

Central Indiana Kindergarten Transition Guide

Choosing, enrolling, and getting your child ready for Kindergarten can be overwhelming. You likely have a lot of questions, like “What are my options?”, “How can I help my child?”, and “What do I need to get the enrollment process started?” Do not worry! Child Care Answers is here to help. We have created this document to help prepare and support you as your child transitions to their first day of school.

What Will You Find In This Guide?

Indiana Age Cut-Offs

Kindergarten Readiness

Preparing for the Transition

Kindergarten Registration

School Choice Voucher

Additional Considerations

How Can Child Care Answers Help

Online Transition Resources



In Indiana, a school corporation is required to provide a Kindergarten program for eligible students that are **five years old on or before August 1st of the school year**. If your child turns five between August 1st and October 1st, you may appeal for admittance for that school year. Additionally, just because your child turns five by the cut off, you as the parent make the decision if your child is ready or should wait until the following school year. Read more on the [Department of Education Kindergarten Entrance Guidance](https://doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/news/kindergarten-adm-guidance-2019-may-5.pdf) (doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/news/kindergarten-adm-guidance-2019-may-5.pdf).



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To receive more information about our support for families, including locating before/after school care, please complete the Family Information Form: [Bit.ly/ccafamily](https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/earlylearning/k-readiness.pdf) or Text “care” to 833-222-1221

Kindergarten Readiness Indicators

While many people focus on letter and number recognition, it is important to remember there are other things your child will need in order to be successful. Letter and number knowledge will come when your child is ready developmentally. It typically develops naturally through real experiences. Provide natural exposure to letters, numbers, and literacy; point out letters in your environment, have your child help you make a grocery list, or encourage her to check out the sale flyers. This builds a strong foundation for the work your child will do in Kindergarten.

Social Skills	Self-Help Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Respects self, others and property✓ Expresses feelings and emotions with words✓ Understands and demonstrates taking turns✓ Attends to a task for short periods of time✓ Accepts guidance✓ Manages transitions and adapts to changes✓ Shows confidence and independence in choices✓ Engages in play experiences with peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Takes care of all toileting needs, including hand washing✓ Feeds self independently using utensils✓ Zips and buttons clothes and jackets✓ Ties or attaches shoes with Velcro✓ Blows nose independently✓ Shows basic safety knowledge✓ Plays with respect to self and/or peers' personal space
Fine & Gross Motor Skills	Early Literacy Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Uses writing tools✓ Creates letters, shapes, symbols, and words with support✓ Opens packages and containers (lunchbox)✓ Runs, stops, hops, gallops, skips, and changes direction✓ Coordinates movements to perform activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Knows that letters and sounds are used to make words✓ Plays with language by using complex sentences and rhymes to create new words✓ Notices letters in his/her name, additional letters or sounds, and symbols (stores, restaurants, etc.); Write his/her name✓ Understands how to open a book and turn pages✓ Understands and follows oral directions✓ Retells familiar stories

Taken from the DOE: <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/earlylearning/k-readiness.pdf> & <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/kindergarten/k-mathematics-readiness.pdf>

Supporting Your Child as a Lifelong Learner

Quality early childhood experiences, whether provided by family or a formal program, increase a child's ability to succeed in Kindergarten. School readiness efforts support the development of skills, knowledge, and health. The goal is for every child to develop a lifelong love of learning.

Here are some ways you can support or enhance your child's development at home:

- **Develop independence** – Encourage your child to dress himself, take care of his things, and serve himself or practice independence while eating. These skills are great to set the foundation for the increasing independence he will have once he transitions in to elementary school.
- **Teach responsibility** – Encourage your child to begin taking on some small responsibilities. This might mean hanging up her coat or backpack on her own when you get home, helping to clean up her things, or taking her dishes to the sink after dinner. These activities can encourage increased responsibility and independence.
- **Plant the seed for social emotional development** – Help your child gain a greater understanding of feelings and emotions in general through actions such as displaying empathy and asking your child about his feelings. This sets him up to have a greater understanding of others as well as his own emotions, which is a skill he will build on for the rest of his life.
- **Read, read, & read some more** – Children who are read to, just 10 minutes a day, hear one million more words before their first day of Kindergarten than children who are not read to. This is one of the easiest ways to build your child's language and literacy skills & enhance your bond with your children.

(Taken from: Ready or Not Kindergarten, Here We Come!, Tracy Galuski via NAEYC)

Preparing for the Transition

Transitioning to Kindergarten is a process that is most successful when you carefully plan it out over the entire pre-kindergarten year. Whether a child is in preschool, child care, or spending time with parents or caregivers at home, there are many ways to make the transition to Kindergarten successful for your child and your family.

Preparing Your Child

The transition can be exciting because your child is moving to something new that the adults in his or her life regard as important. He or she may be apprehensive about leaving familiar people and routines and facing the unknown. When entering Kindergarten, your child must learn to cope with an unfamiliar place, changes in expectations, a new role, peer group, and authority figure. He or she will have many new experiences, like riding the bus and eating in a cafeteria. If not handled well, these new experiences and relationships could be stressful.

- ✓ Talk about the transition and what to expect, like riding the bus and eating in the cafeteria
- ✓ If possible, visit your child's new school before the start of the school year
- ✓ Let your child know this is an exciting time for her as she makes new friends and starts a new school

Getting to Know My Child

You are your child's first teacher and the expert on your child. Because of this, it may be important to share what you know about your child with the Kindergarten teachers who will be working with him/her in the new school year. This gives you the opportunity to pass on important information about your child's likes and dislikes, strengths, areas of growth, and any concerns that you may have. If your child is receiving any special services, the information that you provide here can help to ensure that those services continue without gaps into the new school year. You can use this great resource by the American Federation of Teachers: [Getting to Know My Child: A Guide for My Child's Kindergarten Teacher](https://aft.org/sites/default/files/t2k_gettingtoknowmychild.pdf) (aft.org/sites/default/files/t2k_gettingtoknowmychild.pdf).

Registering Your Child

It is important to remember that you will need to register your child for Kindergarten before the beginning of the school year. Every district handles enrollment differently, but many start the process in the winter/early spring. You will want to contact the district you reside in, or the school where you plan to send your child, for the upcoming year.

Full Day or Half Day

Your chosen school may offer both full- and half-day options for Kindergarten. Which works best for your child and family is your decision. This may be an option that helps narrow down your search for the right school for your child.

Age Requirement

In order to enroll your child for Kindergarten, he or she must be five before August 1st of the school year. **Some districts have an Early Entrance Waiver for children who will turn five before October 1st if you feel your child is ready.*

Paperwork or Documentation

Each school requires something a little different, but every district requires at least these three things at time of enrollment:

- ✓ Your child's birth certificate
- ✓ Your child's immunization records
- ✓ Proof of residency (example: lease, utility bill)

School Assignment

If you are choosing a public school for your family, you can find out your school assignment through their website. If you wish to choose another school within or outside of your district, they typically required applications, and those usually have early deadline (winter/early spring). You can look up schools at inview.doe.in.gov.

Location

Some schools handle registration onsite. Other schools may use a web-based portal. Each district varies, so check their website's enrollment page for more information.

Kindergarten Fair or Kindergarten Roundup

Most districts and schools invite incoming Kindergarten families to a transition fair in the spring of their incoming year. This allows families to learn more about the Kindergarten transition, ask questions, and receive information about registration.

Choice Scholarship Program

Indiana's Choice Scholarship program (or Voucher Program) provides scholarships to eligible Indiana students in order to offset the cost of tuition at participating schools. This is a great opportunity to explore both private and public schools to find the right school for your child and family. There are household income requirements as well as student eligibility requirements. Visit doe.in.gov/choice for more information.

Additional Considerations

Before and After Care

Many schools offer before and after care onsite – you may also have a child care provider you prefer who is able to drop off and pick up children. It is important to arrange care ahead of time as before and after care options can fill up quickly.

Transportation

You will want to check with the school regarding bussing in order to ensure you know the bus stop, bus number, and any other important information, including if bussing is available to and from child care.

Children with Special Needs

If your child has a diagnosed special need and has an IEP, it is crucial that you work with the school to understand the transition plan as well as what services will look like once your child is in Kindergarten. You are your child’s number one advocate!

How Can Child Care Answers Help You?

Whether it is walking you through the transition process, helping you locate private or public school options, or connecting you to resources, we are here to help. All of our services are free for Central Indy families!

Guiding You Through the Process	Before/After School Care	Special Education Supports	Parenting Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•We can help you get started down the road to making this important decision. As you move through the decision process, we offer support to help you understand what to consider when choosing the right school for your family. Submit a request at Bit.ly/ccfamily	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Looking for child care before and after school or for younger siblings? Child Care Answers offers families a list of programs that meet your unique needs. Submit a request at Bit.ly/ccfamily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•If your child has special needs, the process of transitioning to school may involve more. We are here to help you understand the special education process and connect you with outside resource that help you understand your rights and advocate for your family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Being a parent can be a joy, but it's also hard work! Our team of specialists offer workshops, resources, and one-on-one support on child development and parenting. Our resources do not stop when your child turns five! Visit our website: childcareanswers.com/yourchild.

To connect directly with our specialists or to request free help finding child care, complete the Family Information Form: Bit.ly/ccfamily or Text “care” to 833-222-1221

Transition Resources on the Web

Get Ready to Read!	<p>Get Ready to Read! (GRTR!) is an early literacy program designed to help parents and early child care providers ensure that young children are equipped with the fundamental skills necessary for learning to read. The website is full of free resources, including early literacy activities, online games, checklists and a monthly newsletter.</p> <p>getreadytoread.org</p>
National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)	<p>The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) improves the lives of all people with learning difficulties and disabilities by empowering parents, enabling young adults, transforming schools, and creating policy and advocacy impact. Their flagship website, LD.org, provides resources and support to parents of all children who struggle to learn.</p> <p>LD.org</p>
Countdown to Kindergarten Boston	<p>Countdown to Kindergarten Boston is a nonprofit collaborative that engages families, educators, and community members in an effort to celebrate and support the transition into kindergarten, recognizing it as a significant educational and developmental milestone for children and their families.</p> <p>countdowntokindergarten.org/</p>
First Book	<p>First Book is a nonprofit social enterprise that has distributed more than 100 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families throughout the United States and Canada. By making free and very low cost, new, high-quality books available on an ongoing basis, First Book is transforming the lives of children in need and elevating the quality of education.</p> <p>firstbook.org</p>
InSource	<p>The mission of IN*SOURCE provides information and education to families who have children with special needs and provides resources on advocating for your child within the school system.</p> <p>insource.org</p>