Chapter 3: Back to School

Kindergarten Parent Orientation

First thing is first, meeting the parents! Consider it to be a privilege to witness the heart-felt moments and bonds between parents and their children as they reach the important milestone of beginning kindergarten. Try your best to put any initial concerns and questions at ease with the families, so that they may enjoy the experience of starting school with the least amount of anxiety and the most amount of excitement, while making lasting memories. The first thing the parents look for is where his or her child will sit. Attach name plates to tables with Velcro for ease of relocating students later. On each child’s spot, place the orientation packet and the take-home “Kindergarten Kits,” which will really impress parents and get students excited about starting school.

Take-Home Kindergarten Kits

At the “dollar store,” you can purchase a small plastic basket for students to take home and keep at home so that they may have a place to store and collect the mini-books made at school throughout the year. A lot of effort goes into making these books by both teachers and students. To avoid wasting the books, the baskets provide a convenient location for storage and accessibility at home. Students will then not have any excuses to not read at home because they will always have books. In the basket, put a baggie of last year’s left-over crayons, a new pencil, copied alphabet cards, and a first mini-school book for kids to color. On the front of the basket, put a label with a name and title, “____’s Familiar Book Basket.” Under the basket, provide a tablet of construction paper, handwriting paper for homework projects, and the orientation packet. Include a name tag with instructions for students to wear the first week. Prepare all of the above before orientation night. Explain to the parents what the kits are to be used for and when the students come later for the Meet and Greet, send the Kindergarten Kits home with the families.

Tips for the Meet and Greet

Even though you may be exhausted from the orientation and scurrying to put your room together, try to keep in mind the impression you want to make upon your students. This is the perfect opportunity to establish confidence and security with your students. Smile! Greet them at the door with a poem on the floor and a scavenger hunt activity. Post names wherever you can and set up centers for visiting with parents. Set out big books on stands and pocket-chart poems for the first day of school. Have a plate of cookies and stickers for students when they bring you the completed scavenger hunt. Take head-shot-photos of each student. You may want to pre-arrange a parent to be the class photographer and assign this as a first job.
Kindergarten Orientation Packet

The following pages are sample suggestions for your Kindergarten Orientation Packet.
Welcome to Kindergarten!

Mrs. Mahoney’s Full-Day Kindergarten/ Room 55/ Track 4

Orientation Agenda

• Welcome!
• Message for Parents
• Benefits of Full-Day Kindergarten
• Daily Schedule
• Learning Environment
• Lunch & Special Classes
• Behavior & Incentive Programs
• Homework Policy & Birthdays
• Volunteers & Snacks
• Home/ School Folder
• Student/ Parent Information
• First Day Self- Project
• Drop-off/ Dismissal
Dear Parents,

Hello! My name is Mrs. Melanie Mahoney and as your child’s teacher, I am delighted to welcome you to Extended-Day Kindergarten at Lamping Elementary School. This is such an exciting time for you and your child because the first day of school will mark one of the most important milestones in your child’s life, which I am fortunate to be a part of. I am also pleased to be working with you and your child on the new full-day program where many enriched learning adventures await.

To begin, let me give you a little information on my background so that you may be assured that you are leaving your child in good hands. I am originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico. I completed my undergraduate studies at the University of New Mexico. I then continued my studies at UNLV and earned a Masters degree with an emphasis in reading and language arts. This will be my twelfth year of teaching in CCSD. Most of my teaching experience is with first grade and this will be my 13th year teaching kindergarten, which is by far my favorite! My husband, Sean Mahoney, a talented graphic designer and art director, owns and operates Mahoney Advertising & Design. We are also the proud parents of our five year-old daughter, Alexa, who will start kindergarten this year, and eight year-old son, Ian, who is a big third grader here at Lamping.

It is my pleasure to introduce our classroom assistant, Mrs. Carlene Nakashima. Thanks to the Extended-Day Pilot Program, we are able to have her in our classroom every day from 8:40-3:11. This means Mrs. Nakashima will be with the students during lunch time. Whew! She has been working here at Lamping for the past three years and has the most excellent reputation for kindness, dedication, and creativity. I am very grateful to have her assistance.

In my opinion, kindergarten is the BEST grade to teach. It’s such an exciting time full of new discoveries, friends, accomplishments, and independence. As a team, I am looking forward to working with you and your child in the phenomenal learning process that is about to take place in kindergarten this year. The information provided in this packet will offer you some important information and helpful tips to get your child off to a good start, as well as possibly help calm some of your kindergarten jitters.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mahoney
A Message for Kindergarten Parents

Kindle excitement about kindergarten. Ask questions about your child’s day.

Invite new school friends home to play and help your child build strong friendships.

Never forget safety. Teach your child safety rules—whether walking or taking the bus.

Discuss what your child will be learning in school—themes, stories, centers, math topics, special classes, etc.

Explore your neighborhood together. Talk about the world you live in.

Review the good behavior expected of your child, such as following rules and taking turns.

Get involved at your child’s school. Join the PTA. Volunteer in the classroom.

Answer your child’s questions about school. Reassure your child that school is fun.

Read to your child daily. Visit the library together.

Turn every day into a learning experience. Let your child help with everyday chores.

Encourage your child to eat well, get enough sleep, bathe daily, and brush teeth 2x a day.

Notice the new things your child is learning to do. Reinforce your child’s progress with praise.
What Are the Benefits of Full-Day Kindergarten?

Full-day programs reduce the number of transitions kindergarten children experience in a typical day.

Full-day kindergartners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers, and reflectiveness.

Full-day kindergartners are more likely to approach the teacher and they express less shyness in behavior.

Full-day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics in depth.

Full-day kindergarten children experience learning through child-centered project work in an unhurried setting.

Full-day kindergarten children have more time to develop and use oral language in a variety of settings throughout the day.

Full-day kindergarten allows teachers more time to assess students’ progress through close teacher observation and systematic collection and examination of students’s work.

Source: Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Daily Schedule

Monday- Friday

9:00-9:10 Opening: greeting, attendance, check home folders, Pledge, patriotic song. Move to floor.

9:10-9:30 Whole Group Meeting: calendar, daily news, sharing, mini lessons.


9:40-10:00 Phonics/ Phonemic Awareness Instruction/ Handwriting

10:00-10:15 Structured Break: snack, bathrooms, outside play.

10:15-11:15 Literacy Work Stations: (three centers per day M-F, 20 min. each)
Guided Reading, Math, Computer, Library, ABC/Word Center, Listening, Art, Writing, Science, Poetry, Pocket Chart, Overhead.

11:20-11:55 Lunch

11:55-12:05 Modeled/ Shared Reading/ Interactive Writing

12:05-12:25 Writing Block: Modeled, shared/ interactive/ guided writing, journals, or class books.

12:25-1:15 Specialist Classes: Art, Music, P.E., Library, Computers


1:55-2:35 Science/ Social Studies/Health/ Thematic Project

2:35-3:00 Math Tubs/ Book Baskets/ Explorations: Student choice

3:00-3:11 Closure: Clean up, review day, songs, homework, dismissal.

Fun Friday Same as above, but substitute Academic Centers with Developmental Center choices, and flip morning w/afternoon work.

1:15-1:45 Whole Group: Sharing/ Mystery Bag/ Class Graph

1:45-2:45 Developmental Centers (Students self select centers) - Play Dough, Painting, Housekeeping, Blocks, Games/ Puzzles, Math, ABC Center, Computer, Library, Science, Cooking.
Behavior Management and Incentive Programs

Our classroom is a small community where teamwork and good relationships are expected. Since this is a new school experience for most kindergarten students, we will spend a lot of time learning class procedures/routines and practicing them. Each student is expected to act within our standards of behavior. Our classroom expectations are:

“How to be a Good Friend”
Good friends... listen carefully, take turns, say kind things, share, are dependable, help each other, and respect each other.

If the expectations are not being met, we discuss the matter with the child, and first try to encourage children to become self-disciplined through reflection and self-evaluation, and have them ask themselves if their choices are the “right thing to do.”

“How Good Choice Apple Chart”
In addition, we promote good choices with the weekly “Good Choice Apple Chart.” Our goal is to keep all the apples on red during the week and get the privilege of participating in “Fun Friday.” A small apple chart will be given to each child at the beginning of each week to keep in his or her Home Folder. At the end of the day, students will be asked to color in the apple they got for that day. Remember to save the little apple charts in your folder, because after 10 red apples are collected, students will have earned a trip to the treasure chest!

Other Incentives

“Star of the Week”
Each Monday a star student will be announced on the homework calendar. This student will be chosen based on good behavior, good manners, best effort, and responsibility. He/she will get a star sticker to wear, be the Pledge leader for the week, and be a line leader. This student will also be asked to complete the “Star Sheet,” and bring in pictures of his/herself and/or family to share and post in the classroom.

In addition to Star of the Week, treasure chest, and Fun Friday activity time, students are also rewarded for making good choices and following the rules by getting to be a teacher helper, line leader, earning stickers, getting extra time at their center of choice, a positive note home, or a treat. As you can see, encouraging your child to do his/her best pays off in more ways than one! Your support is greatly appreciated.
Yes! Even with a full day of school, homework will be assigned. It is not intended for torture, but to establish the home-to-school connection. Completing and returning homework helps build a sense of responsibility and prepares children for the homework they will have to complete in later school years. Homework calendar packets will be passed out each Monday with assignments through Thursday. All homework is due on Friday. Written work and/or learning activities should take approximately 15 minutes nightly. We also ask that all students read or be read to for an additional 15 minutes per night. It is very important that homework is a positive experience for your child. Setting a nightly routine and providing a quiet environment is helpful. Your child needs your positive encouragement and support during this new experience. If your child is not able to complete an activity or assignment, please write a short note of explanation and he/she will be excused. Homework will be checked and recorded on a chart and awards will be given at conferences and at the end of the year.

Birthdays
Birthdays are special occasions for young children. If your child wishes, he/she may bring a treat for the class. As of now, we have 25 students (and two teachers!). We will celebrate summer birthdays during the last few weeks of school. If you would like to send in invitations, our school policy is to provide one for each child in the class so we can avoid any hurtful situations. A class list can be provided on request.

Parent Involvement
Your support of school activities makes your child feel important and sends the message that you value school! We are always happy to have your help for special activities in the classroom. We would also like to request the help of parents on a regular basis. After the first two weeks of school, our room parents will be sending home a monthly sign-up calendar. I hope that you can come and join in the fun!

Snacks
Your children generally get hungry by mid-morning, so I'm requesting that each family contribute to our snack program. Every child should bring in a snack to share with the entire class (about 25 students). This should be a healthy snack that is quickly eaten, such as a box of crackers, fruit snacks, raisins, apples, etc. We will get a drink of water after our snack, so juice boxes are not necessary. We have already purchased snacks for the first two days. I will request the help of our room parents to organize a snack schedule. Thank you!
Student/Parent Information

Child's name:___________________________ Birthdate:________________

Address:____________________________ Home phone:________________

Mom's/Guardian's Name:_______________ Work or cell #________________

Dad's/Guardian's Name:_______________ Work or cell #________________

Email Address:______________________

Are you able to help in the classroom?__________

If yes, what days are you available?__________________________________

How will your child be going home?____________  If someone is picking him/her up who will it be?__________________________________________

In case of emergency who should I call? name/phone #________________

Is there anything you would like me to know about your child?_______

If so, please explain. ______________________________________
Kindergarten Orientation
Self-Project

• With parent help, brainstorm a variety of materials that reflect you and your personality and that could be attached to the body cut-out. In the past, students have used stickers, yarn, beads, buttons, cloth, photos, and even just crayons. They all turned out unique and wonderful.

• Gather the materials and begin creating yourself! If the materials you use are heavy, you may want to attach it to a poster board, or the back of a cereal box, and cut it out.

• If you are ready, bring your Self-Project to school on the first day for sharing throughout the week. You may bring it in later in the week if you need more time.

HAVE FUN!
Meet and Greet Scavenger Hunt

Name_____________________________________________

☐ Find your name on the door outside of our room.
☐ Read the poem with your parent as you enter the front door.
☐ Find your desk and supply basket.
☐ Find the math tubs.
☐ Find the science tubs.
☐ Find your name on the “Good Choice Apple Chart.”
☐ Find the bulletin board where your work will be displayed.
☐ Find your name on the birthday chart.
☐ Visit the library area. Look at a book, then practice returning it to the matching container.
☐ Find Mrs. N.’s and Mrs. Mahoney’s desks.
☐ Give this sheet to Mrs. Mahoney or Mrs. N. for a special treat!

You can keep the marker for your homework kit!

Enjoy!
Top 10 Things to Do Before the First Day

1. Make three copies of your class roster with each child’s home phone number listed. Keep one on your desk, one on the wall for emergency drills, and one at home.

2. Make a name tag for each student to wear for the first few days that includes:
   • His/her Complete Name
   • Bus number/letter (or walker, car rider)
   • Your name and room number
Laminate students’ tags, hole punch them, and string them as necklaces. Put a note on the back of each one that tells parents to send the tag back to school every day for the first week until dismissal routines are established.

3. Make sure you know HOW each child is to go home from school. Be especially mindful of children going to various locations (Safe Key, day care van, siblings).

4. Label all individual desks, cubbies, and hooks. Prepare sentence strips with student names for first week activities.

5. Be prepared for ‘new’ students not on your roster due to late enrollment. Have blank name and desk tags and cubby tags ready for them and prepare extra materials “just in case!”

6. Send a welcome letter to both students and parents. Be sure to include your supply list if your school hasn’t already provided one at registration. Including a photo of yourself in your letter can be exciting for students, too!

7. Prepare a place to sort supplies your students will bring on the first day. Have empty boxes ready with labels (crayons, tissue, glue, scissors, etc.). Parent helpers will know where to put things on the first day.

8. Don’t forget to make a supply list for yourself. Include a classroom emergency kit with band-aids, safety pins, needle & thread, extra water bottles, snacks, small screwdriver, tweezers, mini flashlight, batteries, adult aspirin, etc. You might want to keep a pair of comfortable shoes and a sweater handy. Make sure to have stationary, note pads, post-its, index cards, paper clips, pens, pencils, and markers for teacher use. Have your clipboard ready to make notes as you go through the first day of school.

9. Plan your first week’s lessons and prepare ALL materials. Leave a copy of your lesson plans on your desk and one at home. Know the schedule for special areas, classes, lunch, recess, arrival and dismissal.

10. Have a classroom management plan in place. Be sure to have a policy about behavior expectations, use of bathrooms, how to handle interruptions, homework, missed work, etc. Establish a clear reward/consequence policy. Check your supply of reward stickers, birthday awards, and “great day” certificates.

~from Scholastic’s Teacher Instructor~

DON’T FORGET!
# Read Alouds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready For Kindergarten</em></td>
<td>by Joseph Slate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Kissing Hand</em></td>
<td>by Audrey Penn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Will I Have A Friend?</em></td>
<td>by Miriam Cohen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!</em></td>
<td>by Nancy Carlson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>If You Take a Mouse to School</em></td>
<td>by Laura Joffe Numeroff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Froggy Goes To School</em></td>
<td>by Jonathan London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chicka, Chicka, Boom, Boom</em></td>
<td>by Bill Martin Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Countdown to Kindergarten</em></td>
<td>by Alison McGhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chrysanthemum</em></td>
<td>by Kevin Henkes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Art

- **Whole Group: Make *Kissing Hand*** hand print with poem.
- Trace name with colored pasta
- Create a *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* scene with rhyme.
- First day “Magic Play Dough”

# Math

- **Whole Group:** Make geometric bus with student photo.
- Number match greeting- give each student a necklace with a number. Teacher calls out numbers and students with the matching numbers greet each other.
- Graphs: Birthday
- How do you go home?

# Writing

- **Journal writing:** free writing
- **Shared writing:** “Friends always…”
- Add chart to first day person project.
- Class book: This is me.
- My name is _________.

# Social Studies

- **Rules**
- **Sharing**
- **Making friends**
- Fire safety- practice fire drill and distribute procedure sheet.
- Take a tour of the school.

# Centers

*Explorations for first week*
- blocks
- library
- math manipulatives
- painting on easels
- magnetic letters
- puzzles
- marble maze
- computers
- Lego table
- housekeeping
- play dough

# Shared Reading

- **Journal writing:** free writing
- **Shared writing:** “Friends always…”
- Add chart to first day person project.
- Class book: This is me.
- My name is _________.

# Other Ideas

- **Music:** The Name Game
- The Wheels on the Bus
- If You’re Happy
- Games: “Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?”
- Make *Kissing Hand* cookies for the first day treat.
- Make a Chicka Boom celery stalk snack
Chapter Three

Back to School

General Lesson Plans
Week of: Aug. 28 - Sept. 1, 2008

Mrs. Mahoney / Full Day Kindergarten/ Track 4/ Rm. 55

Star of the Week: ____________________

Show and Tell: ____________________  Notes: ____________________


9:15-9:25 SORT SUPPLIES: Explain table numbers. Call on tables to sort their supplies into boxes with parent help. Tell students to place the home folder in their mailbox. Demonstrate how to hang backpacks on chairs.  Call table numbers to the floor.

9:25-9:45 MODELED READING & WRITING: The Night Before Kindergarten – After the story, students wave goodbye to their parents as they exit. Discuss feelings. Make a circle map titled “kindergarten.” Have students share anything they know, and record it on the chart. Introduce the calendar. Include movement songs, “Head, Shoulders…”

9:45-10:00 MAGIC PLAY DOUGH TIME: Tell students that if their play dough changes color, it will be a great year!

10:00-10:15 WRITING: Students return to the carpet. Model sharing the crayons at tables, and writing names. Give students pre-made class book page “This is me. My name is _______.” Students write their name and draw a picture of themselves.

10:15-10:40 RECESS/ BATHROOM BREAK/ SNACK: Explain bathroom procedures (washing hands) and playground rules!

10:40-11:25 FIRE DRILL PRACTICE: Read aloud book on fire drills. Discuss the reason for a fire drill. Students practice fire drill procedures. Return to seats. Distribute “We practiced the fire drill today” sheet. Read aloud procedures, and have students write names and color.  Place in mailboxes.

11:00-11:20 WG RUG TIME: Discuss proper group behavior. Sing “If Your Happy and You Know It.” Discuss lunch time procedures, money, clean-up, and recess.

11:25-12:00 LUNCH

12:00-12:15 MODELED READING: The Wheels on the Bus – sing song and discuss how we go to school.

12:15-12:25 BATHROOM BREAK/ PASSING IN THE HALLS

12:25-1:15 SPECIALIST CLASS: Day 1

1:15-2:05 MATH: Create a class graph of “How we go to school.” Have students place name cards on graph. Give students shapes to create their own school bus. Model step-by-step procedures, and place an example on the front board. Add student’s 1st day photos to each bus project.

2:05-2:45 EXPLORATIONS: If time allows, distribute bins to tables, puzzles, letter tiles, etc..., and have students explore.

2:45-3:00 CLASS MEETING: Review first day of school, explain home folder procedures, and sing songs for closure.

3:00-3:11 CLOSING: Pack up home folders in backpacks. Discuss dismissal procedures. Line up.


9:15-9:25 SORT SUPPLIES: Explain table numbers. Call on tables to sort their supplies into boxes with parent help. Tell students to place the home folder in their mailbox. Demonstrate how to hang backpacks on chairs. Call table numbers to the floor.

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10:15-10:40 RECESS/ BATHROOM BREAK/ SNACK: Explain bathroom procedures (washing hands) and playground rules!

10:40-11:25 RULES: Read aloud David Goes to School. Discuss good classroom manners. Share the “Good Friends…” chart. Have students come up with ideas on how to be a good friend. Discuss the “Good Choice Apple Chart” posted on the wall. Play “Guess My Rule” - call on a student to model a rule - students guess. Share “Self-Projects” and have students sign the friendship poster border, and hang projects around.

11:25-12:00 LUNCH *Remind students to wash hands!

12:00-12:15 NAME GAME: Read aloud Chrysanthemum. Have students sit at rug area. Choral read name poem using name cards. WG read the name cards of each child for review. Play the name game with a ball to have students recall names.

11:45-12:15 WRITING: Give students a pre-made page- “This is me. My name is _______.” Students draw a picture of themselves and write their name. Display on bulletin board, then compile for class book.

12:15-1:00 MATH: Saxon Lesson# 1. Obj: ____________________

1:00-2:00 EXPLORATIONS: Whole class meets on floor in circle. Teacher models and discusses using materials and putting them back correctly. Give the “maximum capacity limit” at each area (put up a number card).

2:00-2:15 CLOSING: Pack up blue home folders in backpacks. BATHROOM BREAK/ PASSING IN THE HALLS

2:15-3:05 SPECIAL CLASS: DAY 2 (Music/ Humanities)
### Wednesday

**OPENING:** Check folders, Attendance, Flag Salute, Song: “My Country...”, lunch count.

**CALENDAR:** August Saxon- counting, identifying numbers, days of the week, months...

**SHARED WRITING:** Daily News- Choose one student to share. Model letter formations, sounds, and left to right. Count words. Students signs name on chart.

**SHARED LITERATURE:** *Manners Can Be Fun*. Read aloud and discuss story.

**SHARED WRITING:** Brainstorm ways to have good manners in the classroom. Make a list. Choral read. Introduce the mini-book of Manners. Students complete their own books and share the materials at the tables using their best manners. Teacher records good behaviors on sticky notes, then shares what she saw with the class. Reward!

**RECESS/ SNACK/ BATHROOM**

**JOURNAL WRITING:** Introduce journal writing. Have students practice writing the date, name, and anything they can do. Encourage invented spelling and pictures. Observe letter formation.

**LUNCH:** 11:25-12:00

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** Being Friends- Discuss friendship and how friends can be alike and different. Share more “Self-Projects.” Describe special features of projects.

**Trophies CD** Sing the “Name Song”. Use names with photos in the pocket chart to match. Students return to their seats and trace their names with beans. (teacher pre-writes names on tag board with bold marker).

**BATHROOM BREAK / SPECIAL CLASS:** Day 3 (Music/ Humanities)

**MATH:** Saxon Lesson #3 Obj:________________________________________

**EXPLORATIONS:** Place math material bins on tables. Set expectations, and remind students how to put things back properly.

**CLOSING:** Song, check mailboxes, pack up folders, and line up.

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### Thursday

**OPENING:** Check folders, Attendance, Flag Salute, Song: “Grand Old Flag,” lunch count

**CALENDAR:** Saxon/ August. Call on new calendar helper. Use calendar songs.

**SHARED WRITING:** Daily News- Choose one student to share. Model letter formation, sounds, and left to right. Choral read, and count words. Student signs name.

**SHARED LITERATURE:** *Moria’s Birthday* by Robert Munsch. Discuss birthday graph on the wall. Count how many birthdays are in each month.

**POCKET CHART:** “The Birthday Song.” Use student’s names who just turned six. Mix up sentence strips, then put back in correct order. Also display the birthday cake (layers with colors--see GRIP notebook).

**WRITING:** Students create their own birthday cake with their name, and birthday date. Give students items to decorate their cakes (beads, stickers…). Share projects.

**RECESS/ SNACK/ BATHROOM**

**JOURNAL WRITING:** Free- writing- observe letter knowledge, formation, and fine motor skills (drawings).

**LUNCH:** 11:25-12:00

**MODELED READING:** *Clifford’s Birthday*

**BATHROOM BREAK / SPECIAL CLASS:** Day #4- 12:25-1:15 (Library/ Art)

**MATH:** Saxon Lesson #4 & Explore math tubs at each table. Allow students to rotate based on interest. Practice freezing, count down, and high five attention strategies.

**Explain Fun Friday Centers!!!** Practice using the work board and moving to each area.

**CLOSING:** Song, check mailboxes, pack up folders, and line up.

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### Friday

**OPENING:** Check folders- Check folders, attendance, lunch count, flag salute, song.

**CALENDAR:** Saxon/ August. Call on new calendar helper. Use calendar songs.

**SHARED WRITING:** Daily News- Choose one student to share. Model letter formation, sounds, and left to right. Count words, and choral read. Student signs name.

**SHARED LITERATURE/Writing:** *If You’re Happy and You Know It* Sing with Dr. Jean’s CD. Make a chart, “Kindergarten makes me happy! I like…” Record responses.

**JOURNAL WRITING:** Draw or write about something that makes you happy.

**RECESS/ SNACK/ BATHROOM**

**PHONICS:** Introduction to the Alphabet. Sing the Alphabet song. Point to the alphabet line on board. Play the bean bag alphabet toss on rug.

**ASSESSMENT:** Introduction to the Alphabet. Sing the Alphabet song. Point to the alphabet line on board. Play the bean bag alphabet toss on rug.

**LUNCH:** 11:25-12:00

**POCKET CHART POEMS:** ABC Chant, name/ picture match.

**BATHROOM BREAK / SPECIAL CLASSES:** 12:25-1:15 (Library/ Humanities).

**MATH:** Saxon Math Lesson #5 **TOOTH GRAPH:** Read aloud Lost Tooth book. Create & discuss class tooth graph.

**FUN FRIDAY:** Begin with Show and Tell (backpacks or self-projects). Students select centers using magnetic name cards and icons on the front boards. Centers include: ABC/ Word, Math, Library, Science, Computers, Playdough, Puzzles and Games, House Keeping. Most centers will be exploration, and procedures for taking out and putting away items.

**CLOSING:** Song, check mailboxes, pack up folders, and line up.
Mrs. Mahoney's First Day- Hour by Hour

Take a deep breath, and be ready for the unexpected. Remember! Directions must be given clearly, explicitly, one step at a time with checking for understanding. Allow your students to complete a task or transition before you begin something new. Follow-up with positive recognition of wanted behaviors.

8:40
I meet students and parents out on the playground to mingle, answer last minute questions, take photos with students, and to show my presence and excitement. I like to think of it as if I'm greeting an expected guest at the front door of my home.

9:00
Make sure you've previously invited the parents to walk in with their children to the classroom on the first day. This is helpful with carrying supplies and assisting with children who are dropped off without parents—it happens! It's also a great opportunity for parents to take photos and capture those special first day moments. When you arrive in the classroom, ask parents to help with the unpacking and sorting of supplies into labeled boxes. I like to get this done first thing so that we can go about our day. I demonstrate how to hang backpacks on chairs. Once students, supplies and parents are settled, I take attendance and lunch count. Next, I ask everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. I then identify table signs (table 1, table 2...), remind students to push in chairs, and call tables over to sit on the rug. I take out one of my favorite stories to start the year, The Night Before Kindergarten, written by Natasha Wing. This is a perfect story, because students can connect with the feelings and procedures the characters in the book went through to prepare for the big day. It also is perfect for dismissing parents at the end of the story. The students blow a kiss and give a little wave as parents exit.

9:30
I do a brief calendar introduction, movement songs, name game, shared reading (usually a short poem), and Daily News.

10:00
"Magic Play Dough" time (recipe on page 34). I have students return to their seats, remembering to call them over by table number and then I give them their bag of "Magic" Play Dough.

10:15
Bathroom and Recess Break- While students work with their "Magic" Play Dough, I call tables to the bathroom area. Directions, procedures, and expectations get across to students much more effectively with smaller groups. I explain the bathroom signal and appropriate times to go (before school, morning recess, after lunch, and afternoon break). I try to be flexible with this. I explain to the students that when they are at home, he or she can go to the bathroom as needed. Because we have a lot to learn during our day at school, we need to try to go during our break times as much as possible. I do let students go as needed to avoid accidents. I've found that once the novelty of the bathroom has worn off and lessons are engaging, students eventually learn to go during break times. I tell the students to try to go, use quiet voices, flush, wash hands using one squirt of soap, and one paper towel, then line up to go outside.

10:30
Story and take-home project- The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn. Remember to set listening expectations. After reading the story, allow students time to draw a self-portrait. While working, go around with a hand stamp pad and let students make a handprint on their sheets. Give our heart stickers (to represent the kiss in the story) for students to place on top of their handprints. It's simple and parents will treasure this first day project. Once the project is complete, give students a homemade "Kissing Hand" cookie for a snack.
11:15  
Lunch- Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to explain lunch procedures. Arrive at the cafeteria before the other students so that your kindergartners don't get overwhelmed and you can explain procedures with less confusion. If possible, try to get a parent volunteer or aid to stay with the students for the whole lunch period on the first day. They will need a lot of guidance.

12:00  
Story/ Rest- When you pick students up from the playground, count kids! Read Mrs. Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten by Joseph Slate. I don't invite students to take naps in full-day kindergarten, even though you will have some dozers. I do at first allow students to have a “down” period. This is a long day and I’ve found that if I encourage students to follow expectations while being flexible, understanding, and providing engaging activities, students eventually build up endurance. It takes about a month.

12:20  
Bathroom Break- I take students to the bathroom before I take them to their special class.

12:25-1:15  
Special Class (Art, P.E., Music, Computers, Science)

1:15-1:45  
Explorations- I don’t initially set up a system for the first few days. The purpose of “explorations” is for students to explore their classroom and use the items they are interested in. This activity provides me with information about interactions, personal needs, interests, and allows me to “kid watch.” We go over simple rules and expectations before going to the “explorations” period.
1. Use good manners  
2. Make good choices (teacher’s desk is not an option)  
3. Use inside voices and walking feet  
4. Put things back

1:45-2:00  
Fire Drill Practice- You want to always be prepared! Inform students about the noise and teach the purpose of fire drills.

2:00-2:45  
Circle Time Song- “Wheels on the Bus” and “How I Go Home” class graph. This reminds students where to go at dismissal time and gives me the opportunity to explain procedures. I model the simple bus art project and post an example. I send students back to their seats and distribute the pre-cut materials and first day photo. I keep these projects for classroom display.

3:00-3:10  
Dismissal- Have a system! This gives me the most anxiety out of the entire year. First, explain packing up procedures. There may be a lot of notes from the office, so be prepared. Check to see if students have lunch boxes and backpacks. Line students up according to the parent dismissal notes. Students may tell you that they ride the bus, but it might not be accurate. If you can, ask a volunteer or aid to help you take students to the bus and Safe Key while you stay with the larger group. Walk out a little early for the first week so that you can easily identify your classes parents and to avoid mass confusion. Tell the students to stay in line and if he or she sees a parent, tell your students to NOT run to the parent. I tell my students to raise hands when their parents are in view, I make eye-contact with that parent, and I go to the student with the hand up for a high-five or a hug. Phew!
Teacher’s Homework

- Make the Magic Play Dough before the first day of school.

- Take the head-shot photos home to memorize the names of all the students for the next day. Learning their names ASAP is very helpful and impresses the parents.

**How Will I Handle Crying Kids and Parents?**

Take care of sensitive children and parents by doing what feels natural. Don’t be too surprised if some children cry uncontrollably for hours, run out the door, and chase after their parents. Try not to get overwhelmed with their anxieties. Maintain your composure. If the students see that you are calm and collected, they are more likely to be. Remember, you have a job to do. As hard as it might be, try not to give the crying child too much attention. Keep going along with your plans as much as possible. Invite the parent to stay as long as needed, if it helps. Usually once the child gets to know you, hears you read stories, begins projects, he or she will start to feel a little more relaxed. Sometimes making the upset child your “special helper” distracts the child from his/her emotions. Having an important job will allow the child to feel accepted by you and build trust.

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**MAGIC PLAY DOUGH** from littlegiraffes.com

1 Cup Salt  
2 Tbsp Cream of Tartar  
2 Cups Flour  
Food Coloring  
2 Cups Water  
2 Tbsp Vegetable Oil

Whisk together the dry ingredients in a saucepan. Add the “wet ingredients.” Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until mixture forms into a ball (about 3 to 5 minutes). Remove from pan and place onto floured surface. Cool slightly, then knead it until smooth. Store in zip-lock bag or airtight container in the refrigerator.

How to Add the “Magic”

Form the Play Dough into ball shapes. Poke a hole in the ball and put two or three drops of food coloring in the hole. Form the Play Dough back into a ball again covering the drops of food coloring.