.

Help your child learn good social skills—sharing and taking turns with other children, keeping hands and feet to oneself, communicating with words rather than actions when upset.

Practice having your youngster take care of her/his property, for example, hanging up a coat instead of dropping it on the floor, and playing with toys gently instead of abusing them.

Use age-appropriate language and don't encourage baby talk.



Encourage a positive attitude. Your child should have an “I can do it!” attitude, welcome new activities and handle disappointment appropriately.

Build positive expectations

Talk about school as an exciting new time in life, e.g., “You are going to have so much fun in kindergarten!” Point out the school as you pass by, e.g., “Look! That’s your school!”

Take your child to play at the school playground on weekends or in the summer.

Go to the events your school holds to welcome families, such as kindergarten orientation events (often in the spring) or back-to-school open houses.

After school begins

Attendance is important! Make it a priority to get your child to school on time every day. A student who misses a day of school misses a day of learning. Being just 10 minutes late every day will lose nearly 30 hours of instruction over the school year.

Be organized about homework. Have a regular homework time and do a little each day.

Keep practicing general skills. Keep reading together as often as possible. Practice sight words. Listen and ask questions when your child tells you what they’re learning.

Talk about the teacher and staff in positive ways. Help your child resolve any problems.

Communicate with your school. Read the newsletters and notes the school sends home. Contact the teacher by email or make an appointment if you want to talk.

DRESSING FOR COMFORT

Kindergarten students should wear comfortable clothes that allow them to actively participate in a variety of activities.

Choose clothing that your child can put on and take off by her/himself.

Choose shoes that your child can run and play in. Sandals with straps are OK, but no flip flops or high heels.

Dress for the weather. Expect that your child will spend some time outside every day.

Put your child's name on all outdoor clothing that may be worn to school.

Choose clothing that would be all right to stain or tear. Accidents happen at school. Even a painting smock can't fully protect clothing.

Ask the kindergarten teacher how s/he handles accidents that require a change of clothes. Each teacher handles this differently.

Check the Lost & Found periodically to see if your child has left behind some article of clothing.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Keeping kindergarteners safe

Establish clear, simple after-school routines.

Whenever there is a change in the routine, please be sure to notify the teacher.

Each child coming to kindergarten should know:

- Her/his full name, address and telephone number.
- Parents' full names.
- What traffic lights mean.
- How to cross streets safely, i.e., stop and then look both ways before beginning to cross.
- That a parent's approval is required to go to another child's home after school.
- Not to accept a ride or get in a stranger's car.

Special health problems

If your child has a special health problem that might require health care during the school day (such as diabetes, asthma, seizures, severe allergies), please contact the school and complete the necessary forms at least one week before your child starts school. The school nurse will then contact you for further review.



Don't send sick kids to school

When youngsters are sick, they need to stay home. If your child has any of the following symptoms, please do not send him/her to school:

Fever of 100 degrees or more. Children should stay home until the fever has been gone for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Vomiting or severe diarrhea. Children should stay home until symptoms have been gone for 24 hours.

Severe cold. A little sniffle is not a reason to stay home, but a severe cold or influenza is.

Sore throat or a persistent cough

Ear ache

Severe headache

If your child has a communicable disease, s/he should not come to school. Common childhood communicable diseases include chicken pox and whooping cough (pertussis). Please call the school and tell them when your child has a communicable disease.

Call when staying home from school

Please call the school attendance line as soon as possible when your child will be absent from kindergarten for all or part of the day.

When the teacher reports your child as absent and you have not called, the school office will call you to see if your child has been delayed or is ill. Calling the school first is appreciated.



Taking medication at school

Medicines may be kept in the school office and dispensed to students by school personnel *only with written permission*.

Prescription medicine:

- Must be in the original prescription bottle or container. The label must clearly show the student's name, prescribing physician's name and dosing instructions.
- Emergency medication (such as an inhaler or bee sting kit) may be carried by the student when it has a parent's and physician's written instructions.
- Changes in medication dosage or time will be accepted by school personnel only with written permission of the parent and a new, properly labeled pharmacy container reflecting the change in dosage and/or time to be administered.

Over-the-counter medicine:

- All over-the-counter medication must be received in the original container which represents the medicine inside the container. Baggies are not acceptable.

For questions about school health concerns, visit 4j.lane.edu/ess/healthservices or call 541-790-7216.





Healthy foods make healthy learners

Schools provide healthy meals

4J schools serve a tasty, affordable, nutritious breakfast and lunch every day. School meals meet nutrition requirements established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and 4J's Wellness Policy.

Menus are carefully planned to reflect Eugene's cultural diversity, offer daily vegetarian options, provide a variety of fruits and vegetables and include fresh, local and organic foods where feasible. An all-you-can-eat salad bar is included with every cafeteria meal, featuring a variety of fresh produce and other healthy foods.

Contact your school to learn about the availability and cost of meals in your child's kindergarten program. For more information about school meals, see 4j.lane.edu/nutrition/localfood and 4j.lane.edu/nutrition/menus or call 541-790-7656.

Free and reduced-price school meals

Nearly half of the students in 4J schools qualify for free and reduced-price school meals through a federally funded program. Families who qualify can also get discounts for other programs such as low-cost high-speed internet, Kidsports and the City of Eugene's RecZone.

This can help your school as well as your family. The school district receives federal reimbursement for the meals, and schools can receive additional federal funding based on how many students have qualified for the program.

The school meal program is confidential. Only a few staff members know who is in the program. Children in the program are not identified to other children or adults.

If your household income is below a certain level (e.g. \$44,863 a year for a family of four in 2015–16), or if you receive food stamps, TANF, or FDPIR, you qualify! Just apply online or fill out an application, available from your school.

For more information or to apply, see 4j.lane.edu/nutrition/freelunch or call 541-790-7659.

Healthy snacks and parties

4J's policy about healthful foods also extends to snacks provided at school, on outings and at class parties. Fruits and vegetables, whole grains and other healthful foods are encouraged. Foods high in sugar, sodium and fat are limited, and soda pop is not allowed. For more information visit 4j.lane.edu/nutrition/wellness.

Eat well at home, too

Children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive. Families who send lunch or snacks to school with their children are encouraged to select healthy options. Serving healthy meals and snacks at home can help your child's long-term health and development.





MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION

Throughout kindergarten, it's very important for parents and the teacher to communicate closely to ensure children have a positive introduction to school.

Here are some ways you can keep in touch.

Visit your child's classroom periodically. Parents are always welcome. Visits give parents a chance to see how their children interact with others in a learning situation.

Pay attention to information from school. Read newsletters and notes the school sends home. Attend events like kindergarten orientation and curriculum night.

Send email or schedule an appointment to talk with your child's teacher face-to-face or over the telephone if you have questions or information to share. Drop-ins are not an effective way to communicate important information. There are just too many distractions that can interfere. Scheduling an appointment or communicating by email is more effective.

If English is not your first language, an interpreter can help you participate in parent-teacher conferences and other school meetings. Ask your school or call 541-790-6514 for information.

Volunteer in your child's classroom. Adult helpers can be a welcome resource for the teacher.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering in the classroom is a great way for parents to connect to their child's kindergarten experience.

Every 4J school welcomes and appreciates volunteers. By taking on a few of the many tasks in today's schools, volunteers allow teachers and staff to focus more on helping children learn and grow. Many volunteers work just 1–3 hours per week, or help out intermittently.

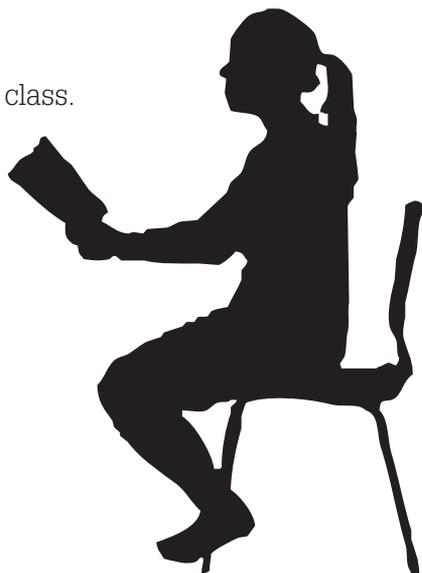
The benefits can include:

- Getting to know the other children in your child's class.
- Getting to know the parents of other kindergarten children.
- Getting to know the teacher and other school staff.
- Your child will be proud knowing you helped the school.

Not all volunteers spend time in the classroom. There are lots of other ways to volunteer:

- Help with a school event.
- Help provide snacks or supplies for parties in class.
- Help prepare class materials at home.
- Help with the library.
- Do one-to-one reading.
- Help with a field trip.
- Share a special talent with the class.

To get started, talk to the teacher or fill out a volunteer interest form. More information is available at 4j.lane.edu/volunteers.



PARENT CHECKLIST

Key steps to get ready for kindergarten

- What school will my child attend?** (See page 4.)

Name of school _____

Office phone _____

Principal _____

School website _____

- Register for kindergarten.** (See page 6.)

Kindergarten Roundup dates (spring) _____

Forms filled out Immunization records

Birth certificate Proof of address

Medical/dental/vision exam Appointment(s) _____

- What will be my child's kindergarten schedule?**

Start & end time _____

Child care before/after school _____

Child care for no-school days _____

- Who will be my child's kindergarten teacher?**

(Usually determined in late summer.)

Name _____

Email _____

- Will my child eat meals at school?** Yes No

Does s/he qualify for free or reduced-cost meals? Yes No

(See page 14.)

How will my child get to and from school? (School bus, LTD, walk, bike, carpool, drive. See www.4j.lane.edu/transportation.)

Do we qualify for school bus transportation? Yes No

Transportation from home to school _____

Transportation from school to home _____

Go to events at our new school. (Classroom visit, open house, kindergarten orientation, back-to-school social, visit the playground on weekends, etc.)

Date & time _____

Date & time _____

What other school resources are available to help my child? (Services for students with disabilities, English language learners, developmental delays in speech or language, behavioral or academic challenges, talented and gifted, etc.)

What should the teacher know about my child? (Think about what to share; the teacher will ask when school starts.)

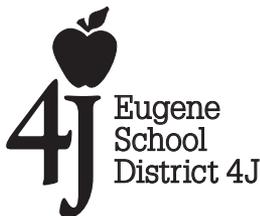
Sign up for the free Ready4K! text message service:
Text READY4K to 313131. (See page 7.)

Help my child get ready for kindergarten. (See pages 7–9.)

School District Resources

4J District Office (Main Line)	541-790-7700
Boundaries (School Attendance Area) . . .	541-790-7571
English Language Learners (ELL)	541-790-6514
Eugene Education Foundation.	541-790-7744
Food and Nutrition Services.	541-790-7656
Health Services	541-790-7216
Homeless Student Services	541-790-7220
Instructional Services	541-790-7550
School Choice	541-790-7570
Special Education	541-790-7800
Speech and Language Program	541-790-6512
Talented and Gifted (TAG)	541-790-7574
Transportation/Bus Routes	541-790-7474
Volunteer Information	541-790-7669

www.4j.lane.edu/kindergarten



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