

Welcome to Kindergarten!



**Learning is Fun
in Room 19**

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Welcome!

The enclosed information is about the Hershey Early Childhood Center, kindergarten in general, and items particular to our classroom. Please hold onto this booklet for future reference. I hope this information does not overwhelm you now, but will serve as one tool as questions arise during the year. *If at any time during the school year you have questions, please feel free to contact me. You may send in a note, send an e-mail, or call.* My contact information is on the front cover. During the school hours, the phone system will direct your call to my voice mail and you may leave a message. Whenever you contact me, I will get back to you as soon as possible. I am unable to check my email and voicemail during teaching time – *if you need to get a message to be about dismissal on that day or any urgent information I might need to tell your child, please call the ECC office at 531-2211 and the secretaries will get the message to me immediately.*

I will send post monthly newsletters on my website to keep you updated on many of our classroom activities and all of the skills we will be working on in class. Each newsletter will also have a calendar for your reference any special days, our specials schedule and other fun things going on at school. These calendars and newsletters are great references and something you will want to refer to each month.

Going to Kindergarten

Starting Kindergarten can be an anxious time for your child. Often children have built-up fears, as well as excitement about going to a new school. Children may have expectations that are supposed to be different now that they are going to a “big school,” or they may be afraid of taking the bus for the first time, or even making new friends. Talking with your child about anxieties, as well as making special positive plans and preparations can help ease the transition.

Here are some ways you can share in and support your child’s entrance into Kindergarten:

1. Remember that even the most “grown-up” Kindergartner can regress and act babyish when faced with a challenging situation. Show extra patience and understanding to help your child deal with confusing feelings about wanting to be big and small at the same time.
2. Your child’s sense of identity in a new group is very important. Work together to label belongings from home with the child’s name.
3. Your little one may not know how to talk about what we did at school. Help by asking specific questions - What did you do today? What was your favorite thing you did today? Did you meet a new friend?
4. Make a special place at home to display your child’s artwork and writing. Fasten paintings to the refrigerator with magnets or hang them on a clothesline with clothespins. Encourage your child to share things that they have done at school with the whole family.

Items Needed for School

The materials your child needs to bring to school every day are:

- A **book-bag** large enough to carry his/her belongings (To prevent frustration, I suggest the bag be one large enough to carry the take-home folder, it does not have wheels, and it is easy for your child to manage without help.)
- **Take-home folder** that will carry notes, homework, etc. (This folder is supplied by our PTO and will be sent home on the first day of school.)

Items Needed the First Week of School

The following items should be sent to school on your child’s first day or during your child’s first week:

- A **plastic 8 inch x 6 inch snap-top pencil box**. Please write your child’s name on the bottom of the box using a permanent marker. There are several different styles of pencil boxes available. Please choose one that is big enough to hold scissors, colored pencils, crayons, glue stick, and several writing pencils.
- A **box of twelve #2 Ticonderoga yellow wooden pencils (NOT MECHANICAL)**.
- **Six Elmer’s large 0.77 oz. white glue sticks**.
- **Three boxes of Crayola 24 pack crayons**.
- If you would like to donate any of the following any time throughout the year we would greatly appreciate it . . . brown lunch bags, gallon or sandwich size Ziploc baggies, Chlorox wipes, box of tissues, wet wipes (thanks in advance!).

Name Tag and Transportation/Bus Tag

Please note, a name tag and transportation/bus tag will be provided for each child on or before the first day of school. I will be giving your child a name tag before school starts. Your child will be receiving their bus/transportation tag on the first day of school. The name tag and bus/transportation tag should both be attached to your child's backpack until your child is confident in finding his/her bus and knows the bus number or it falls off, whichever happens first. This is provided for the student's safety.

Other Items

Please make sure that you place your child's name on book-bags, coats, and all other items sent to school. Also, please include home address, classroom number, and bus information, if possible, somewhere in the book bag. It is much easier to identify misplaced items and assist students that way. As other items are needed throughout the year, I will place a note in the monthly newsletter or send a separate request home. For example, I may ask for donations of specific foods or materials for special crafts or snacks in our classroom. If you are unable to donate or supply items for your child, please feel comfortable to share that with me so that either the school or myself can provide these things for your child. Thank you in advance for your support and donations.

One final note, students are advised to wear clothing and shoes that allow them to play safely on the playground.

Attendance

- The morning session begins at 8:40. Children who walk or are driven to school should arrive between 8:30-8:40 (students are not allowed in classrooms before 8:37).
- If your child is tardy, a late pass must be obtained from our office.
- If your child must be dismissed from school early or if he/she is to go home with someone else, please send in a note (the school needs written permission, so please do not leave me phone messages or send an e-mail with dismissal information) with your child that day. I will then send the note to the office. All early dismissals must be handled from the **office**. Please sign your child out in the office and the secretaries will call for him/her at that time.
- If your child is absent from school, you need to also call the Absentee Line at 533-1815 in the morning and report your child's absence. A "Record of Absence" card is also required for all absences. A completed slip should accompany a student upon their return to school.

Six Day Cycle – Special Schedule

Our school operates on a six-day cycle for specials. The first day of school is Day 1. Each successive day is numbered accordingly through Day 6 and then the cycle begins again with Day 1. Days that are missed due to holidays and school closings are not counted and the cycle picks up where it ended prior to the interruption. Look for reminders of our special schedule, classroom happenings, and school events in the newsletter/calendar on my website. Here's our special schedule . . .

Day 1 – Library

(please make sure your child brings their Library books on Day 1)

Day 2 – Social Skills

Day 3 – Physical Education/Gym

(please make sure your child wears sneakers on Day3)

Day 4 – Music

Day 5 – Art

Day 6 - Physical Education/Gym

(please make sure your child wears sneakers on Day6)

A typical day in kindergarten will include the following:

Arrival
Morning Work
Opening (Social Skills, Class Meeting, Recess)
Reading
Snack (provided by Food Services)
Math
Centers (Reading, writing, Math, Art, Computer, etc.) and Small Group Instruction
Lunch
Special
Recess
Structured Play (Math and Reading Exploration, Science and Discovery, Social Skills)
Clean-up
Dismissal

Please remind students that we have plenty of wonderful things to play with and explore in the classroom, so there is no need to bring toys from home.

Snack Time

Due to the fact that many of the children eat an early breakfast and we have a late lunch, I have decided to implement “snack time”. **OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT NO LONGER PROVIDES SNACK THROUGH OUR CAFETERIA FOR KINDERGARTNERS.** I am asking that you please pack your child a healthy snack EVERYDAY for them to eat during this time. This should help keep their brains and bodies working at their best!

Our snack time should take no more than 15 minutes and will be eaten in the classroom, so please keep in mind when planning your snacks. I also recommend that you send in 5 snacks on Monday so that your child has enough for the week. The kids can keep them in their cubby or backpack. Just place it in a Ziploc baggie with their name on it. Also, foods requiring minimal clean-up and individually packaged are best! Please DO NOT send anything to drink since we already have a water fountain.

Some ideas to pack for snack; crackers, pretzels, cereal, fruit snacks, cut up fruit, etc. Just keep it simple. Please DO NOT send in any candy, cakes, greasy chips and finger coloring foods. Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important part of kindergarten. They are milestones that record how much each child has grown in a year. We like to make birthdays special. Here are some suggestions for making it a wonderful day for your child.

- ❖ No food is allowed to be sent into school for birthdays – this is a school policy.
- ❖ If you want, you can send in a birthday pencil, small toy, eraser, etc. to pass out in place of any food item to share with the children in the class – we will still sing and make your child’s birthday special!
- ❖ If your child has a summer birthday and you wish to send in something during the school year, please feel free to me about a specific date.

One Final Request

If you are planning a birthday party for your child outside of school, please mail the invitations to your child’s classmates. I realize that it is impossible to include everyone in your child’s class at a birthday party, but as a teacher, I need to protect the feelings of those who have not been invited. When invitations are presented to only a few in school, the others are hurt by the exclusion. By keeping the invitation process out of school, everyone is happier. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Things to Practice at Home this Year

Retellings, Story Elements, and Concepts of Print

The single most important skill a child needs to gain from reading instruction is the ability to get information from what is read. Since the majority of students at the kindergarten level are not yet readers, we as educators have developed other activities to help students gain this important reading skill. We begin with teaching the concepts of print (locate the cover, title page, concept of a word verses a sentence, etc.). We also practice retelling stories and identifying story elements. In order to do this, the child must isolate important details, identify characters and setting, and sequence events. Take a minute to ask questions and discuss a story you read with your child to check their comprehension. These are important skills to practice at home when reading to your little one.

Alphabet

Have your child practice saying the alphabet and identifying the individual letter-sounds. Your child should practice printing his or her name using upper and lower case letters. Encourage reading and writing daily.

Math

Have your child practice counting to 100 and recognizing numbers. Your child should also practice recognizing shapes. Both of these skills can be fun to practice in the car, in a store, or even right at home. Our school uses the Everyday Math curriculum. Information will be sent home in many newsletters to come.

Personal Information

Your child should practice saying his or her phone number and address. This is so important for safety reasons. Have your child also practice recognizing his/her birth date. Two other important skills to practice are tying shoes and fastening coats. This really helps out with confusion in the colder seasons.

Newsletters and Blog

The classroom blog is a fun and exciting way for me to communicate information with you throughout the school year. To conserve resources and take advantage of the wonderful technology that is available, I am going to attempt to go paperless as much as possible. **I will communicate information with you through e-mail, the classroom blog and my teacher website. Both my teacher site and classroom blog, can be found at <http://hwhitehead5.weebly.com>**

Newsletters are an important source of information for families during the school year. I will post a monthly newsletter on my website, which will share what we are working on in each area of the curriculum so you can reinforce the same skills at home.

Special event details, announcements, requests for items from home, or any other important information will also be included in the newsletter or shared on the blog. A calendar will be posted for each month. This calendar will include due dates, your child's library or computer days, and special events.

If you do not have access to the internet or e-mail, please let me know so that I can communicate with you in other ways.

Book Orders

Scholastic book orders will be sent home with each monthly newsletter. I have found that Scholastic offers the best children's literature at reasonable prices, often cheaper than found in stores. Please do not feel obligated to order books. The book orders are provided only for your convenience. If you would like to make a purchase, there are two ways to order books.

Using the book order flyer that is sent home:

1. Write your child's name and mark your selections clearly in pen on the order form provided on the back of the flyer.
2. Write a check payable to Scholastic for the amount of the order. Please do not send cash.
3. Place the order form and the check in a sealed envelope with the following written on the outside of the envelope:
Book Order, Child's Name, Mrs. Whitehead, room 19
4. Send the envelope to school by the date indicated.

Order online at the bookclubs website, where you can choose from a much wider selection of books, pay with a credit card, and your order is sent directly to me. Plus, we earn a FREE book for the classroom library every time a parent places an order online. Here's how it works:

1. SIGN UP at www.scholastic.com/bookclubs. On the parent page, click the "Register" button in the "First Time Here?" section. Register for your own user name and password. When prompted, enter the one-time Class Activation Code HJQWY. This unique code ensures that your order is sent to me.
2. Select the books you'd like, pay with your credit card, and place your order by the online due date.
3. When placing future orders, you will login using your username and password, and your orders will automatically be sent to me.

Either way you order, your child's books will be delivered directly to the classroom.

Classroom Rules

I am very excited to be part of your child's education. I would like to share our classroom rules with you so that you are aware of what I expect in the classroom. I also feel it is important that the things we do at school are reinforced at home.

Our Classroom Rules – also known as **CHAMPS** . . .

Conversation- talking kindly, being respectful of others, working quietly and cooperatively

Help- helping others, sharing materials, and knowing how to ask for help when needed

Activity- completing work/activity by listening and following the given directions

Movement- keeping your body to yourself and in the appropriate place (in line, in a chair, on the carpet, etc.)

Participation- actively engaged and takes responsibility for choices and materials

Success- We are all CHAMPS when we learn and work together!

Classroom Rules continued . . .

By following these CHAMPS rules we can create a classroom environment that is fun, safe and conducive for learning!

In order to encourage the students to follow these rules, positive reinforcement will be used for good behavior. This includes personal positive comments, class recognition, special privileges and the use of a reward system where the class as a whole can earn special rewards.

1st warning – friendly reminder – the student is reminded of what the proper behavior looks like.

2nd warning – the student will be asked to come up with a better behavior choice on their own (using our CHAMP rules).

3rd warning – the student will sit in briefly for recess to be “re-taught” the proper behavior.

4th warning – the student will receive a phone call home. If a student would move past red, they will visit the principal’s office and a phone call home will be made.

Severe behavior – the student will be sent directly to the principal’s office without benefit of the other steps.

Thank you so much for your cooperation!