

# Welcome to KINDERGARTEN SUCCESS starts here!



## *Welcome students and families of the Class of 2030!*

*We are proud to be your educational partners as you embark on this new journey of learning and growing. Whether you have a currently enrolled student or are new to Utica Community Schools, we are pleased to have you as part of the UCS family.*

*While kindergarten is the first stepping-stone in the pathway of learning, you can feel confident that over the next 13 years your child will have a high-quality education that meets their individual needs. UCS is committed to exemplary teaching and learning for each student in a safe and supportive environment.*

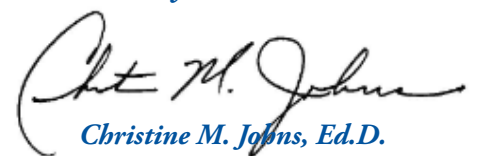
*At Utica Community Schools, we are proud of our tradition of success, excellence and innovation. UCS strives to develop skills in students for creative problem-solving and critical thinking. We allow students to become well-rounded, responsible citizens who are passionate contributors to society and are fully prepared for college and their careers. A UCS education truly lasts a lifetime.*

*As new members of the UCS family, you can be proud that our students achievement levels consistently outpace their county, state and national peers.*

*Our schools and programs are nationally recognized for excellence and the UCS graduation rate outpaces state averages by more than 12 points. Even our average attendance rate of 95% demonstrates that our students are ready and committed to their learning. As a kindergartener, your child is now part of this achievement legacy.*

*Class of 2030 we welcome you to the UCS family and our tradition of success!*

*Sincerely,*



*Christine M. Johns, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools*

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### Utica Community Schools Board of Education

Gene L. Klida, President • Michele Templeton, Vice President • Jennifer L. Prybys, Secretary • Robert A. Ross, Ph.D., Treasurer  
Ken Krolczyk, Trustee • Mary K. Thomas, Ph.D., Trustee • Denyeal Nesovski, Trustee



## Enrolling for the First Time

Children residing within the Utica Community Schools boundaries who will reach their fifth birthday on or before September 1 are eligible for kindergarten. All children must register for school by their sixth birthday.

To enroll your child, please bring the following documents to the elementary school in your attendance area:

- Your child's original birth certificate or certified copy, with raised seal, issued by the county clerk of the county where your child was born or the health department of the state of birth; and
- Your child's health immunization record; including vision and hearing screenings. Be sure to schedule immunization updates early, as these appointments are often limited; and
- Two proofs of residency are required:
  - ▲ Photo ID
  - ▲ Property tax bill, closing papers or lease agreement. Utility bills are not accepted as proof of residency.

Children may be excluded from attending school if not in compliance with Michigan's immunization laws

For further information about hearing and vision screening, call 586-412-5945.

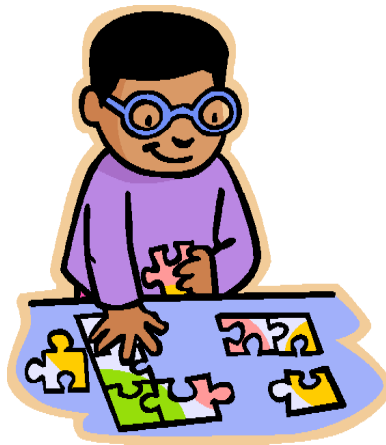
To learn more about childhood immunization, call the health department at 586-469-5372.



## Off to a Great Start

As your child enters kindergarten, an exciting new phase in his or her young life — the elementary school years — is beginning to unfold.

Kindergarten is an adventure in discovery where your child will develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. The year ahead is an important stepping stone to future learning. The full-day kindergarten curriculum is designed to help children establish good work habits and prepare them for success in first grade and every level beyond.



## Parents Set the Stage for Success

While teachers and other caring adults help children learn and grow in the school setting, nothing compares to a parent's nurturing influence in transforming a child into a caring and capable young adult.

As a parent, you can help your child succeed by promoting skills that build strong character and self-esteem.

Encourage your son or daughter to:

- show respect by treating others the way he or she wants to be treated
- show responsibility by being accountable for what he or she says and does
- show integrity by being truthful and trustworthy
- do his or her personal best by putting forth his or her best effort
- demonstrate positive communication by being considerate with his or her words and actions

Work to build your child's decision-making skills by:

- brainstorming possible ways to solve problems at home and at school
- weighing the positive and negative results of each choice
- choosing the solution that promises the best outcome
- relating your own decision-making experiences and sharing lessons you learned from both positive and negative results

## What Your Child Will Learn

The Utica Community Schools curriculum aligns with the Michigan curriculum framework and academic standards. For more information on the state curriculum, visit the Michigan Department of Education Web site: [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde).

All students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and challenged to achieve to their highest potential. Here is a brief description of the kindergarten academic program:

### English Language Arts

English Language Arts –reading, writing, speaking and listening – are taught across all areas of the curriculum.

Using a literature-based approach, children are exposed to a rich variety of reading selections.

They systematically gain and develop strategic, independent skills necessary for strong oral and written communication.

Teachers monitor students' progress in reading and writing through ongoing assessments that enable them to target instruction according to student needs.

Daily classroom instruction includes reading and writing:

### Reading –

Children are encouraged to develop an early love of reading and writing as they interact with quality, age-appropriate literature and create stories in which their "talk" is written down, helping make the connection between ideas and written words.

Teachers model good reading practices as they guide students toward:

- recognizing and associating letters with sounds
- engaging in speaking and listening activities
- taking an active part in classroom conversations, as a speaker and as a listener
- asking and answering questions about key details in passages read aloud
- learning how to use question words, such as who, what, where, when, why or how in discussions
- dramatizing and retelling stories
- relating the experiences of characters to real life experiences
- memorizing, classifying and sequencing experiences
- sharing daily reading experiences with fiction and nonfiction texts
- stating an opinion or preference about a topic
- expanding vocabulary, including the use of high frequency words



#### ***How parents can help:***

You can help strengthen your child's skills in English Language Arts by:

- talking with and listening to your child
- using proper speech
- reading to your child daily and visiting the library often
- reading aloud informational books and articles that appeal to your child's interests - animals, birds, etc.
- having your child read aloud to you
- engaging your child in discussions about school assemblies, special events, field trips or family experiences
- monitoring television viewing, watching programs together and discussing what you see
- providing your child with a variety of writing materials such as pencils, crayons, markers and an assortment of paper
- encouraging your child to dictate stories to you
- praising your child's reading and writing efforts

#### **Mathematics**

The kindergarten mathematics curriculum features hands-on lessons designed to help students learn to reason and begin to calculate mathematically.

Kindergarten students will begin to relate math concepts and skills to other subject areas and daily life experiences.

The kindergarten math program will focus on:

- knowing number names and the count sequence
- counting to tell the number of objects
- comparing numbers
- understanding addition as putting together and adding to, and understanding subtraction as taking apart and taking from
- working with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations for place value
- describing and comparing

measurable attributes

- classifying objects and counting the number of objects in categories
- identifying and describing shapes analyzing, comparing, creating and composing shape

#### ***How parents can help:***

You can begin to build your child's understanding of the usefulness of mathematics by:

- having him or her count household objects, such as dishes, fruit, shoes
- pointing out how numbers are used in everyday life – phone numbers, calendars, clocks, money, etc.
- having your child use comparison words, such as larger/smaller, more/less, above/below, top/middle/bottom
- enlisting your child's help to measure recipe ingredients
- talking about the different shapes in which food is packaged, such as square boxes, rectangular boxes, cones and cylinders
- working together to prepare a shopping list from advertised prices
- having your child help put away groceries to develop classifying and reasoning skills

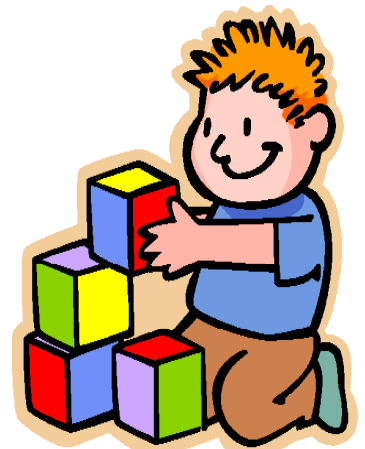
#### **Writing –**

Teachers begin to teach writing by providing meaningful opportunities for children to express themselves about classroom activities and the world around them.

Even simple writing assignments can enhance students' reading, thinking and problem-solving skills. Children will progress through these stages of beginning writing:

- dictating thoughts
- drawing pictures to communicate
- beginning to write and spell simple words
- practicing writing in notebooks, class books and language experience charts

Teachers also monitor students' progress in reading and writing through ongoing assessments that help target instruction accordingly.





## Science

The study of science in kindergarten teaches students to ask questions about and better understand and appreciate the world around them.

Your child will learn to develop solutions to problems through hands-on instruction in:

- investigation
- experimentation
- data collection and analysis
- drawing conclusions

### *How parents can help:*

You can develop your child's interest and awareness of science and nature by:

- encouraging your child to observe what is happening around him or her and to wonder and ask why
- prompting him or her to predict what might happen
- discussing changes your child can observe, such as freezing water into ice cubes and letting it melt back into water or slicing an apple, which cannot be made whole again
- encouraging your child to think about objects according to size or color - for instance, flowers, trees, rocks, hills, mountains and planets
- observing leaves or insects and asking your child to group the ones that are similar
- tracking weather changes and selecting suitable outdoor clothing
- stargazing together
- visiting a museum of natural history or science exhibits

## Social Studies

The social studies curriculum encourages kindergarten students to become self-directed and responsible citizens by making connections between themselves, their family members and their community.

Your child will learn about:

- historical events
- geography
- good citizenship (following rules and accepting consequences)
- economics (money, buying and selling)
- people and cultures of other nations

### *How parents can help:*

You can increase your child's awareness of the past and present by together:

- discussing newsworthy items
- discussing traits of good citizenship
- visiting local historical sites
- visiting interesting places like farms, museums, nature centers, etc.
- sharing personal experiences, such as recollections of historical events
- watching movies about historical events
- reading historical books
- doing simple calendar-type activities

## Media Center/Technology

At the heart of every UCS elementary school is a technology-enhanced media center where even the youngest students pursue learning projects that connect with the kindergarten standards, guided by a media center teacher.

Your child will have access to a literature- and digital-rich library collection, along with educational technology that includes computers, video and presentation equipment.

Technology plays a key role in all instruction and learning. Your child will be introduced to using computers as learning tools, both in the media center and in the classroom.

Other technologies, such as digital cameras and interactive white boards are also available to them. Your child will gain experience with the latest research-based educational software that aligns with the instruction.

Access to a wide variety of technologies provides kindergarten students with early access to 21st Century learning skills.

## English Learners (EL)

The EL program is available to kindergarten students who come from families with limited English language skills. The goal of the EL program is to help students acquire reading, writing, listening and speaking English language skills necessary for academic success.

EL support will be provided to identified students to help with classroom concepts and to gain assimilation skills. Full-day kindergarten provides an excellent environment for them to be immersed in the English language and American culture with classroom peers.

## Art, Music and Physical Education

The kindergarten curriculum includes the study of art, music and physical education taught by specialist teachers. The curriculum is aligned with updated Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations.

### *How parents can help:*

Assist your child in broadening and developing his or her abilities and interests by:

- providing pencils, crayons, paper, blunt-end scissors and other art supplies, plus a well-lit work area
- praising and displaying your child's artwork at home
- providing a variety of musical resources, such as age-appropriate CDs and DVDs
- together singing songs or doing play activities learned at school
- selecting toys that help build skills
- providing safe play equipment at home



- encouraging a healthy diet
- encouraging daily outdoor play
- taking your child to parks and playgrounds
- joining your child in action games and board games
- helping your child create simple projects
- encouraging your child to share what he or she has learned in class

### Special Education

Every elementary school has certified special education teachers, speech/language therapists, social workers and psychologists available to identify students' learning challenges and work with classroom teachers and parents to manage students' special needs and help them succeed.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have about their child's progress with the classroom teacher.

### Educating the Total Child

Success in kindergarten depends on more than academic studies. Social and emotional growth, development of motor skills, and acquiring appropriate work habits are essential to your child's overall achievement.

### Social and Emotional Growth

During the coming school year, watch for your child to:

- learn to share and take turns
- develop the ability to listen to others and express his or her ideas clearly
- use good manners and show courtesy toward others
- learn to follow school rules
- appreciate his or her self-worth
- develop the ability to think for himself or herself
- learn to accept constructive criticism
- learn to solve problems by himself or herself

### How parents can help:

Build your child's self-confidence and sense of responsibility by:

- listening to your child and making your child feel that what he/she says is important
- showing your love and support
- praising his or her efforts often
- encouraging your child to do some things independently
- allowing your child to make his or her own decisions when appropriate
- encouraging children to take responsibility for their behavior
- encouraging good manners and regard for others' feelings
- inviting your child's friends to play at your home
- reinforcing an awareness that everyone is unique and our nation, communities and schools enjoy a richness of many cultures

### Motor Skill Development

Your child's motor skill development is promoted daily in the kindergarten classroom through activities such as:

- using scissors, crayons, paste, pencils, paint and modeling clay
- working with puzzles, pegboards, blocks and stringing beads
- practicing lacing, zipping, buttoning and tying
- physical education and active play



### School and Home – a Winning Team!

#### Emergency Information Card

At the start of each school year, you will be asked to complete and return your child's emergency card with the following information:

- your home phone and cell phone numbers and e-mail address
- work place names and phone numbers for you and your spouse
- names and phone numbers of adult relatives and friends for the school to contact if you cannot be reached
- details of any medical conditions your child has
- your signature stating the school can approve emergency medical treatment for your child in a life-threatening situation.

This information will enable the school to notify you if your child becomes ill or injured, or if there is an emergency school closing.

**IMPORTANT: Please immediately notify the school of any changes to your emergency card information.**

If a student requires emergency medical treatment and a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will call 911 to summon an ambulance to transport the student to a hospital.

A staff member will accompany the student and remain at the hospital until the parent/guardian arrives.

#### Attendance is Very Important

Regular attendance is necessary for students to get the most out of school.

If your child is too ill to attend class, please notify the school as soon as possible. Use the voice mail absence line when school is not in session.

If your child arrives late, you must sign him or her in at the office before he or she can go to class.

If you request an early release, you must sign your child out at the office.

Students who are frequently absent and/or tardy (late) will be reported to the district attendance officers.

## Safety First

Your child's safety and well-being are of utmost importance. Safety practices are emphasized to students by:

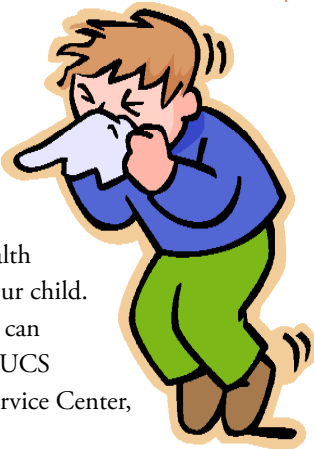
- providing instruction on bus, bicycle, pedestrian and winter safety
- discussing safe use of equipment at school and home
- practicing fire drills and fire safety
- stressing safety regarding strangers
- holding security and disaster drills

## Health is Essential

Good health is essential to your child's well-being and academic success.

If your child has a health issue, such as diabetes, asthma, seizures or a life-threatening allergy, please make his or her teacher and principal aware of the condition so they can respond quickly and appropriately to your child's needs.

A registered nurse is available to provide information and advice on health issues affecting your child. The district nurse can be reached at the UCS Administrative Service Center, 586-797-1120.



## A Word about Clothing

Good grooming habits help create a positive school environment.

Children are more comfortable and feel better about themselves and their school work when they are clean, neatly groomed and appropriately dressed

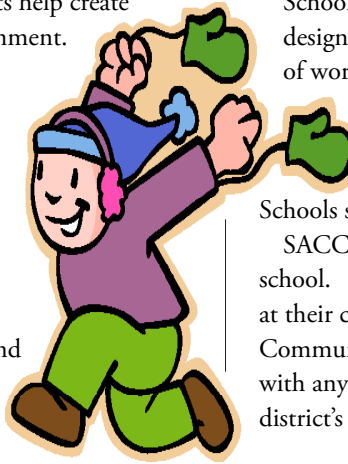
Choose clothing that allows free movement and outerwear that is easy to put on and take off.

Footwear should be age-appropriate, comfortable, safe and suitable for indoor and outdoor play.

Avoid clothing that is tattered or bears disrespectful lettering, words or symbols.

Please label outerwear and other belongings with your child's name.

Children should come to school dressed for outdoor play, even in the winter months. During extremely cold or inclement weather, recess is generally held indoors.



## School Age Child Care

School Age Child Care (SACC) is designed to meet the child care needs of working parents by offering supervised planned activities before or after school for Utica Community Schools students.

SACC is available at every elementary school. Parents can register for SACC at their child's school. Please call UCS Community Education at 586-797-6980 with any questions you have about the district's programs.

## Bus Transportation

The school district follows Michigan Board of Education guidelines to determine student eligibility for bus transportation. The guidelines are based on the distance from home to school and safety conditions for walkers. Your school's principal can tell you if your address is on a busing route.

You must register for bus service at your child's school PRIOR to the first day of school.

For the first few weeks of school, kindergarten bus riders should wear a tag indicating their BUS NUMBER.

If you have a question about busing, please contact the UCS Transportation Department, 586-797-7100.

## Authorization for Medication

Students should not take medication at school unless it is absolutely necessary.

In order for a student to receive over-the-counter or prescription medication during the school day, the parent or guardian must file an Authorization for Medication form signed by the child's physician with the school office.

All medicines must be in the original containers and kept in the school office.

In addition, the school requires a doctor's signature in order for a student to receive:

- injected medication (insulin, etc.)
- any over the counter medicine (aspirin, etc.)
- inhaler
- epinephrine pen

## Helpful Information to Note:

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

School secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

School address: \_\_\_\_\_

Kindergarten start time: \_\_\_\_\_ dismissal time: \_\_\_\_\_

Absence Line to call if my child is absent or late: \_\_\_\_\_

Notice of Nondiscrimination — In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, it is the policy of Utica Community Schools that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, disability, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or in policies governing student conduct and attendance. Any person suspecting a discriminatory practice should contact the Executive Director of Human Resources at Utica Community Schools, 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 or call (586) 797-1000.