

## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Stephen F. Austin Elementary! The first year in school is a great adventure away from home for children, and is important to later achievement in school. We are looking forward to meeting your child and working together this year.



### **What is Kindergarten?**

The purpose of kindergarten is to provide a basic foundation for your child's education. It is a program geared to make the transition from home to school as smooth as possible and to make each child's first experience with school a happy and successful one.

The kindergarten program is designed to help stimulate a good self-concept, providing each child with many experiences of achievement. Kindergarten children will work and create independently and learn to cooperate with others in a group. The program will provide opportunities for social and emotional development, inspire language development, and expand physical and mental growth.

## Getting Ready for School

- Help your child practice cooperation, sharing, and friendliness, especially in a group.
- Read! Read! Read! Try to read to your child every day and listen to them as they “read” to you. (Picture books, pattern books, books with CDs, etc.) Visit the public library together. Let your child see you read, also.
- Encourage singing, rhyming games, etc. You can even make them a part of your regular routine during car trips.
- Make sure your child knows personal information, such as:
  - \* Name -first and last name      \* Address
  - \* Age                                      \* Parent’s name
  - \* Phone number                      \* Birthday
- Practice identifying simple shapes.
- Recognize and name the eight basic colors.
- Count to ten. This should be done with objects and not just verbally. Use macaroni, toothpicks, marbles, utensils, etc.
- Practice recognizing the alphabet and sounds that consonants make.
- Practice cutting with scissors. Use old coloring books to cut out pictures or cut out coupons for mom. Fiskar scissors are recommended.
- Encourage free art and drawing vs. coloring pre-existing pictures.
- Let your child experiment with Crayola Washable Markers. They do not stain things or people.
- Encourage toys that explore and develop muscle control.
  - Example: Lego’s, Play Dough, Silly Putty, Lincoln Logs, etc.
- Encourage listening skills in your child. Read a story and ask questions about the plot, their reactions to events in the story, characters, feelings, etc.
- Purchase the same supplies for home as required for school to encourage continued learning.
- Allow children to use regular glue rather than glue sticks or paste. They need to learn the tricks of how to open and close the bottle and how to use just a little drop instead of a big puddle.

## **How Do I Know When My Child Is Ready to Read?**

Children who have developed readiness skills are most likely to:

- Visually see differences in objects or letters
- See and hear differences in sounds
- Enjoy reading activities
- Recognize and name all upper case and lower case letters, as well as their sounds
- Hear and judge sound in words—phonemic awareness

### **Readiness Preparation:**

1. Read and discuss nursery rhymes, poems, and stories to your child to stimulate a love of books.
2. Talk to your child.
3. Discourage “baby talk”.
4. Discuss experiences your child has had and places he/she has been (zoo, farm, post office, fire station etc.)
5. Provide opportunities to play and share with other children and make friends.
6. Teach your child his/her full name, parent’s name, address, and phone number. When learning to print his/her name, he/she should use both capital and lower case letters (ex: Tom, Kate).

## How Parents Can Help

1. Let your child share in home responsibilities, conversations, and activities.
2. Give your child duties at home to develop self-confidence and responsibility (setting the table, sorting the laundry, putting away toys, etc.)
3. Establish a regular pattern for sleep (10 hours), meals, (keep snacks to a minimum), and play.
4. Teach your child to get dressed independently.
5. Be sure your child listens to others and follows directions.
6. Teach your child to help others (brothers, sisters, pets, neighbors, etc.)
7. Teach appropriate safety procedures (like not talking to strangers, and how to cross the street with out the help of an adult)
8. Supervise viewing of television programs.

## Speech

In kindergarten, great emphasis is placed on listening activities and language development. The first part of the year is devoted to helping the children recognize sounds in the environment. Beginning with discrimination of vastly different sounds, the program then works with the final sounds of animal and human voices, and finally with the discrimination of speech sounds.

The development of speech is a continual process. Speech sounds are acquired slowly and perfection in speech developed gradually.

- Sounds most four year olds can make: p, b, m, h, w, n, k, g, and f
- Sounds most five year olds can make: v, t, d, ng, and y.
- Sounds most six year olds can make: j, sh, ch, and l.
- Sounds most seven year olds can make: r, wh, and th.
- Sounds most eight year olds can make: s, z, tr, and sl.



## Handwriting

Handwriting is a complex motor skill and is directly related to maturation. Areas related to readiness for handwriting include visual discrimination, attention span, muscle coordination, handedness, and emotional maturity. Differences in the level or readiness necessitate looking at students individually. We will be instructing each child in the proper formation of his name. By the end of kindergarten, we expect that your child will be able to print both first and last names using proper letter formation, i.e., first letter uppercase and subsequent letters lowercase (John, Mary). The children will also be working on skills such as cutting, tracing, learning how to hold a pencil correctly and they will be involved in creative writing. In September, we will begin writing in a journal. The students will be encouraged to put their thoughts on paper. They will go through various stages of handwriting including scribbling, drawing pictures, forming letters, words and hopefully sentences by the end of the year.

Print Alphabet—Uppercase

A B C D E F G

H I J K L M N

O P Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

Print Alphabet—Lowercase

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

## Skills Sheet

The nine-week skills sheets are intended to provide you with the objectives that will be focused on each nine-week grading period. These skills are the basic skills that will be covered during the nine weeks and reflect only those skills graded for mastery. At the end of each grading period, a graded copy of the current skills will be sent home in your child's report card. It will correspond to the specific academic areas listed on the report card. The skill sheet for the following nine-week period will be located on the back side of the graded skills sheet.



## **Cooperation Between Home and School**

Cooperation between parents and teachers is very important. Both the parents and the school are joint partners in the total education of the child.

Any concerns that arise should be brought to the teacher's attention. If your child develops or already has a particular fear or dislike, it may be overcome more easily if both the parents and the school work together cooperatively.

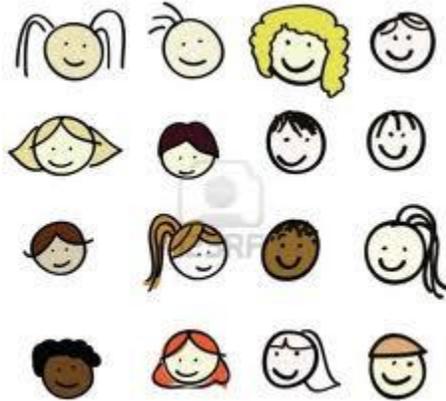
Teachers will be creating a weekly newsletter informing you of topics covered, homework, future dates/activities, etc.

### **Notes**

Many important messages, reminders, or forms that need to be completed and returned will be sent home during the school year. These notes will be sent home in your child's daily folder or Wednesday folder. Please look for these each day and give them to your prompt attention. Thank your child for being a responsible messenger.

If there is a change in the method of transportation, please send a note to the teacher (in the daily folder) to prevent confusion for both the child and the teacher. If an emergency occurs and you need to change the method of transportation, please call the school office by 2:00 p.m. to ensure your child getting home correctly.

Without a note or phone message, your child will go home his or her regular way.



## **Kindergarten Homework Policy**

In kindergarten, we value homework as a vital connection between the child's classroom experience and home experiences. We want our students to see the relevance to their own lives. Please do not spend more than fifteen minutes on an assignment. District policy sees homework as a valued extension of learning beyond the classroom and an integral part of the instructional program. Homework serves the following purposes:

1. To provide student opportunities to practice skills after demonstrating an understanding of the skills within the classroom.
2. To provide students opportunities to complete tasks begun under the direction of the teacher.
3. To encourage task commitment, responsibility, and self-discipline.
4. To allow make-up work because of absences, (this will not be graded.)
5. To review material in preparation for tests and other class work.

## **What To Wear?**

A uniform dress code has been successfully established at Austin Elementary and any other questions about style or color of clothing can be answered by referring to the Austin Dress Code (see the Student Handbook). Please remember that in selecting your child's clothes, visualize your child painting, gluing, climbing, sitting on the floor and playing games.

Choose clothes that are easily managed without help. Jumpsuits, overalls and suspenders are difficult for children who wait until the last minute to go to the bathroom. If shoes with laces are worn, please make sure your child can tie his/her own shoes. Because we go to recess and/or physical education every day, we discourage sending students to school in boots or shoes with a big heel. Girls should wear shorts under skirts or dresses. District policy prohibits wearing of any hats or caps to school. The children are happier if they are comfortable and can participate more easily. Make sure all jackets and sweaters are clearly labeled. Please practice tying, zipping, snapping and buttoning.

## **Backpacks**

Your child should bring a backpack to school each day. Please make sure it is large enough to hold a folder and can easily be opened and closed by your child. Be sure to label it with your child's name.

## **Money**

There are various times during the school year that you may send money to school with your child. If you send money for a special reason, please place it in a sealed envelope or Ziploc bag. Write your child's name, the teacher's name and what the money is for so that we may distribute it effectively. Please the envelope or plastic bag of money in the daily folder.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are very special occasions and we do like to celebrate them. If you would like to send a treat for your child's birthday, you may. We ask that you send individual items that will be easy to pass out. They must be purchased from a store with ingredient labels clearly showing. Some suggestions include cookies, cupcakes, brownies, etc.

## **Cafeteria Information**

For your convenience, the monthly Lamar CISD breakfast and lunch menus are published on the district website at [www.lcisd.org](http://www.lcisd.org). Milk and juice choice will be served with each meal. Parents are strongly encouraged to prepay meals by the week or month through your child's account. The number will be given to you at Kindergarten orientation or you can go directly to the cashier in the cafeteria and pay. You may also pay online at <https://www.parentonline.net/public/login.aspx>.

If you choose to send money with your child, please send it in an envelope or Ziploc bag. Checks should be payable to Austin Food Service.

If you plan on joining your child for lunch, please check in at the office with your driver's license and secure a visitors pass. Meet your child's class in the cafeteria at the appointed time.

# Discipline Procedures

In the classroom, there are some rules:

- Use appropriate behavior
- Keep on task and following directions
- Use time and material wisely
- Have a positive attitude
- Listen
- Respect self and others

Please be sure to discuss these rules with your child prior to the first day of school as well as during the year.

We will be using a color system to monitor classroom behavior. If a child chooses to break a rule, he/she will be asked to change their color. The color progression is as follows:

- Green: begin each day
- Yellow: verbal warning
- Red: teacher/student interaction (folder initialed)
- Administrative referral for severe cases:
  - If a student harms himself or others, damages school property or uses inappropriate language, he/she will receive an automatic administrative referral.

Your child will start each day with his/her clip on green and then move down according to behavior. However, throughout the day, your child will have numerous opportunities to move their clip up with positive behavior. Please remember that positive reinforcement is the main form of management in the classroom.

Positive reinforcement examples are positive notes, treasure chest, stickers and verbal praise. Kindergarten should be an enjoyable experience for everyone.

You will be advised of your child's behavior daily in their daily folder. It is important that you view and sign the folder daily. This is a way of communicating with you.

Please feel free to email the teachers at school, send a note or set up a conference if you have any concerns about your child's behavior.