



Language Arts



Reading Readiness

Reading readiness skills are taught in District 204 kindergarten classrooms. The expectation is not to teach students to read, but to provide readiness "tools" as a secure foundation "on the road" to reading. With continual exposure and repetition of these activities, District 204 kindergarten students will be given a foundation for reading development and will be given encouragement to demonstrate reading ability when it is developmentally appropriate for each child.

The focus for the District 204 reading program is to teach kindergartners the meaning of language and concepts of print. Skills are taught in the context of reading through daily phonemic awareness, the process of the Reading Instruction Framework (read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent practice, interactive reading) and Harcourt resources and materials.

The Harcourt Trophies Reading Series uses universal themes to help students make real life connections and to build continuity throughout the program. The following skills are covered in our reading readiness program:

- recognize and identify letters and initial consonant sounds
- recognize rhyming words
- predict outcomes
- understand cause and effect relationships
- compare and contrast stories
- encounter a variety of quality literature
- understand the connection between spoken and written language
- self-expression; verbally and through print
- retell stories or experiences in sequence

Part of our reading readiness program also includes literacy-based activities. We are attempting to get children to learn to read and write by doing just that, reading and writing. We will take each child at his/her current level and build upon it. In kindergarten, we do a lot of dictating stories and repetitive reading. Students are encouraged to write their own stories. We write class books frequently, as well as read a variety of children's literature to expand their vocabulary and understanding.

Jolly Phonics

Your child will be participating in an evidence-based, systematic phonics program called Jolly Phonics. This means that students will be taught the main 42 sounds of English, not just the alphabet sounds. With this knowledge, they are taken through the stages of blending sounds to form words and then to reading! At the same time, the students are taught to write by identifying sounds in words and relating the letters to those sounds. Parent participation is extremely important for this program to be successful for your child.

6 + 1 Writing Program

Students from K-12 use the 6+1 traits of writing. In kindergarten, students are exposed to the vocabulary used in this program. This is done through books we read, stories we write, pictures we draw, etc. The following is an explanation of the six traits.

1. Ideas and Content	concerns the focus on the main idea of the writing
2. Organization	emphasizes the logical development of topic from beginning to end
3. Voice	concentrates on a sense of a real person behind the words and a clear understanding of audience
4. Word Choice	encourages varied and rich, powerful and engaging words
5. Sentence Fluency	highlights the smooth flow of the text
6. Conventions	examines mechanical correctness, including spelling, grammar & paragraphing
7. Presentation (optional trait)	supports text and format that is legible and pleasing to the eye

Handwriting

D'Nealian writing is a method of teaching the basic number and letter formations, with a focus on size, slant, rhythm, and spacing. Children will be taught to write their name with a capital letter followed by lowercase letters (John, not JOHN). Please keep this in mind when practicing at home.

As each letter is introduced, we talk about how we will write the letter (D'Nealian style) and how we will see the letter written in books (block letter and typewritten). In essence, your child is learning two forms of the alphabet. Reversals are common at the kindergarten level. Do not be concerned by this as reversals tend to diminish with practice and as your child matures.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee

Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk

Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp

Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu

Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz