

We Skoolhouse



KINDERGARTEN SCHEDULE GUIDE: CLASSROOM



ESTABLISHING YOUR SCHEDULE



Cultivating a structured schedule provides children with a feeling of predictability, reliability, and safety in their day-to-day experiences. While the overall skeleton of the week is structured and predictable (meal time, outdoor times, rest time, etc.) the time within each event provides far greater flexibility and child-centered experiences. **Some tips to keep in mind:**

- **Establish Consistent Routines:** Consistency is key in establishing predictable routines for activities and events, as it provides a sense of security and structure for young children, helping them feel safe and confident in their environment.
- **Reduce Transitions:** Minimizing the number of transitions throughout the day allows children to have longer, uninterrupted periods of engagement in activities. By reducing the need to "shift gears" frequently, children can better focus their attention and fully immerse themselves in their experiences.
- **Prioritize Outdoor Time:** Outdoor play is essential for children's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development. Incorporating ample outdoor time into the daily schedule provides children with opportunities to explore nature, engage in active play, and experience sensory-rich stimuli, fostering holistic development and a love for the outdoors.
- **Promote Autonomy in Exploration:** Encouraging autonomy in children's exploration of classroom centers and materials empowers them to follow their interests, make choices, and take ownership of their learning. Providing open-ended materials and allowing children to freely explore different areas of the classroom promotes creativity, problem-solving skills, focus, and independence.
- **Offer Flexibility and Adaptability:** While consistency is important, it's also essential to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of individual children and the group as a whole. Being attuned to children's cues and adjusting the schedule accordingly ensures that their developmental needs are met and fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE - KINDERGARTEN



Arrival & Morning Free Play
(And Optional Rolling Snack)

Morning Gathering & Community Meeting

Investigations & Learning Centers

Outdoor Play

Handwashing & Lunch

Afternoon Exploration & Independent Play

Story Time & Closing Circle

Dismissal & Free Play

SAMPLE WEEKLY SCHEDULE - KINDERGARTEN

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrival & Morning Free Play (and Optional Rolling Snack)				
Morning Gathering & Community Meeting (About 15-20 minutes depending engagement)				
Investigations & Learning Centers (Approximately 60-90 minutes depending on flow and engagement)				
Outdoor Play (At least 1 hour at minimum recommended)				
Hand-washing & Lunch (Approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on age and group size)				
Afternoon Exploration & Independent Play (Approximately 60-75 minutes)				
Story Time & Closing Circle (About 15-20 minutes)				
Free Play & Dismissal				





DAILY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Arrival & Morning Free Play (with Rolling Snack Option)

This time supports a smooth and welcoming transition from home to school. As children arrive, they are invited into a thoughtfully prepared environment with open-ended materials and familiar spaces. Children choose how to begin their day—whether through building, drawing, exploring sensory materials, or engaging in imaginative play. This period encourages autonomy, relationship-building, and self-regulation.

An optional rolling snack may be available for those who are hungry, supporting individual rhythms and needs.

The unhurried pace helps children settle in, preparing them emotionally and mentally for the day's learning.



Morning Gathering & Community Meeting is a time for connection, rhythm, and shared communication. It often includes songs, group discussion, or story sharing. In kindergarten, this time can begin to take a more collaborative tone—children may contribute ideas for the day, reflect on projects, or set intentions.

However, attendance should remain optional in spirit. While more kindergarteners may naturally gravitate to group gathering, some children may still need more time to settle or may prefer to listen from the edge. Honoring this does not weaken community—it builds it by showing that voices are welcomed when they are ready.

Pay attention to energy. If engagement is low, don't push through the full plan—shorten it or pivot. Keep gathering light and interactive, including movement, visuals, or humor to support attention spans. Use this time to set the emotional tone of the day—not to control behavior or enforce conformity.



Investigations & Learning Centers is a block of time that offers extended time for children to explore open-ended materials, engage in inquiry-based play, and pursue deeper learning through projects and provocations. Centers may include areas such as literacy, math, construction, art, science, dramatic play, or sensory exploration. Materials are intentionally selected and rotated in response to children's interests, developmental needs, and ongoing classroom investigations.

Children are encouraged to move freely throughout the space, selecting where they want to be, what they want to work on, and how long they stay in each area. Assigning children to specific centers or placing time limits on their choices can interrupt focus, limit agency, and reduce opportunities for collaboration and sustained inquiry. Learning in early childhood thrives when children are trusted to navigate space independently and engage in meaningful work without unnecessary interruption. Freedom to choose where and how to engage is not a break from learning—it is learning.

As children explore, teachers may work with small groups or individuals to journal about a shared experience, introduce new materials to extend a classroom investigation, or co-construct visual representations that support meaning-making. These moments should grow naturally from observation and interest, rather than being pre-scripted or rigidly scheduled.

Preparing the environment with care is essential, but it's equally important to leave space for children to bring their own ideas. Materials should be open-ended and flexible—ready to be combined, transformed, or repurposed. Documentation is a key part of this time. Observing children's conversations, choices, and creations allows teachers to reflect on learning and shape what comes next. Rather than rotating children through preset tasks, this is a time to support focus, follow curiosity, and allow projects to deepen over time.





Outdoor Play is vital for children's holistic development, encompassing physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional aspects. Nature serves as a dynamic classroom, offering diverse opportunities for learning and growth. Engaging with natural elements, such as trees, rocks, and water, allows children to develop a sense of wonder, curiosity, and connection to their environment.

Outdoor play stimulates children's creativity, problem-solving skills, and physical development. Exploring natural elements encourages sensory exploration and fosters a deeper understanding of the world around them. Additionally, playground equipment and open spaces provide opportunities for active play and movement, aiding in the development of gross motor skills, coordination, and spatial awareness.



Outdoor play allows children to benefit from fresh air and sunshine, contributing to their overall health and well-being. Ideally, children should spend at least 1-2 hours outside daily within the school day, as research suggests that more time spent outdoors correlates with improved physical and mental well-being. Exposure to natural light and vitamin D from the sun supports physical growth, strengthens the immune system, and enhances mood and energy levels.

Hand-washing and Lunch are pivotal moments in a child's day, not only for nourishment but also for social interaction and bonding. Teachers can enhance these experiences by joining the children during mealtime, creating a supportive and engaging environment.

Hand-washing before lunch serves as a hygienic ritual, but it's also a chance for teachers to interact with the children on a personal level. By joining the children at the sink, teachers can model proper hand-washing techniques and engage in casual conversation, fostering a sense of connection.

During lunchtime, teachers have the opportunity to sit with the children, sharing a meal and engaging in meaningful conversation. This simple act of sitting together promotes a sense of community and belonging, allowing teachers to build rapport with the children and strengthen relationships.



Afternoon Exploration and Independent Play serves as a natural transition from the more active parts of the day into a slower, quieter rhythm. After lunch and outdoor play, many children benefit from a calm, restorative atmosphere that allows them to recharge while still engaging meaningfully with materials and ideas. Afternoon Exploration is intentionally paced to honor the body's natural rhythms, offering space for both independent play and quieter forms of learning.

The environment should reflect the slower tone of this time—lighting may be dimmed slightly, music (if used) kept soft and ambient, and materials selected to support focused, creative, or reflective play. Some children may gravitate toward small-world setups, drawing, puzzles, book nooks, or calming sensory play. Others may choose to revisit projects or provocations from earlier in the day. Teachers can support these choices by observing without interrupting, noting what sustains attention, and offering quiet prompts or new materials when appropriate.

This is also an ideal time for children who need it to rest. While formal nap time is typically not included in kindergarten schedules, children should be offered the option to lie down, relax with a book, or simply observe. Creating cozy areas with soft materials and gentle transitions communicates that downtime is welcomed and respected.

Teachers may continue to engage in light small-group work or individual conversations during this block, especially for project reflection, journaling, or observational drawing. However, the focus should remain on maintaining a peaceful tone and respecting each child's level of energy and engagement.





Story Time and Closing Circle provide a reflective, grounding close to the day. This shared time invites children to slow down, gather as a community, and process the experiences, ideas, and emotions that unfolded throughout the day. It helps create rhythm, emotional closure, and a sense of continuity as children prepare to transition home.

Story Time may include a thoughtfully chosen read-aloud connected to classroom investigations, current interests, or social-emotional themes. Books can be used to validate children's experiences, introduce new perspectives, or spark curiosity for future exploration.

What matters most is not how much is read, but how present and engaged the experience feels. Some days children may be fully absorbed; other times, attention may waver—and that's okay.

Closing Circle offers a chance for collective reflection. Children may share something they created or discovered, recall a moment of joy or challenge, or participate in a familiar closing song or ritual. This time should be responsive rather than scripted—guided by the energy and mood of the group. If the room feels tired, keep it short and comforting. If there's excitement or unfinished ideas, use it as a moment to preview what might continue tomorrow.

This is not a time to review behavior or rush through routines. It is a time to listen, connect, & allow children to feel seen and valued at the end of their day. Maintaining a calm and consistent tone during Closing Circle helps children transition out of the classroom with a sense of belonging & emotional security.



Dismissal marks the end of the structured school day, but it should still be approached with intention and care. For many children, the way they leave the classroom is just as important as how they enter. A calm, predictable dismissal routine helps children feel secure and emotionally regulated as they transition home or into after-school programming.

During this time, the classroom environment should remain consistent with the tone set during Closing Circle—unhurried, calm, and connected. Children may choose from a limited set of familiar, low-stimulation materials such as books, puzzles, drawing tools, or simple construction toys. These activities support play without overstimulating tired bodies and minds. This type of free play is especially helpful for children who are waiting for staggered pickup times or for those transitioning into aftercare.

Teachers should remain fully present during dismissal, available to connect with families, support individual transitions, and provide closure to each child's day. Rather than using this time to clean, reset the classroom, or engage in unrelated adult conversations, educators should focus on saying individual goodbyes, sharing highlights or observations with caregivers when appropriate, and ensuring every child leaves feeling seen and cared for.

In programs where children stay for after-school care, free play can also serve as a natural bridge between the core day and extended programming. Maintaining a clear handoff—both emotionally and physically—between the classroom teacher and aftercare staff helps children understand the transition and feel supported across settings.