

A Brochure About Kindergarten Registration and Screening



What is the purpose of the screening?

We conduct the screening as the first official step in registering a child for that important first year of schooling. Our purpose is to gather information about the kindergarten class enrollment numbers, and about the children's readiness and learning needs so we can plan for their instructional program. Through the screening we can give parents some feedback on their child's individual readiness level, and can make suggestions on how, if advisable, to use the remaining months before kindergarten to strengthen that readiness.

What will my child be doing during the registration and screening time?

When you arrive, you and your child will be welcomed by one of our volunteer escorts. The escort will give your child a name tag to wear and then will escort him/her to a small classroom where a teacher will be waiting. Let your child know that you will be staying downstairs to fill out the registration papers while they go upstairs to spend a little time with the teacher.

Tell me about the screening itself.

The screening will be done through prepared questions and tasks in a two-step process.

First, a teacher will interview your child by using a series of prepared questions. The child will be asked to do some small motor tasks and some large motor tasks.

When this visit is done, the escort, waiting in the hallway outside, will accompany your child to a second teacher who will spend time with him/her doing some language activities that focus on common every day things. It is in this setting that a language development assessment will be done.

Who will do the language assessment mentioned above?

There will be a certified speech and language pathologist who will be completing a language assessment. She will observe your child as she/he talks with the screener. This observation will allow the pathologist enough information to note if there are developmental delays or articulation needs to be addressed.

Is the screening a test?

No it isn't. It's a set of tasks and skills that prekindergarten children typically know and/or can perform.

We will take a look at your child's language development, general knowledge, specific knowledge, and some large and small muscle task accomplishments. The screening will be based on a series of questions that should look like a game or should seem like just plain conversation. Your child's responses will be recorded on the screening instrument, but there will be no actual test "scores" to analyze.

Who will be doing the actual screening?

We will have experienced teachers trained in the use of the screening program. The added requirements we have sought for our screeners include experience with young children and experience teaching early grades.

When will my child actually meet his/her kindergarten teacher?

Your child and you will be invited to your home school for a special visit in the kindergarten classroom. This visit will happen in late spring.

When will I get the results of the screening?

One of the district administrators will meet with you before you leave the screening - registration. At that time a brief outcome report can be given. Later in the spring we will send you a letter about your child's entrance to school.

Do screening results determine whether or not my child is eligible for kindergarten?

No, the law of the State of Illinois states clearly that any child who is 5 years of age on or before September 1 of the kindergarten year is eligible for kindergarten.

Will there be any test scores of any kind?

No, since we are not administering any actual tests, there won't be that kind of information to interpret. We will be able to let you know about your child's kindergarten readiness. We will also be able to let you know if we suspect there may be some special needs that should be addressed.

Should I prepare my child for the screening?

No. Please do not do anything different than you would otherwise be doing with your child at this time. A child who has been "coached" in a special way may in fact provide misleading results. What we hope for most is to meet your child at the stage of development and readiness that is natural for him/her at that time. Most of all, avoid any conversation about "tests", "tasks", or "answers"; talk more about games and *visiting*.

What exactly can I tell my child about the event?

Here's a suggestion: Tell your child how exciting it is that you and she/he will be going to sign up for kindergarten. Tell your child that there will be a couple of teachers, and she/he will meet with them to visit and play games. Alert your child that you will be filling out papers in one place while she/he goes with the teacher. Help your child to understand that the registration/screening is not happening at the child's "real" kindergarten school.

Why isn't the Screening/Registration held at the local school?

Our elementary schools do not have any unused space during the school day. We therefore use a place other than our schools for a daytime event of this size.

Why is this event held during the day instead of in the evening?

Our purpose of interviewing children requires daytime hours that work for children. We would like to have been able to be more flexible on behalf of working parents, but to do so would be counter productive for the children.

Will I be able to just drop off my child for the screening?

We need you to stay in the adult reception area until your child is brought back from screening. You will have some registration materials to complete, and we would like you to look over school information and pick up immunization and health forms, which should be completed by your physician. You will also have the opportunity to meet and talk with one or more of the elementary principals.

How long should all this take?

We expect that the entire process will take from 45 minutes to an hour.

This is my first child entering kindergarten in this district. When I have questions, whom should I ask?

You can call your building principal with any questions. She/he will be happy to talk with you on the phone or to have you in for a visit.

The school offices are generally open all through June and August, so these are times when you might reach the building principal or perhaps visit the building as well. Please refer to information you have already received to find the names and phone numbers of our school principals.

Will there be any additional steps to take before the start of school?

Yes, but they will all be up to you:

*Be sure you get the medical forms completed by your physician, and get your immunizations up to date.

*As school time approaches, you may want to take your kindergartner with you when shopping for supplies. (A supplies list will be given out when you visit the Kindergarten room).

*This summer, take a walk to your school. Show your child the school, walk around it to see the play areas and the doorways. If possible, go inside to find the classroom.