Entering Kindergarten is an important milestone for your child. As we look towards schools reopening in the wake of COVID-19 and enhanced safety precautions, Avon Maitland District School Board (AMDSB) will continue to offer high quality programming while ensuring a safe and nurturing learning environment for our youngest learners.

What does in person Kindergarten look like in AMDSB?
Our Kindergarten programs follow the Ministry of Education’s play-based inquiry model. This incorporates learning in four areas:

1. Belonging and Contributing
2. Self-Regulation and Well-Being
3. Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours
4. Problem Solving and Innovating

To provide excellent Kindergarten programing:

- Kindergarten students in AMDSB will be participating in active play-based learning opportunities throughout the day. Young learners are active and will not be expected to sit at desks all day.
- Kindergarten students will spend a significant amount of learning time outdoors.
- The number of students at each learning centre may be limited, with materials cleaned as appropriate.
- Some learning activities will not be available this fall due to cleaning requirements (costumes, soft toys, etc.).
- Children will be taught proper handwashing and safety protocols in a developmentally appropriate way with safety routines built into the day.
- Learning will be designed to follow physical distancing and safety protocols. This may include instruction in smaller groups, limiting the frequency of whole group gatherings, and spreading out or marking safe student seating for group activities or instruction.
- **We will be encouraging physical distancing in these classrooms as much as possible.**
How are educator teams preparing to welcome your child to kindergarten?

Educator teams will:

- Be trained in COVID-19 related health and safety protocols.
- Build in multiple opportunities for handwashing and sanitizing throughout the day.
- Prepare classrooms according to the guidelines that will be provided by AMDSB which will include, but are not limited to, decluttering classrooms of non-essential items, increasing outdoor learning opportunities, enhanced cleaning protocols, creating larger play and meeting spaces by removing furniture and some materials.
- Continue to implement the Kindergarten Program and curriculum, which includes a focus on children’s well-being and emotional learning.

What does online Kindergarten look like in AMDSB?

Families of Kindergarten students may choose online learning. Details include:

- Each day, Kindergarten students will have opportunities to participate in scheduled, live (real time) virtual sessions in large and small group formats.
- The length of the online teaching sessions will be developmentally appropriate to engage the attention of young learners.
- Kindergarten students will be assigned activities to complete at home with parent/caregiver support.
- Classes will be created centrally and will include children from across our district.
- All classes will be taught by AMDSB teachers who are available to the system. This means your child will not likely be taught by a teacher from their home school.
- Families who opt for online learning this fall will need to wait for specific entry points (e.g. January 2021) to return to face to face learning so that we may maintain appropriate cohort and safety protocols.

Communication

If you are a parent of a new JK or Kindergarten student, you will receive information about Kindergarten interviews from your home school in late August. You will also receive information from your local school Principal or the Educator team that may include a walk through video of the classroom, an introduction to the Kindergarten Educator team, or an introductory letter. Please share all of these with your child to help build their knowledge of Kindergarten.

The First Week

Customarily, all students in JK/SK are in attendance by the end of the first week of school. In order to support students in learning new safety routines and adjust to changes in the school and classroom environments, JK/SK students will attend their first day of school on the day assigned by their home school. Families will be notified with a start date for their JK and SK students by the home school.

Please contact your home school Principal if you do not receive information about a start day for your child by the end of August.
Enhanced Safety Measures

AMDSB has developed protocols in consultation with Huron Perth Public Health and is following the Ministry of Education's Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools. These protocols and enhancements to health and safety at our schools were outlined in the August 6 School Reopening Fact Sheet. The most relevant information to Kindergarten students includes:

- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks indoors, and when riding on school buses.
- All high touch surfaces (door handles, railings, washrooms, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day.
- Items that cannot be easily disinfected (e.g., carpets, plush toys, etc.) have been removed from classrooms and only essential items will be permitted.
- Shared learning materials and tools will be limited.
- Any shared items will be cleaned/disinfected between uses.
- Playground structures will be cleaned/disinfected regularly.
- Parents can help by minimizing personal belongings sent to school, labelling any belongings and remind students they must not be shared.
- Nutritional breaks will take place in the classroom at the students’ assigned learning space or outdoors. No sharing of food or beverages.
- Students will stay together and move together in one cohort (group) throughout the day including nutrition breaks and recess.
- Specialized teachers, like arts, and music, will still be able to go into classrooms to provide programming while wearing their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- To maintain distance between students, staggered nutrition breaks, recesses, and transitions will be implemented.
- Until further notice, volunteers will not be permitted in classrooms.

As we continue to make plans to welcome your child to Kindergarten in the fall, please watch for further communication from AMDSB or your school regarding school entry. Please contact your school Principal for any additional questions.
Helping Your Child Be Prepared for Kindergarten:

In AMDSB schools, Kindergarten children will be welcomed into classroom communities with consideration for their needs and comfort level. Parents and families play an important role in promoting positive messages about attending school. When talking to your child about attending school in the fall, reassure your child that school is a safe place to learn, play and grow. Further to sharing positive messages about starting school, it is recommended that families practice skills with their child. Here are some suggestions to help your child be prepared to start the next step in their school journey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can families help their child to be ready for and excited about starting school?</th>
<th>How can families help their child adjust to a new routine?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Practice: hand washing, opening food containers, doing up zippers, putting on own shoes, opening lunch bag, your morning routine ahead of time</td>
<td>• Engage in learning activities over the summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walk to your bus/pick up area and show them where to stand and what to do</td>
<td>• Read together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walk your route to school and practice what to do at corners and streets, talk about the crossing guard. If someone else walks your child to school, invite them to come with you a few times</td>
<td>• Sing and rhyme together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practice your ‘getting home from school/childcare’ routine (where to put shoes and backpacks, lunch bags)</td>
<td>• First make letters, then names or small words out of sand or other physical objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan out snacks and lunches, discuss which parts of the lunch to eat first nutrition break and which to save for second</td>
<td>• Play memory and matching games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask how many do you see (2 dogs!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Talk about more or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build and create with found items (shells, pebbles, boxes, paper rolls, forts etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Talk about names in your family and the sounds and letters in those names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use colouring books and draw pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>