

Gradual Entry Process for Kindergarten Students

The Chilliwack School District has a long history of planning carefully for the transition to Kindergarten and acknowledges the need for a gradual entry process. This important transition phase is aimed to set up students for success for the rest of their school years, and often involves a variety of visits, communications and opportunities to connect young children and their families with their school, before beginning the first day of full kindergarten.

September 2021

Kindergarten children will be welcomed into their new schools in small groups at the beginning of September by the Kindergarten teachers. The children will also attend for short periods of time during the first two weeks of school to ensure a smooth and successful transition into Kindergarten. You will be contacted by your principal/Kindergarten teacher via letter with assigned attendance dates and specific times for your child's gradual entry.

We understand that Gradual Entry may be somewhat challenging for families. Thank you for supporting your child during this transition to school. Creating a positive beginning is important for each child.

Frequently Asked Questions about Gradual Entry:

1. What does Gradual Entry to Kindergarten mean for my child?

This means your child will have a focused time to connect with his/her kindergarten teacher and adjust to the new social/emotional realities of the elementary school context. This developmental model of transition allows children and teachers to work in smaller groups, adapting to the new learning environment that the Full Day Kindergarten program offers. Teachers will be introducing children to classroom routines and procedures, easing the transition in a more personalized way, so your child feels comfortable and valued as a new member of the school community.

2. What does Gradual Entry to Kindergarten mean for your family?

The Chilliwack School District recognizes the parents/families are the first teacher of the child and the gradual entry process gives the families the opportunity to share valuable background knowledge with school personnel.

3. When is a child ready for school?

Children don't all talk or walk on a schedule, so it's no surprise that chronological age is often not the best indicator of school readiness. How ready each child is for school depends more on their level of well-being, creativity, social responsibility and language development. Gradual entry can help teachers identify which children need support and make sure resources are made available to give that support.

4. What should I expect throughout the process?

Gradual entry is consistent across the District for full day Kindergarten; however, times of intake meetings and groupings of students will vary from school to school. Students will have the opportunity to get to know their teacher, as well as some classmates, classroom routines and meet key staff from the school. Kindergarten teachers will gather important information about each student (interests, readiness levels and learning styles) to help inform their instructional plan for the student. This information is gathered from children and families from conversations and observations.

5. When will I know who my child's teacher is?

Taking the time to get to know all of the Kindergarten students before setting class lists will help Kindergarten teachers create balanced classes which take into account everyone's individual needs. You will be notified of which class your child will be in for the remainder of the year on Friday, September 17th.

Tips to help prepare your child for Kindergarten:

- Listen and talk to your child about what Kindergarten will be like. Express excitement and enthusiasm so that your child will look forward to Kindergarten.
- Try to arrange for your child to spend independent time with relatives of close family friends. This often helps children develop a growing sense of independence and capacities for communicating needs with other adults. It also gives parents a window into how their child reacts to being without them.
- Set up playdates – informal socialization is important to maintain over the summer months for all children, regardless of preschool experiences. Setting up playdates with children who attend the same school can help your child establish early friendships.

