

A Parent's Guide to **Getting Ready for Kindergarten**

We want to help you and your child be comfortable and ready to start school. We hope the information below will help make this transition a time of joy and happy anticipation. We are looking forward to welcoming your child and guiding him/her through a year of tremendous growth.

– HaMorah Irene, HaMorah Myriam, Ms. Fucarile

How is the day structured in Kindergarten? How many teachers will my child have? Where are the Kindergarten rooms?

There are three Kindergarten teachers who will work as a unified team on all parts of the daily program. While each teacher will take on a leadership role for specific areas of the curriculum, they will all plan and implement instruction together. Students will learn and play together in a variety of formats and group structures, including whole-grade, flexible small groups and sometimes one on one with a teacher. All of the Kindergarten teachers will have the opportunity to work with every one of the students, and the students will all get to interact with one another. Children will have oral Hebrew instruction with HaMorah Orit Steinberg in their classroom and they will have art, music, and physical education with those specialty teachers in the art, music and gym rooms. The schedule of each day is different, with Limudei Kodesh, General Studies and special subjects interspersed throughout the day. Each day begins with some free play, Tefillah and Morning Meeting.

Which room should my child go to on the first day of school and what time does the first day begin and end?

Students should arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 on the first day of school and go to room 103. The first day of school for Kindergarten students only, ends at 12:00 noon.

May I walk my child to class on the first day? May I drop him/her off in the carpool lane? What if my child takes the bus?

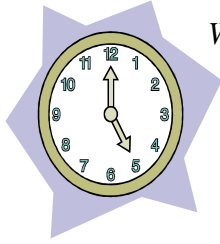
Parents are welcome to accompany their children to class on the first several days of school, if you choose to do so. If you prefer to drop your child in the carpool lane or if your child takes the bus, rest assured that adults will greet the carpool and bus students and will help them find their rooms on the first day.

If you drop your child off at his/her room, we encourage you to give a brief hug goodbye and then leave the room to let your child settle in. A few tears are not uncommon on the first day of school; this usually subsides in a matter of minutes as the child becomes involved in the class. All Kindergarten parents are cordially invited to a Parent Welcome Back Breakfast from 8:00 – 9:00 AM in the Brener lunchroom.



If you would like to discuss any separation issues with a teacher, please leave a voicemail, an email message or send a note.

What time does school begin for Kindergarten students throughout the year?



We suggest students arrive at school by 7:45 AM each morning. This allows your child to put away belongings and greet classmates before the day of learning begins, promptly at 8:00 AM. Students who arrive late may feel upset and will be missing essential play, learning and group-building time which can be difficult to walk into after it has begun.

My child would like to see the classrooms and meet the teachers before the first day. Is this possible?

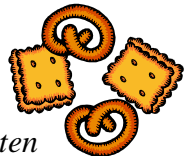
Yes! Kindergarten students and their parents are invited to an informal “Drop In” on Tuesday, September 6th from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Your child will have an opportunity to meet the teachers and see the kindergarten classrooms.

Is there a dress code for Kindergarten?

Kindergarten students may wear pants or shorts. Girls may wear dresses or skirts. Boys must wear kippot, and tzitzit. Both boys and girls are required to wear sneakers every day, in order to be prepared for physical education classes and for active play in the recess yard. Footwear with straps, heels, or buckles, such as sandals or Shabbat-type shoes, is not permitted for safety reasons. Other details about student dress are included in the Parent Handbook, which will be mailed during the summer.

What should I know about food and my Kindergarten child?

Kindergarteners should come to school each day with food for lunch and one snack. A morning snack is provided by the school. The afternoon snack is provided by parents. Please place lunches and snacks in separate containers so that the snacks are eaten specifically at snack time. Students who remain at school after 3:00 PM need a second snack. Please be aware that if your child eats a lunch with meat, the afternoon snack cannot have dairy in it. There are many choices of pareve snacks which you can provide your child. Milk is offered daily at morning snack to all children at no charge. Families are actively encouraged to send only healthy foods to school. It may help your child to have a short discussion about what foods are being packed, to guide him/her in knowing what is intended for lunch and each of the snacks. Further information about food, kashrut, and birthday parties is contained in the Parent Handbook, mailed over the summer. Please be aware that Maimonides Elementary School is a “nut-free” school. Food items with evident nut content should not be brought to school.



How are birthdays celebrated in first grade?

The children together with the teacher celebrate birthdays in class with songs and blessings, but without birthday cake or special food. Parents may choose to honor their child’s birthday with a gift for the classroom, to be coordinated with the classroom teacher.

What things should my child bring to class?

The majority of the school supplies your child will need are provided by the school. Please make sure your child has a backpack, lunchbox and a complete change of clothes all labeled clearly with his/her name. Please provide an art smock labeled with your child's name for use in class.

Can I send toys with my child to school?

We do not allow students to bring toys from home to school. These toys may easily break or get lost which would be upsetting to your child and interfere with your child's productive day at school.

Will my child have homework?

Kindergarteners will not have homework in either General Studies or Limudei Kodesh. However, we suggest that parents review and discuss with their child what was taught during the week which will be outlined in the weekly Kindergarten newsletter.

What can I do to help my child be ready for Kindergarten?

- 1. Take a special trip to the library to obtain a library card for your child. Enjoy reading together in English, Hebrew, or whatever languages you speak at home!*
- 2. When driving in the car or walking in public places, point out English and Hebrew print in the environment. Encourage your child to look for road signs, letters in a menu, or kosher symbols on food products.*
- 3. Let your child see you reading for work or for pleasure. Take a moment to tell him/her about what you are reading.*
- 4. Play rhyming games. If you point out a stop sign, ask if he/she can think of any words that rhyme with stop.*
- 5. When you are davening, try showing your child the Hebrew letters in the siddur and running your finger along the text, as you say familiar words or phrases in the tefilot.*
- 6. Encourage your child to wash hands and say netilat yadayim before meals.*
- 7. Help your child to say modeh ani and the first line of shema each morning.*
- 8. Allow your child to have experiences cutting with child-safe scissors. He/she could cut ten pictures out of a magazine and glue them into a book made with a few pieces of paper. You might encourage adding drawings and numbering each page of the book. We would love to see any completed books in September!*
- 9. Practice zipping backpacks and jackets, putting on shoes or boots, and other activities to gain independence.*

10. *Expect your child to participate in some helpful tasks such as clearing the table, putting away toys, holding the door, or pushing in chairs. This is good preparation for Kindergarten where everyone works together to keep the classroom clean and orderly.*
11. *Provide opportunities to count objects, such as putting the right number of forks on the Shabbat dinner table, and to classify items, such as sorting laundry by color. These simple activities will nurture your child's emergent mathematical thinking.*
12. *Encourage independence when using the bathroom, and practice washing hands. In Kindergarten we teach that children should use warm water and soap to make lots of bubbles, then sing the entire alphabet or alef-bet song while washing, in order to make sure hands are really clean.*
13. *Talk with your child about the Three Weeks and Tisha B' Av. In this packet you will find some information you can use to help your child understand this serious time of year.*

Suggestions for Sharing Stories and Books with Your Kindergarten Child



Reading with your child is a means of giving a special gift of togetherness. It can help develop a lifelong love of reading, providing your child with opportunities to hear new vocabulary and appropriate phrasing. The following ideas may provide you with some suggestions to use during this special time. Why not try one at a time?*

- *Use soft tones.*
- *Try "Picture Talk". "Read" the pictures.*
- *Chant a repetitive refrain. You could even make up a tune!*
- *If there are repeated rhymes or rhythmic sayings in the story, ask your child to repeat them. After repeated readings, (s)he might even memorize the words to "read" with you.*
- *Invite your child to let his/her fingers "do the walking" to turn the pages.*
- *Sharpen your child's thinking skills. Ask questions that call for yes or no answers.*
- *Ask open-ended and choice questions that stimulate reasoning skills. (Example: What do you think the character will do next?)*
- *Create new words to a repeating phrase.*
- *Clap out the syllabic rhymes of certain vocabulary.*
- *Ask your child what happened first, second, etc. You can simplify by asking what happened at the beginning, middle, and end.*
- *Change the ending.*
- *Discuss the feelings of the characters.*
- *Can your child predict what might happen next?*
- *Listen for a particular sound.*
- *Locate a particular letter or word on a page.*
- *Don't forget to have fun!*

**These ideas will work just fine if you are reading to your child in Hebrew, or any other language used in your home.*

Kindergarten Books and Resources



The Night Before Kindergarten

Natasha Wing

Kindergarten ABC

Jacqueline Rogers

Will I Have a Friend?

Miriam Cohen

What Will I Do if I Can't Tie My Shoes?

Heidi Kilgras

If You Take a Mouse to School

Laura Numeroff

First Day of School

Helen Oxenbury

Kindergarten Kids

James Howe

Tiptoe Into Kindergarten

Jacqueline Rogers

❖ *Here are a few websites you might like to try:*

www.starfall.com

www.readwritething.org/materials/abcmatch

www.pdictionary.com

www.enchantedlearning.com/Dictionary.html

www.literactive.com

*Relax and know that your child will have a wonderful
Kindergarten year!*