

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about Full-Day Kindergarten in the West Chester Area School District

1. Why is West Chester moving to a full-day kindergarten program?

A full-day program gives our youngest learners the time they deserve to master critical literacy and math concepts that form the foundation for their future academic success. The current half-day kindergarten program is less than three hours, shorter than many preschool days. Students do best when learning is dynamic, thoughtful, and not rushed. More than three-quarters of schools nationwide offer full-day kindergarten programs, where students have the time to learn more thoroughly and deeply instead of hurrying through key concepts. We believe a full-day program is the right fit for a school district with high academic standards.

2. What makes this program different from others?

Our team of teachers and administrators consulted with Dr. Kathy Hirsch-Pasek, renowned researcher and author of “Einstein Never Used Flashcards” about how to maximize early childhood education through dynamic, play-based experiences. We worked hard to build a program that incorporates the Pennsylvania Core Standards into this approach. We believe we’ve created a unique program that will truly help our students to develop confidence, foster creativity, critical thinking skills, and an early ability to collaborate.

3. What will my child be learning?

Children in our full-day program will:

- Build early literacy skills
- Develop an understanding of math concepts and problem-solving through hands-on activities
- Experience expanded opportunities in science, social studies, art, music, library, PE, technology, and purposeful play
- Develop effective school habits and social skills

The goal is for students to have a fun, engaging experience that will foster a lifelong love of learning and prepare them for the rest of their elementary years. The program will be developmentally appropriate with a focus on movement. We understand that young children need to move and learn best through play and discovery.

4. What does research say about full-day kindergarten?

- Students in full-day classes show greater reading and mathematics achievement gains than those in half-day classes, and those gains typically stay with them through later grades.
- Students in full-day classes tend to do better with the transition to first grade. They show significant gains in school socialization, such as understanding appropriate behavior and interacting with other children.
- Teachers have the opportunity to get to know students better and address their learning challenges early, helping to get and keep them on track. They also have more time to provide enrichment and

individualized instruction to meet every learner's specific needs and challenge them.

- The earlier students' learning challenges are addressed, the less intervention that's needed in future years. That can translate to cost savings that can be used to provide other learning opportunities.
- Full-day students have more opportunities for creativity and more varied experiences since they don't have to rush through their curriculum.

5. What is the class size?

Kindergarten class sizes are capped at 25 students, and each school has a full-time kindergarten aide.

6. What are the hours?

Kindergarten class hours will be the same as the elementary school day. Please check your child's home school schedule as elementary start and end times vary by school.

7. Is a full day too long day for kindergartners?

Children will have a balance of active and restful activities during the day. Breaks are built into our kindergarten schedule. All teachers have learning centers in which students spend individual and group time. The move to a full day of school is often a challenging time for students (even if it occurs in first grade), but school districts with full-day programs tell us that most students adjust well. Our counselors and teachers are eager to work with parents to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

8. How do I know if my child is ready for full-day kindergarten, and how can I help my child prepare?

Our [Kindergarten Readiness Skills](#) a resource that provides information about activities you can do at home to help prepare to send your child to school in the fall. Children must be five years old on or before September 1st to enter kindergarten.

9. How will my child be assessed to see if they are ready?

Any child who meets the age criteria for kindergarten will be admitted to the program. We do an assessment of skills in the late spring/summer for all incoming kindergarten students. Your home school will contact you to schedule this. It is a simple assessment of basic skills that helps us to place students in classes. There is nothing you should do to help your child study or prepare, and there is no 'grade' or report. Our staff works hard to make this experience a simple, positive one that will hopefully get your child excited about kindergarten.

10. When will I find out what bus my child will take?

Information will be available to parents in August.

11. Can I drive my child to and from school instead of having my child ride the bus?

Yes. Please check with your school's principal regarding drop-off and pick-up procedures.

12. Will the full-day kindergarten students have the option of staying at school for before or after care?

Yes, kindergarten students will have the same [access to before and after care](#) as the rest of the school.

13. How do I register for full-day kindergarten?

You must begin the registration process by completing information online. Please to visit the West Chester Area School District's website or [begin the registration process](#) here.

14. What happens after I register?

Once you have finished the online component of registration, [please call your child's future elementary school](#) to schedule an appointment to complete the registration process. On our Full-Day Kindergarten I a lot of helpful information as well as an [overall timeline of events](#).

15. Can we tour the school when we complete the registration process?

Since school will be in session, we cannot conduct building tours for every registrant. Contact your building principal for available times to visit. Elementary schools provide Sneak-a-Peek and Kindergarten Orientation the week before school starts. You can also ask when the elementary school fairs or other public events are scheduled and attend those to help your child start to feel comfortable with the new surroundings.