



Junior Kindergarten | Kindergarten

# PARENT BOOKLET



Government of  
Northwest Territories

## Welcome!

We are delighted to welcome your child to Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten! Like Kindergarten for 5 year olds, JK is a program available to any child turning 4 years old on or before December 31. Both years of kindergarten are optional; you can choose what you think is best for your child.

The purpose of this program is to help build a strong foundation for learning in a safe and caring play-based environment.

Kindergarten promotes the social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development of all children, and is based on the understanding that each child develops at his or her own pace. Children in JK/K will be provided with a secure, respectful and nurturing environment, where their developmental needs can be supported through different experiences.

## Is my child ready for a full day of Junior Kindergarten at age four (or even three)?

You are your child's first teacher and role model. You know them best and every child develops at their own pace. If you have any questions, talk to your school principal or kindergarten teacher about how to ease your child's transition to school. As well, many communities have additional preschool programs from which to choose. Remember the two year kindergarten program is optional, you decide what is best for your child.

## What curriculum will Junior Kindergarten follow?

Junior kindergarten will follow the NWT Junior Kindergarten/ Kindergarten Curriculum which is a developmentally and culturally appropriate program for both 4 and 5 year old children. Your child will be learning about the world through play. The curriculum focuses on:

- Sense of Identity
- Healthy Living
- Relationship with the Land
- Citizenship
- Self-Regulation
- Conversation and Communication
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Creativity and Innovation
- Problem-Solving and Decision-Making
- Reading and Writing
- Mathematics

## What is Play-Based Learning?

Children are full of natural curiosity, and when they play, they are learning. There is a strong link between play, learning and healthy development.

During play, children use all of their senses, communicate their thoughts and emotions, explore their environment, and connect what they already know with new knowledge and skills. They bring their language, customs and culture into the classroom as they become familiar with their classmates, teachers and environment.

Play teaches children how to:

- problem solve,
- make friends,
- express themselves,
- focus their attention for long periods of time,
- recognize letters and numbers in a meaningful context,
- tell stories, and
- manage emotions and excitement.



In Junior Kindergarten, teachers will structure play to create learning moments.

For example, while children are playing, they may chat with friends at the block centre and figure out how to stop their block tower from falling over. Children might make their own boats at the water centre and the teacher will help sort what sinks or floats. After an experience on the land, children may draw a picture about what they have seen. Children will role play at the dramatic play centre which could be a bus, restaurant, museum, or tent.

## What will I see in the classroom?

The classroom will have various learning centres at which children will spend a large chunk of their day. These include:

- Dramatic play
- Puppets
- Book corner
- Writing centre
- Music centre
- Block centre
- Sand and water tables
- Mathematics centre
- Discovery, science and technology centre
- Visual arts centre

### **You will also see:**

- an open area of group activities
- an area with tables for small group activities and snack time
- an outdoor area for children to play and explore nature
- an area set aside for children to rest or play quietly
- washrooms nearby

## What will my child be doing?

Children will guide their learning with observation, exploration and conversation. How children spend their time at each activity will depend on the children and teacher. Children will alternate between:

- learning centres,
- large group time,
- small group time,
- individual time, and
- outdoor play.

Things to note:

- Where and when children eat lunch is determined by the school's schedule.
- Snack time may happen during centres, as a centre, or during a scheduled snack time.
- Children may or may not have a scheduled nap or quiet time, but will be able to rest in designated areas when they feel tired.

## Things your child may need for school:

- Pair of indoor shoes that can stay at the school and be used in the gym. As children and feet grow, these shoes may need to be switched during the year.
- Change of clothes labeled with their names.

Please know that toileting accidents happen to all kids. We will do our best to be consistent and remind children to use the bathroom regularly. We will always treat children with understanding and respect. But on occasion, we may need your assistance. Please send an extra set of clothes to school and make sure the office has your contact information.

## How to help your Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten learner:

- Support your child’s healthy mind and body by ensuring your child has 10 hours of sleep every night, and has plenty of healthy foods from which to choose from.
- Limit how much time your child spends in front of any kind of screen – television, video games, tablets or computers.
- Brush teeth together twice a day.
- Encourage play in your house.
- Read to your kids every day (in any language).
- Keep books around your home.
- Ask a variety of questions when you’re out with your child.
- Encourage your child to ask questions all the time — Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
- Give your child some responsibilities around the house, like cleaning up their toys and making their bed.
- Take your child places like the library, community events and the park. Talk about these trips. Talk about everything!
- Sing songs and recite nursery rhymes.
- Tell a story about your day and have your child tell you about their day. Ask them what they did at recess and during other school activities.

## Separation Anxiety

Separation Anxiety is not unusual for children. There are a few things you can do to help reduce the stress:

- Start talking about school as a fun and exciting place for learning.
- Have your child play with other children who may be in their class so they will have a 'buddy' when they start school.
- Walk by the school and visit whenever you get the chance.
- Say good-bye quickly. The faster and simpler it is, the better for your child. A big hug and kiss and let them know what time you will pick them up so they know you are coming back.

## What services are available?

If you have any concerns about your child's speech, motor development, hearing or vision please contact the school or public health nurse. Both will be more than happy to help fill out forms.

Every child should see the Public Health Nurse to ensure immunizations are up-to-date and check speech, hearing, vision and healthy development. Please call to set up an appointment.



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