

# LET'S GET READY TO LEARN!

## KINDERGARTEN FAQS

Beginning Kindergarten is an exciting milestone for you and your child. It is a time of exploration and growth. Our Kindergarten program is designed to delight your child in learning, helping them build stronger connections to friends and teachers to give them a stronger start to their learning journey with GYPSD schools.

We know that by weaving **self-regulation** and rich **literacy** experiences into our play-based programs we will provide our students with a strong foundation for future learning. Our Kindergarten programs encourage children to play and learn through a variety of experiential education opportunities.

Just as your child may have questions about starting their new learning journey with us, we realize that our parents and families may have some as well. Here are some of the most **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT KINDERGARTEN** – if you still have some concerns, we welcome you to contact your local school directly.

### What is Self-Regulation?

Self-regulation is the ability to stay calmly focused and alert as we face stressors in our lives. In school, self-regulation enables children to get along with people, control their behavior and be in a calm-but alert- and-focused state conducive to learning. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, self-regulation will be the predictor of success. Stuart Shanker, 2013, *Self-Regulation, Calm, Alert, and Learning: Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation*.

### Why a Focus on Literacy?

All children deserve a strong foundation in literacy. Research confirms that children's language and literacy skills in preschool and in Kindergarten are strongly related to later academic success. Young children develop into strong readers and writers when their teachers focus on these foundational areas of literacy development.

### How Does a Play-Based Program Support Self-Regulation and Literacy?

Imaginative and creative play supports literacy skill development such as oral language and phonological awareness. It also supports student self-regulation and successful school adjustment. Bodrova and Leong, 2004 *"The Importance of Being Playful."*

### What Will This Look Like in The Classroom?

Our Kindergarten classrooms offer a variety of learning spaces and activities to support literacy, numeracy, creativity and self-regulation through language, art, music, construction, imaginative and sensory play. Technology, including access to iPads and Smartboards, is available to enhance and support learning in all of our Kindergarten classrooms.

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### **Does GYPSD Offer Full-Day Kindergarten?**

Full-day Kindergarten five days a week is offered in the communities of Edson, Hinton and Jasper. An extended full day Kindergarten four days a week is offered in all other GYPSD communities.

### **What Are The Fees For Kindergarten?**

Expenses for classroom supplies, instructional material fees, and transportation costs vary in each of our communities. Please contact your school of choice for further information.

### **Is Transportation Available?**

GYPSD offers transportation for Kindergarten students. Please contact our Transportation Services department at 780 723 4471 to learn more about bus registration.

### **How Do GYPSD Schools Ensure The Safety of Our Children?**

All of our schools are equipped with security systems; safe arrival programs, and fenced-in, well supervised outdoor play areas. Each school has personnel trained in First Aid.

### **Are There Opportunities for Parents to be Involved in The Classroom/ School (As A Volunteer, Chaperone For Field Trips, Etc.)?**

We welcome and encourage parent involvement in Kindergarten and throughout your child's education in our schools.

### **What Supports and Resources Are Available for My Child's Special Needs?**

Every GYPSD school is supported by a school linked team consisting of a speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, behavior consultant, literacy/early learning lead teacher, technology lead teacher, Family School Liaison Counselor and a Success Coach. The team works collaboratively with the school and community agencies to support all kids. Please talk to the administration at your local school to learn more.

### **Do You Offer Specialized Programs?**

GYPSD offers a French Immersion program in Jasper, Hinton and Edson as well as an alternative Christian program in Grande Cache. At Sheldon Coates School in Grande Cache and Evansview School in Evansburg, students also enjoy Forest School which is a time to play and learn about the world through time in nature where educators support children in play, making connections to the land and investigating the biodiversity that the forest has to offer.