Let's Go to School!

A Guide for Families on Kindergarten Transition

School transition is a process that prepares all partners - students, families, schools, and communities - to develop knowledge, skills, and relationships that help students move from one educational setting to another.

The first school transition a child normally experiences is moving from home to an early care and education program, to Georgia's Pre-K Program, or to kindergarten. Leaving a familiar environment for one with new rules, children, teachers, buildings, and expectations can be very stressful as well as very exciting for a young child. A smooth transition to kindergarten helps your child be more self-confident, develop better relationships with others, and succeed in school. Continue reading to learn more about what you can do to make sure your child has a successful transition into school!

How Do I Find Out Which School My Child Will Attend?

Call your local school district directly or visit their website to determine which school your child will attend. In some districts you can attend any school, although most assign schools to specific areas based on your home address. Some schools, such as charter and magnet schools, may also have enrollment policies that are exceptions to the rules, so be sure to examine all your choices.

When Is Kindergarten Registration?

It is important for your child to be ready to learn the first day school begins. Schools typically conduct registration in the spring. However, some allow registration throughout the school year before your child enters kindergarten. If you are unsure of when to register your child, contact your local school district.

What Forms Do I Need?

The following chart is a general list of documentation that is normally required by schools to enroll your child in kindergarten. Requirements and deadlines vary, so be sure to contact your school or school district for more information.

Requirement	Documents	Notes	Locate Documents
Legal Proof of Age – Must be 5 by September 1st	○ Certified birth certificate	○ Districts may accept student military ID, passport, adoption record, baptismal record, or affidavit of age.	○ Georgia Department of Community Health http://health.state.ga.us
Proof of Residence	○ Electric, cable, or home telephone bill AND; ○ Rental contract, mortgage statement, property tax statement, settlement statement, or property deed	○ Districts may accept a notarized affidavit of residency if living with a relative or friend. ○ Most districts require two forms of for proof of residence, one from the first bullet and one from the second bullet.	
Health	○ Immunization Form 3231 ○ Vision, Hearing, and Dental Exam Form 3300	○ Districts may conduct vision, hearing, and dental exams during registration fair.	○ Local doctor's office ○ Community health center
U.S. Identification	○ Social security card	○ Districts may allow parents to sign a social security waiver form.	○ U.S. Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov
Student Information	○ Student information form ○ Emergency contact form ○ Request for special services form	○ Districts may require photo ID of the parent/guardian registering the child.	○ Child's school

What Is My Child Going to Learn in Kindergarten?

The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) provide clear expectations for instruction, assessment and student work. Please visit the website, GeorgiaStandards.Org, or call 1(800) 311-3627 to learn information about the state's curriculum standards, as well as to obtain free resources to help you support your child's classroom curriculum at home. If available, it is suggested you take a copy of your child's Pre-K Progress Report or other early care and education progress portfolios when you meet with your child's kindergarten teacher to better inform the teacher of your child's growth and school readiness.

How Will I Know My Child Is Learning in Kindergarten?

The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) is a year-long, performance based assessment that measures what your child is learning and expected to learn in kindergarten.

Throughout the year teachers will provide learning experiences for your child in:

- English/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science

Social, emotional, and developmental skills are also measured regarding your child's:

- Approaches to Learning
- Personal and Social Development
- Motor Skills

How Do I Prepare My Family and Child for School?

- Talk enthusiastically with your child about starting kindergarten and what he or she will experience.
- Read to your child every day or every night for fifteen to twenty minutes.
- Have your child practice self-help skills such as buttoning his or her pants, washing hands, using the bathroom, and eating at a table.
- Make sure your child knows important personal information such as his or her name, parent's name, address, and phone number.

- Get your child and your family into a morning and bedtime routine. Practice these a month before school starts.
- Take a tour of the school with your child.
- Meet your child's teacher and other school staff.
- Begin to plan how your child will get to and from school, including school bus routes, carpool schedules, or pick-up and drop-off times.
- Learn the school day hours and make arrangements for before and after school care if needed.
- Ask for the school calendar so you will know when school holidays are planned.

How Do I Become Involved in My Child's School and Education?

Children whose parents and families are involved in their education are more successful in school! There are many ways you can get involved even before your child enters kindergarten.

- Visit your school's parent organization such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Go to a PTA or other parent organization meeting in the spring before your child starts school. Find out how you can join and get involved. Contact your child's school to learn of meeting dates and times.
- Put school dates on your calendar. Ask for a copy of the school calendar for the following year and put important dates, such as open houses, parent conferences, and holidays, on your family's calendar.
- Attend school activities. Go to a school activity, such as a literacy night, to find out about school expectations and to get to know other parents and school staff. To learn of school events call the school and ask to speak with the Parent Involvement Coordinator or School Counselor.
- Find an adult education class that is right for you. Enroll in a financial planning seminar, computer session, parent workshop, English as a Second Language class, or GED class. To learn which classes are offered, contact your school's Parent Involvement Coordinator.

- Volunteer. Participate by reading to students or helping in your child's classroom, the media center, or the cafeteria. Volunteering is a way to meet your child's classmates, network, and understand your school community. Let the kindergarten teacher know your special skills, interests, and times you are available.
- Share your ideas. Find out which school committees seek to include parent representation, such as Title I, School Council, and family engagement. Talk to the principal and other parents about getting involved.
- Be an informed parent. Carefully read information sent home from the school on school policies, procedures, curriculum, and meetings. Check out newsletters, web sites, and other resources.
- Update contact information. Keep your child's school informed about changes to your family's address, phone numbers, and email so they can always contact you when needed.
- Show your child that you care. Ask your child about his or her school day. Monitor your child's academic, social, and developmental performance daily.

What Resources Are Available?

Books:

- Kindergarten Rocks
  by Katie Davis
- Countdown to Kindergarten
  by Alison McGhee
- Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!
  by Nancy Carlson

Visit Our Partners for More Information on Kindergarten Transition

Bright from the Start
www.decal.ga.gov

Smart Start/ United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta
www.smartstartga.org
www.uwma.org

Georgia Public Broadcasting
www.gbp.org/education

Georgia Parent Teacher Association
www.georgiapta.org

Georgia Parents As Teachers Network
http://georgiapatnetwork.org

Georgia Department of Education
www.gadoe.org

Georgia Association on Young Children
www.gayconline.org