

# The ABC's of Kindergarten at Tiffany Hills School

Please read through the following ABC's of Kindergarten. All the information you will read is specific to our school; however, it may vary slightly between classes. Please put this in a safe place so that you will be able to refer to it throughout the year when questions arise. We hope this information will be beneficial to you.

**A~ Alphabet** It is very important that your child learn the letters of the alphabet and the sounds represented by each letter. Daily practice is a must.

**B~ Before & After School** Both Before and Afterschool Programs are available at Tiffany Hills School for those children who need care outside of the school day. These programs are run by Today's Family Daycare. Please contact them if you need to enroll your child in this program. Spaces are limited so make sure to sign up early to avoid disappointment.

**Bell Times** Tiffany Hills bell times:

9:15am Entry

10:55am-11:35 1st Nutrition Break

1:15pm-1:55pm 2<sup>nd</sup> Nutrition Break

3:35pm Dismissal (Parents can arrive 5-10 min. earlier to pickup at our playground door when child is ready)

**Blogs & Other Communication** Please visit & subscribe to our Tiffany Hills' Website ([www.hwdsb.on.ca/tiffanyhills/](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/tiffanyhills/)) to check out the happenings at the school.

**Bus** Students who ride the bus are met in the morning by a DECE who will escort bus students into the fenced kindergarten play area until the bell rings. At dismissal time, students are escorted by DECEs directly onto the bus. An adult needs to be waiting at the bus stop in order for the bus driver to let the student off of the bus. If no one is at the stop to meet the child, the child will be taken back to the school where the office will contact the parent to come and pick up the child.

During the summer, the transportation department at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will send a letter to each eligible Kindergarten parent outlining the appropriate transportation information for your child. Please use the bus tag sent to you by attaching it to your child's large backpack. Do not remove!

**C~ Communication of Learning Story Report** Over the course of the school year, your child will receive 3 reports. In November, your child will receive a Communication of Learning Progress Report (COLS Report). In February and June, your child will receive a COLS Report highlighting your child's key learning, growth in learning and next steps. In November, you will be invited to the school for an interview

with your child's Educator Team to discuss your child's progress and any questions you may.

**D~ Dismissal** At the end of the day, parents are asked to line up along the wall outside of their child's classroom. When the door opens, please provide the educator with your child's name so we can call him/her to go. Please allow for spatial distancing and please be patient.

If someone different is picking up, please put a note in your child's mailbag or let the office know so they can alert the education team. PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL THE CLASSROOM EDUCATORS.

**Donations** Our goal as a Kindergarten team, is to make learning as fun as possible. In order to accomplish this we often need to purchase or collect materials. Throughout the year we will list materials we are in need of in our newsletter or on the blog. Please consider donating materials whenever possible.

**E~ Early Words** If you are concerned about your child's speech, please contact the Early Words Center at 905-381-2828 BEFORE school starts.

**Email** Please provide a current email address for Kinder updates.

**Environmental Print** Many studies have stated that in order to become a good reader a child needs to read and be read to daily from a very young age. If your family has not started this routine, now is the time. The first words a child learns to read are those words he/she sees everyday. Help us create an Environmental Print Bulletin Board by sending in as many Environmental Print Words as you can find (McDonalds, KITKAT, Nike, Tide etc.). Try making an Environmental Print Book or Bulletin Board in your home as well.

**Extra Clothing** Please send in an extra pair of clothes for your child in case of emergency. In a labeled Ziploc bag, include shorts/pants, socks, underwear and a t-shirt. These items will remain in your child's cubby until needed and then the entire bag will be sent home so new items can be put back in. If no clothing items are sent in and your child has an accident, the office will notify you so a change of clothes can be brought in or the child taken home.

**F~ Field Trips** Field trips are an excellent way to extend what a child is learning at school. In order for your child to participate in a field trip, all forms must be completely filled out and returned in a Ziploc bag or envelope labeled with 1. Child's name 2. Reason for Sending Money (Field Trip to Farm etc.). Please be aware that all trip forms and money are due on the date stated on the trip forms and the classroom calendar. Children who do not hand in forms and money on time will be unable to attend the trip. Also note that we are usually unable to give refunds of trip money. Your child's spot on the bus is a pre-determined cost and therefore the seat must be paid for whether he/she attends or not. If interested in volunteering on the trip, please make sure you have a valid police check. Apply early so you won't be disappointed that you are unable to attend the trip.

**G~ Guided Reading** It is through guided reading that teachers show children how to read and foster the development of independent reading. Guided reading reinforces for the beginning reader how to track words, the recognition of patterns in the story,

identify familiar words and predict. Students work in groups of up to 4 with the teacher. The teacher focuses on reading strategies that the students need at this point in their development.

**H~ Helpers (Volunteers)** We are looking for volunteers to help out in our classroom and/or be Volunteer Readers. You might be cutting things out, filing work, hanging up work, cleaning toys, working with individual children or a small group for reading. The length of time is flexible. All volunteers MUST have a police check and a Vulnerable Sector Screening.

## **Volunteer Police Check & Vulnerable Sector Screening**

There will be many opportunities for you to volunteer throughout your child's school career. In order to participate in any school trips, a police check is necessary. Please pick up a letter and instructions from the school's office so you don't miss out on any exciting events. It can take a minimum of a few weeks to acquire your Police Check, so do it early!!!

**I~ Independence** Children who are independent thrive in a Kindergarten Program.

All children are expected to do most things all by themselves. We have a 3 Try Rule. A child must try 3 times before asking for help. Please encourage your child's independence at home by allowing him/her to do things by him/her self. Be careful when dressing your child for school and when you're purchasing outdoor clothing. Buckles, belts, toggles, laces and other fancy clasps are too hard for a Kindergarten Child to do independently. Having to constantly ask for help to do things while classmates are doing the same things independently can be detrimental to a child's self esteem and confidence. Avoid setting your child up for failure by ensuring that everything he/she wears is kid-friendly and by ensuring that he/she can accomplish most tasks by him/her self: use bathroom, wash hands, dress self (indoor and outdoor clothes), put on and take off shoes, use appropriate manners when eating, walk in line and other skills used daily in the classroom.

**Inquiry** Children will become curious about the world they live in, become risk-takers, and will explore and observe different things. They will ask questions and problem-solve to find the answers during play.

**J~ Journals** In our kindergarten program, journals are used as a tool to see growth in letters and writing skills.

**K~ Kidwriting** As children get excited about writing, they will pass through several stages. These stages range from SQUIGGLES, to RANDOM LETTERS, to MORE PURPOSEFUL LETTERS, to SIMPLE WORDS, ETC. During this time we encourage praise and kidwriting. Kidwriting is when your child slowly sounds out a word and prints the sounds that s/he hears. Remember, your child will NOT print all of the letters. For example, brn (barn), ct (cat), wtrmln (watermelon). When they ask you how to spell something, sound it out with them and encourage them to record the sounds they hear.

**Knapsack** Your child needs to bring a **very large**, easy to open knapsack to school everyday. Your child's snack bag must fit easily inside the knapsack. Please help your child learn that he/she is responsible for bringing his/her knapsack to school everyday. Your child will carry a knapsack for the next 12 years so please teach them

from a young age how to take care of it. Your child will use this knapsack to carry mail to and from school. Please check for important forms daily.

**L~ Label** Please label ALL student items that come to school (e.g. clothing, water bottle, boots, snowpants, shoes, etc.)

**Late** If your child is late, please visit the office to get an admittance slip BEFORE your child comes to the classroom. Students are LATE when the door to the playground closes. Please DO NOT hand your child off to the educators in the kinder playground as that is NOT your child's class. If your child needs to leave early, please send a note. If you know that your child will be absent, please notify the school secretary by phone at (905) 304-6223 or use School Messenger. Please download the app.

**Library** Each week your child will visit the school library to exchange his/her book. In order to take out a new library book, your child must bring back the borrowed book. If you lose or damage your child's library book, please replace it with a similar "new" book.

**Lining Up** Now that your child is attending school he/she is ready to learn responsibility. The first responsibility a child encounters each day is lining up outside in the kindergarten area when the bell rings. When you arrive at school before the bell your child may want to snuggle with you or run around with his/her friends. As soon as the bell rings your child must line up, face forward and keep quiet. This may take a few weeks of practice.

**Litter Less Lunch** Please send your child with a litter less lunch. Please open all food packages and put them in easy to open containers that your child can open independently. Please send a spoon or fork if your child requires these as we do not always have extras.

**M~ Mailbag** All mail from home is to go in your child's mailbag (Ziploc baggie/other) and then into your child's knapsack. At school, your child is expected to take out his/her own mailbag and put it into the teacher's mailbox. Please never hand your child's teacher any items, notes, or money while she is greeting or dismissing the children. These items are often misplaced or lost due to the confusion entry and dismissal bring. Your child's teacher is responsible for the children and distractions take away from this responsibility. When children arrive at school they are expected to empty all mail from their backpacks into the teacher's mailbox. For the first few weeks your child's teacher will help with this process. If you have information that needs immediate attention or you notice your child is not delivering his/her mail, pin a note to the front of your child's shirt and your child's teacher will see it. We encourage you to set up a mailbox at home where your child can deliver mail from the school to you. \*\*Please make sure that any money sent to school is clearly labeled with your child's name and reason for the money in a baggy or envelope.

**Money** Please use Cash Online for payment of school activities and food sales. If money is sent in, it needs to come in a labeled envelope and be placed in your child's mailbag please. Please provide EXACT change as it is often difficult and time consuming for us to do this. When multiple monies are sent in, please make sure that each is in a SEPARATE labeled envelope. Often money is going to different places and cannot easily be divided into these areas.

**N~ NO Toys at School** Do not send any toys, jewellery, make-up or trading cards to school. This often becomes a disruption or issue when something happens to them. A note will be sent home when students have a special event and are allowed to bring in something from home.

**O~ Open House** Open House is a time when children are invited to bring their families to school to meet their teachers and see the school building. Please check the Kinder News for dates and times.

**Outdoor Play** Each school day, we will be going outside for approximately 40 minutes. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. When the weather turns cooler, please send in a hat and EXTRA WATERPROOF mittens. Please have your child practice dressing independently for outside.

**P~ Parking Lot** Please do not stop and idle your car on the road through the parking lot during drop-off and pick-up times, as this creates a backlog of cars needing to get through and staff cars that are blocked in. Parking in this area is a FIRE ZONE Violation and could result in a fine from By-Law.

**Phonemic Awareness** Phonemic awareness is the understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds called phonemes. It is the ability to hear sounds in words and the ability to manipulate sounds in words orally. We engage in phonemic awareness activities daily.

**Phonics** Phonics is a systematic instructional approach that links the foundation of phonemic awareness with children's growing knowledge of letter-sound relationships to enable children to decode words and read.

**Pick-ups** Please send a note or call the school if someone else is picking up your child. Please make sure that you have updated your Authorized Pick up form with your teacher. This will help to eliminate any difficulties at the pick up gate. If this is a first time pickup, please make sure s/he has valid ID.

**Physical Education** The kindergarten children will have gym class weekly. Please make sure that your child has running shoes for gym as s/he will not be able to participate otherwise. Children should wear comfortable clothing such as t-shirt and track pants on those days. Running shoes must be ones that they can put on themselves and have VELCRO.

**Play is Learning** The importance of play has been studied for years and this is what we have learned: Our classroom is an environment where children can explore their world through a process of play-based learning. Play helps children develop strong oral communication skills, make friends and become confident. It fosters creativity in completing tasks, solving problems, and making decisions. Come and play with us and see what you learn!

**Popcorn Words** (Words that POP up everywhere!!!) Practice, practice, practice this special song that is all about sight words. This song that will go home in your child's reading duo tang is used constantly in kindergarten to assist with reading

and writing. The Popcorn words are: like, a, I, he, and, in, that, of, is, it, to, can, the, was, big, no, me, said, go, my, am, yes, we, see, went and are sung to the tune of "Mary had a little lamb".

**Q~ Quick Good Byes** Quick good byes leave drier eyes! Some children will cry every time their parents leave them. Be assured that most children's tears disappear within minutes. If your child does not seem to be calming down as the day progresses, the office will contact you.

**R~ Rainy Days** Rainy days will happen this year. Please plan to arrive at the school very close to bell time on rainy days. Be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

**Reading/Writing** We cannot stress enough that daily reading and writing both at home and at school is extremely important. Your child's brain is still developing and the best thing that you can do for your child before he/she reaches the age of 6 is to begin a daily routine of reading and writing in your home. In school we engage the children in reading and writing activities everyday. Children participate in these activities in large groups (shared reading/writing), small groups (guided reading/writing) and in independent situations (journals, independent reading time). Most of our work jobs are literacy based as well. This means that all children will be completing reading and writing activities on a regular on-going basis at their developmental level. Children who practice reading and writing at home daily are usually very evident in the Kindergarten classroom. These are for the most part the children who emerge as strong readers and writers at the Kindergarten level. Please help us in giving your child a head start in literacy.

**Recess** Beginning in June, the Year 2 students prepare for grade 1 by learning the Recess Routine. They will be partnered up with a grade 1 student. They will go outside for first nutrition break on the back playground for 20 minutes during recess with the rest of the school. The Year 2 students will continue to go out to the Kindergarten area.

**Roots of Empathy** Depending on the year, we may have classes participating in Roots of Empathy. Weekly, our class community comes together to monitor and observe the growth of a baby. We learn about emotions, growth, needs of a baby, and how to be caring, empathetic citizens of the world.

**S~ School Messenger App** Please download the School Messenger App to enter absences, lates, and early pick ups. It will also send you important notices about the school your child. The Office will buzz to have your child sent down to meet you.

**Security** Please note that all outer doors are always locked. When you go to the front door of the school, you will need to be buzzed in and must report to the Office. If you are picking up your child EARLY from school, you must go to the office to sign out

**Snacks** We are on the balanced day so that means we have two nutrition breaks every day your child is at school. Please send in enough food for both breaks. Keeping children organized and preventing spills during snack time is a huge task. In order to keep things flowing smoothly during snack all children are required to bring the following items to school every day. 1. A lunch bag (that fits inside knapsack) 2. Spill-proof drink container 3. Healthy snack. NO PEANUT BUTTER OR NUT PRODUCTS.

4. Spoons. Please make sure that you do not send in open-mouth bottles (e.g. water bottles, juice bottles) as these often get knocked over and is time consuming to clean up. Please pack a spoon as often we do not have extras and your child will be sent home with that food item.

**Special Letter/Sound** Your child's special letter is the letter that his/her name begins with and your child's special sound is the sound that his/her name begins with. Please encourage your child to talk about all of his/her friends and family member's special letters and sounds so that learning the alphabet is more meaningful for them.

**September Entry Plan** Beginning in September, Year 1 students, any students in Year 2 who are new to kindergarten, and their parents will be invited to attend a short visit on the Tuesday after Labour Day. All students will be attending on the Wednesday. Previous Year 2 students will receive a note with their start date in their June Report Card Envelope.

**T~ Talk to your Child** Everyday, take the opportunity to talk to your child about their day.

**U~ Underwear** Your child is encouraged to bring extra pairs of underwear to keep in his/her extra clothes bag. Accidents do happen.

**V~ Velcro** All children need to come to school in **Velcro or slip on non-marking running shoes**. Please help to keep our room a safe place by saving laced shoes, dress shoes and sandals for at home wear. All children need a pair of Velcro running shoes, zipper shoes or slip on running shoes to keep at school when it becomes boot season.

**W~Water Bottles** Please make sure that you send your child with a non-spill refillable water bottle EVERY day as we do not have a fountain in our room.

**Word Wall/Window/Portable Word Folders** A word wall/window/folder is an area filled with words that the children can refer to during reading and writing activities. Word folders are used extensively in most primary and even some junior classrooms. It is our hope that by teaching the Kindergarten students to use a word wall/folder it will be familiar to them and they will more easily adapt to the more advanced words and strategies used in Grade 1 and beyond. Our word wall/folders will consist of the names of our classmates for the first part of the school year.

**Writer's Workshop/Program** All children will participate in a writing program. For the first few months, children will participate in a guided/modeled writing lesson. As students build up their confidence, we work towards independent writing. We do our writing in our writing journals which are notebooks that children write their own stories. Children's journal writings are an example of what they can do all by themselves. Your child's educator team uses your child's journal to assess what skills your child has gained from group writing and reading activities. Kindergarten journals vary greatly from child to child. A child's journal will develop from random scribbles to random letters and eventually to words and sentences that are spelled phonetically. It is

an amazing process that your child will go through during his/her 2 years in Kindergarten.

**X~ Exciting** Kindergarten is a very exciting time for children. We encourage you to ask your child questions about his or her day so you can share in this excitement.

**Z~ ZZZ's** Children who are well rested when they get to school are attentive and ready to learn. If your child is not yet on a schedule that includes an appropriate bedtime please work with your child to develop one. Reward programs and sticker charts work great. If your child needs to be woken up in order to have time to get ready for school he/she probably needs to go to bed earlier. Ensuring children get enough ZZZ's is a difficult task with your busy lives but children who sleep well will succeed.

**Zipper** Start now having your child practice INDEPENDENTLY zipping up his/her own zippers (jackets, pants).

**The Kinder Team**

**We are looking forward to a great year with your child!**

