



Welcome to Kindergarten 1



A guide to helping you and your little one be prepared for the start of Kindergarten 1

Dear families,

Welcome to Kindergarten 1 at ISS International School! This is a very exciting time in your family's life and I could not be more happy to be a part of it.

The start of school is an important milestone, and like most milestones, it can come with a range of emotions, from nervousness to excitement and panic to delight. Believe me...as teachers we feel it too! Everyone has those "butterflies" in their tummy on the first day of school.

For me, the emotion that overwhelms them all is excitement. Excitement about all the fun explorations and discoveries that we'll embark on. Excitement for the class community that will develop and the group and personal accomplishments that the year will bring.

Please use this "Welcome to Kindergarten" booklet as a guide to prepare your family for the start of Kindergarten 1. I encourage you to revisit the important ideas that it outlines over the course of the year, including the fundamentals of our play-based curriculum, as well as the ideas suggested for supporting your child's development at home.

I consider the relationship between family, teacher, and child to be essential for healthy and holistic development and look forward to collaborating with you this year.

Please feel free to contact me at any time throughout the year with questions, comments, and concerns. You are always welcome to stop by our classroom in the morning for a visit and check out what we've been busy learning. Please also visit our classroom blog and Twitter account for frequent updates and in-depth explanations about our activities. All of this contact information is available in the "Meet the Teacher" section on Page 2.

Here's to a great year together and an exciting journey in Kindergarten 1! :) *Alison Camie*



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Meet the Teachers

My name is **Alison Camire** and I am very excited to be starting a new school year with you and your child in Kindergarten 1!

I am originally from White Rock, British Columbia on the west coast of Canada where my family still resides. After completing a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Bachelor of Education at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada, I moved to Milan, Italy where I taught Year 1 (ages 5-6) in a bilingual programme that combined the Primary Years' Programme with the Italian national curriculum. Two years ago my partner and I relocated to Singapore and ISS. After one year as a Grade 1 teacher I made the move to Kindergarten 1 and also became the Early Years (Kindergarten 1 & 2) team leader. This will be my second year in that role.

I love my job and am inspired every day by the natural curiosities and thinking abilities of young children. I am an avid supporter of emergent curriculum and the Reggio Emilia approach, which views children as competent and powerful thinkers, who we must support in directing their own learning. The ultimate goal of my curriculum is to honour children's natural capabilities and to raise optimistic and confident students who possess the skills, attitudes, and information to participate as active citizens in a global world. I am also passionate about arts- and technology-integration, as well as making children's thinking visible through pedagogical documentation.

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, hiking, and yoga. Although the weather in Singapore is hot, I love getting outside to enjoy the fresh air and beautiful plants and flowers, especially in the Botanic Garden which is very close to my house. I also love to travel and enjoy exploring different parts of Southeast Asia every chance I get.

I'm **Ms. Mano** and I have been working with ISS International School as a teaching assistant for the past eight years. Prior to coming to ISS, my background entailed teaching in a local preschool and coaching art on the side. Children and art have always been my passions. Bringing both together gives me immense pleasure in understanding the children differently.

Putting my passion to good use, I have also been contributing part of the proceeds from paintings I sell to the Children's Cancer Society. Thus, with the wealth of experience -- especially with children, I'm glad to tie both my passion and my career.



Communication

You have a variety of options for communicating questions, comments, and information to your teacher and finding out about what we've been up to in the classroom.

Contact Ms. Alison

Email: acamire@iss.edu.sg

Communication Book: You can write handwritten messages that will be checked each morning in your child's blue communication notebook that they will receive on the first day of school. Please keep these messages brief.

Follow Our Learning

Blog: www.k1-2.weebly.com

Twitter: @MissAlisonK1

Information will be passed to you in the following ways:

- (1) Paper documents in your child's mesh bag (2) Emails from the school office & Ms. Alison (3) Class Blog

A Day in Kindergarten

This is a sample schedule of what our day in Kindergarten 1 might look like. Please note that specialist subjects (Physical Education, Art, Music, Mandarin, Library) do not occur at the same time every day, but rather occur at different times throughout the week as can be viewed on the weekly schedule that follows. Please be aware, that to some degree, this schedule remains flexible and open to the interests, inquiries, and decisions of students. We try not to interrupt students' sustained involvement in group work and projects when it is not mandatory for a transition to occur.

Time	Activity	Details
7:30 - 7:55 AM	Children arrive at classroom, sign themselves in with a drawing or writing beside their name on a clipboard, and participate in free play.	Children are welcome to arrive at any point during this time. Families are invited to join us in the classroom to read with their child, view a project we are working on, or ask questions.
7:55 - 8:15 AM	Continued free play and exploration	Children continue their free, self-directed play. Parents are asked to exit the room at the sound of the 7:55 AM bell.
8:15 - 8:35 AM	Morning Meeting	Held at the main carpet, this includes: greetings; discussion about the day's plan; songs; sharing personal work, stories & experiences; suggestions from children about projects for the day and ways to continue yesterday's work; planning for the day (maybe adjusting teacher-planned schedule) as a group
8:35 - 8:55 AM	Group Lesson	The lesson connects to our K1 Literacy or Maths curriculum or ongoing explorations within the current unit of inquiry.
8:55 - 9:20 AM	Learning Centres	Centres provide choice for students and connect to the group lesson that has just taken place. The format and organization of centres provides opportunity for small group or 1-to-1 instructions with the teacher.
9:20 - 9:25 AM	Tidy-up!	Children are responsible for cleaning up their own materials.
9:25 - 9:30 AM	Bathroom Visits	Children independently visit the bathroom as needed throughout the day. This is a whole-group visit for toilet-use and washing hands.
9:30 - 9:50 AM	Snack Time	Children eat in the classroom. They set out place mats and are responsible for cleaning up their space.
9:50 - 10:10 AM	Recess Break	Free outdoor play in the Kindergarten 1 playground.
10:10 - 10:20 AM	Transition Time	After bathroom visits, we reconnect as a class with one of the following: a read aloud, personal reading or quiet time, group quiet time & relaxation exercises.
10:20 - 10:50 AM	Group Lesson & Learning Activity (in large group, small groups, or individually)	The lesson connects to our K1 Literacy or Maths curriculum or ongoing explorations within the current unit of inquiry (usually different than what has been covered in the morning lesson).
10:50 - 11:35 AM	Specialist Subject	Physical Education, Art, Music or Mandarin
11:35 AM - 12:05 PM	Recess Break	Free outdoor play in the playground
12:05 - 12:15 PM	Tidy-up, bathroom visits, set up for eating lunch	Similar to morning pre-snack routine
12:15 - 12:50 PM	Lunch & Free Play Time	Children eat in the classroom and repeat routines from morning snack time. When children are finished eating they may participate in free play within the classroom.
12:50 - 1:05 PM	Transition Time	After bathroom visits, we reconnect as a class with one of the following: a read aloud, personal reading or quiet time, group quiet time & relaxation exercises, group physical activity (like dance, yoga, or stretching).

1:05 - 2:00 PM	Free Choice Time	Children have an opportunity for free, self-selected play that they may pursue independently or in collaboration with peers. Some children choose to continue explorations or projects that they started in morning play or centre times. Learning from the morning lessons may be revisited in small group or 1-to-1 settings as needed.
2:00 - 2:15 PM	Afternoon Meeting & Reflection Time	Held at the main carpet, this includes: group discussions and reflections on experiences of the day (such as challenges, successes, conflicts, favourite moments, progress made). We complete our calendar session where we review the month, day, and date through discussion and song, aided with manipulatives.
2:15 - 2:25 PM	Packing Up & Dismissal	With support, children relocate to bus pick-up points and parent pick-up rooms.

A Note About Play

You may have noticed that free play forms a significant part of our days. Play-based activities are also the context of much of our academic learning.

Children engage in various kinds of play, such as physical play, object play, pretend or dramatic play, constructive play, and games with rules. To foster optimum development, children require opportunities to participate in play in all of its formats, in both child-initiated and teacher-initiated ways.

Through play, children express, combine, and extend what they know about the world around them. Their play scenarios combine everything they have learned and are wondering about, including the words, signs, symbols, and customs of their language and culture, as well as their own and other people's thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Play empowers children to represent and transform the world around them, promoting physical, intellectual, and social development in ways that cannot be achieved by focusing on narrow pre-academic skills. Play also contributes to children's capacity for self-regulation: the internal mechanism that enables us to engage in mindful, intentional, and thoughtful behaviours. When children play, they interact with people and materials in ways that require them to set, negotiate and follow rules, thus growing in their ability to inhibit impulses, act in coordination with others and make plans. Much research has shown that children's self-regulating behaviours in the early years predicts future school success and achievement.

Transitions

We transition between activities using songs and full body movement activities. The children quickly become familiar with a few favourites that we use frequently to support smooth changes, oral language and gross motor development.



First Weeks:

The first week of school is all about settling in and adjusting. We will learn about the important parts of the school, as well as who we can ask for help. We'll also set some class rules and agreements. The ultimate focus will be on building a class community in which everyone feels happy, safe, cared for, and supported. For the first two weeks of school, parents are encouraged to join us in the classroom between 7:30 and 7:55 AM to support the transition. We ask that you please consider the following schedule in your participation:

Monday, August 11	Tuesday, August 12	Wednesday, August 13	Thursday, August 14	Friday, August 15
Participate fully in play and activities with your child. Help him or her unpack bag & select activities.	Participate fully in play and activities with your child. Help him or her unpack bag & select activities.	Participate fully in play and activities with your child. Help him or her unpack bag & select activities.	Help your child unpack bag & select activities. Allow him or her to complete activities independently. Participate in discussion around them.	Help your child unpack bag & select activities. Allow him or her to complete activities independently. Participate in discussion around them.
Monday, August 18	Monday, August 19	Monday, August 20	Monday, August 21	Monday, August 22
Allow your child to independently unpack bag & select and participate in activities. Make yourself available only as needed.	Allow your child to independently unpack bag & select and participate in activities. Make yourself available only as needed & try to leave before 7:55 AM.	Allow your child to independently unpack bag & select and participate in activities. Make yourself available only as needed & try to leave before 7:55 AM.	Allow your child to independently unpack bag & select and participate in activities. Spend only about 5-10 minutes in the classroom.	Allow your child to independently unpack bag & select and participate in activities. Spend only about 5 minutes in the classroom.

Curriculum



The most significant curriculum aspect of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years' Programme are the six Transdisciplinary Themes which frame the majority of learning:

Who We Are Where We Are in Place & Time
How We Express Ourselves How the World Works
Sharing the Planet How We Organize Ourselves

In Kindergarten 1, students engage with four of the six themes. These themes have led us to develop a programme of inquiry, and set of units of inquiry, in which the students investigate important ideas with a high level of involvement in inquiry.

For more about the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, visit www.ibo.org/pyp/.

Who We Are	How the World Works	How We Organize Ourselves	How We Express Ourselves
<p>Central Idea: Who we are is shaped by the people around us.</p> <p>Lines of Inquiry: (1) Who I Am, (2) The people around me, (3) How we are the same & different as other people</p> <p>Key Concepts: Form, Connection</p>	<p>Central Idea: Light is all around us and behaves in different ways.</p> <p>Lines of Inquiry: (1) Types of light; (2) How light is used; (3) How light can be transformed</p> <p>Key Concepts: Form, Function, Change</p>	<p>Central Idea: We move in different ways and for different purposes.</p> <p>Lines of Inquiry: (1) Ways we move; (2) Reasons that we move; (3) How we move safely</p> <p>Key Concepts: Form, Causation, Responsibility</p>	<p>Central Idea: Stories are shared and responded to in many ways.</p> <p>Lines of Inquiry: (1) How stories are told; (2) The feelings and emotions that stories cause; (3) How stories relate to our world</p> <p>Key Concepts: Perspective, Reflection</p>

The subject areas identified within the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme are:

- Language
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Arts
- Personal, Social & Physical Education (PSPE)

Science and Social Studies are always addressed as an integrated part of the programme of inquiry. The other subject areas can also be addressed through unit-integration or as "stand-alone" units.

Language Strands:

- Oral Language (Listening & Speaking)
- Visual Language (Viewing & Presenting)
- Written Language (Reading & Writing)

Mathematics Strands:

- Data Handling
- Measurement
- Shape & Space
- Pattern & Function
- Number

Inquiry

Inquiry is a vehicle for learning in the PYP and the basis of our curriculum. It builds on children's natural curiosity and sense of wonder about the world. Through this approach, children engage in learning and activities that support them in actively exploring, asking questions, solving problems, applying theories and information, and drawing conclusions. Through the process, children become researchers and do meaningful work that is significant to them.

Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies are the main subjects taught by class teachers, though the Arts and PSPE are also covered in collaboration with specialists.

Routines & Expectations

IB Learner Profile

Learners at our school strive to be:

Inquirers

Develop curiosity. Conduct inquiry & research. Show independence in learning.

Knowledgeable

Explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local & global significance & develop deep understandings.

Thinkers

Approach problems with critical & creative thinking skills, making reasoned decisions.

Communicators

Express ideas confidently in a variety of modes of communication. Work effectively in collaboration.

Principled

Act with integrity, fairness, justice and respect. Take responsibility for own actions.

Open-minded

Open to perspectives, values & traditions of others. Interested in a range of perspectives.

Caring

Show empathy, compassion & respect towards the needs & feelings of others.

Risk-takers (Courageous)

Approach unfamiliar situations with courage. Explores new roles, ideas & strategies.

Balanced

Understand the importance of intellectual, physical, and emotional balance for well-being.

Reflective

Give thoughtful consideration to learning & experiences. Assess & understand strengths and limitations.



The 4 Be's

ISS code of behaviour

Be Safe

Be Honest

Be Respectful

Be Responsible



The IB Learner Profile and 4 Be's Code of Conduct guide student behaviour and interactions and frame expectations at all grade levels.

Uniform

- Children are required to wear the ISS uniform to school.
- A PE uniform is to be worn on days when students participate in PE classes (Mondays & Thursdays).
- Closed-toed shoes must be worn. Children cannot wear open-toed shoes or flip flops to school.

Class Contact List

In the first two weeks of school we will be sending out a contact list with phone numbers and email addresses of families in our class. It may be used to contact other families to arrange play and visits outside of school hours. Please inform me as soon as possible if you do not wish for your information to be included on this list.

"Where's my spot?"

There is no assigned seating at group tables in the classroom. Children are encouraged to select their own chairs, tables, and play spaces in a variety of different areas throughout the day. This routine encourages independent thought, decision-making, friendship-building, and a positive and competent approach to basic conflict management.



Morning Arrival

7:30 - 7:55 AM

For the first two weeks, parents are encouraged to join us in the classroom between 7:30 and 7:55 AM.

Every morning children will be greeted by the teacher and teaching assistant and are responsible for :

1. Hanging their backpacks on their peg outside of the classroom. Unpacking their lunch and water bottle (and putting it in the fridge). Unpacking their mesh bag (and putting it in the basket).
2. Signing in on the attendance clipboard with drawing or writing.
3. Self-selecting a free-play activity.

** Parents are asked to leave the classroom when the bell rings at 7:55 AM.



Afternoon Dismissal

2:25 PM

The afternoon bell rings at 2:25 PM. Children will be supported by the teacher and teaching assistant in moving to their dismissal locations.

Children go home by either:

1. Parent pick-up (Rooms 12, 14, 15 - access at back doors of classroom on the playground!)
2. Bus

Permanent changes to dismissal arrangements must be communicated to the main office. One-day changes (i.e. parent pick-up instead of bus or going home with a friend) can be communicated to the class teacher.

** Children and parents are asked not to return to classroom after dismissal due to teacher meetings and lack of appropriate supervision.

Snacks, Lunch & Healthy Eating

Please ensure that your child has a healthy snack (and packed lunch if you do not order school lunch) each day to keep them well-fueled for all of our learning. This includes vegetables, fruit, and no sugary snacks. Please also send a big bottle of water so that your child can stay hydrated. We can refill this bottle over the course of the day.

As you are making your healthy food choices please remember:

- to label your child's lunch box and water bottle with their first and last name
- we will refrigerate cold snacks and lunches
- we are unable to reheat food in the microwave due to school policy



**A Note About Allergies: In the first week of school you will receive an email from me informing you of any severe allergies that we have in our class community. After this point, I ask that you refrain from packing these items in your child's school lunches. This may include nuts, eggs, or shellfish. Please stay tuned for this important information.*

Birthdays!

If you wish to bring in a treat, please contact me so that we can arrange the celebrations for an appropriate time. Please consider quick and easy-to-clean options such as fruit or cupcakes.

I will be happy to circulate birthday invitations so long as all the children have been included in order to avoid feelings being hurt.

Library



Our library lessons are on Fridays. Your child may borrow one book each week. Please ensure that the book is returned the following Friday so that another book can be selected and issued.

Illnesses & Absences

If your child is not well, please keep him or her at home. You can phone the main office to inform us of the absence. Normally, when children are on medication they need to be home. Thank you in advance for keeping our class healthy.

A Note for English Language Learners

If your child is still learning to communicate in English, it may be useful to help him or her learn some key information and phrases in order to feel more confident at school:

- Recognize full name (spoken and written)
- Recognize main classroom
- Identify personal property, such as school bag, lunch box, and water bottle
- "May I go to the toilet?", "I need..." / "I want..."

Materials & Personal Items

The school provides all writing, art, and stationary materials as part of your tuition. Please send the following personal items to school as soon as possible. These will remain in the classroom in your child's personal cubby tray until the end of the school year.

- Art smock (old t-shirt or art apron)
- Extra set of clothes in a ziplock bag (t-shirt, shorts & underwear!)
- Small stuffed toy or personal comfort item
- Hat
- A small photograph of your family and/or people important to your child



Supporting the Transition

From Read Now British Columbia's "Ready, Set, Learn: Helping Your Preschooler Get Ready for School" (2009)

As your child's first and most important teachers, your family plays an essential role in your child's education . . . including the transition to Kindergarten!

Many factors contribute to a child's success in school, including:

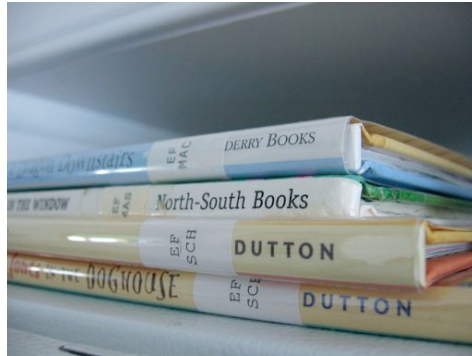
- ☐ confidence
- ☐ relationships with friends
- ☐ language development (in your mother tongue)
- ☐ the ability to communicate needs, wants, and thoughts to adults and children
- ☐ the ability to follow instructions and routines
- ☐ a setting that encourages creativity, motivation, cooperation and persistence

You can support your child in developing these capacities and others by participating together in activities and play that are already part of your everyday life, including cultural and family traditions and routines. You may also want to try some of these activities which address some key development areas and support school success. Please keep in mind that these activities can all be completed in your mother tongue!



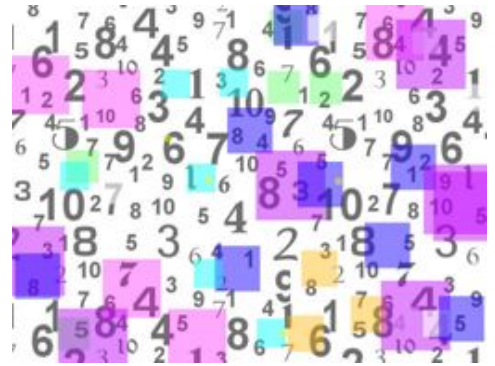
Talking

1. Talk about the day's activities or plans for the next day.
2. Point out names of things as you ride in the car or walk to the store.
3. Listen carefully to your child. Show that you are interested in his or her ideas. Ask questions about what you hear.
4. Use rhymes to increase interest in language. Play rhyming games and read rhyming stories and poetry.
5. Sing songs. Make up simple songs about everyday activities like having lunch and sing them together.
6. Expand your child's sentences. If your child says, "Daddy cook soup," respond with "Yes, Daddy is cooking vegetable soup for lunch".
7. Ask your child to tell you a story about a picture he or she has drawn.
8. Talk about colours: "Look at that blue car", "Are you going to wear your red dress?"



Books

1. Set aside a special time each day to read to your child. Pick a special spot in your home where it is quiet and you and your child are comfortable.
2. Ask questions about the pictures in books: "Where do you think the woman is going?" Pause to discuss the meaning of new words.
3. Encourage your child to select and look at books on their own. Sit with your child and read your own book to show that books are enjoyable.
4. Encourage repetition. Revisit favourite books so your child becomes familiar with words & letters.
5. Join the library! Explore the children's section together and borrow books.
6. Introduce books into daily activities. Play dress up and act out a book or read a recipe out loud as you cook.
7. Share books that show people of different cultures, genders, ages and abilities.



Numbers

1. Count as a part of everyday routines: "Please get me 6 spoons." "How many letters are in the mailbox?"
2. Discuss the order of events: "This morning at 10:00 we are going to the store. After lunch, you will have time to play."
3. Make a calendar together. Write in special days and have your child mark off each day.
4. Help your child learn your family's phone number and address.
5. Collect objects (buttons, stones, blocks) & sort them by shape, colour, and size.
6. Identify & talk about shapes in the world around you: "That window is square."
7. Start a growth chart and talk about the ideas of weight & height.
8. Use words that give direction when asking your child to do something: "Look under the box."



Feelings

1. Talk about feelings & what might cause them: "You are feeling really happy. Is it because we're going to the park?"
2. Expand vocabulary using new words: "disappointed", "frustrated", "surprised".
3. Listen to & accept your child's concerns. Reassure & comfort.
4. Encourage your child to talk about him or herself: "Tell me three things that you like to eat".
5. Pause when reading a book & ask how a character might be feeling.
6. Show how to handle emotions positively yourself. Suggest different ideas for coping.
7. Address inappropriate behaviour immediately & calmly. Help cope with tantrums by discussing afterward what helps your child feel better when experiencing frustration or anger.
8. Model patience and persistence in your tasks. Children will learn to stick with things by acting like their parents.



Getting Along

1. Give approval (with encouraging words & actions like smiling) for taking turns & waiting for a turn.
2. Introduce your child to simple games that require taking turns (such as the card game "Go Fish").
3. Encourage your child to have regular responsibilities around the home. An activity like choosing clothes independently allows your child to get used to routines & expectations as part of the day.
4. Provide lots of opportunities for your child to interact with friends. Set up short play dates (1-2 hours) with friends on a regular basis. Be sure to provide the experience of playing away from your own home and learning the rules of another family.
5. Invite your own friends over. Young children pay close attention to behaviour and often imitate what you do. Model positive social behaviour.
6. Read stories about friends to introduce socializing and interpersonal dynamics.



Physical Activity

1. Play games such as throwing & catching a ball and balancing or building blocks to develop hand-eye coordination.
2. Play active games, like tag and hide-and-go-seek. Go swimming together.
3. Practice fundamental movement skills, like skipping, jumping, running, and balancing on one foot, during play.
4. Walk together to the park or playground and be active. Also teach playground safety (waiting turns, sliding feet first, staying away from moving swings & the bottom of slides).
5. Put on some of your child's favourite music and dance!
6. Teach your child how to use the pedals on a tricycle or toy car to move themselves forward and back.
7. Try stretching before bed to promote relaxation and flexibility.
8. Talk about & model the ways that you stay physically active.

The Wider World

1. Go for neighbourhood walks. Take turns pointing out interesting things. Bring along a container so your child can collect treasures along the way (like seeds, leaves, and rocks) and explore them later at home.
2. Attend a variety of community events in your area.
3. Help your child understand where food comes from. Show them food being grown in gardens, farms, orchards, or greenhouses and make the link to your local shops and markets.
4. Help your child identify items that can be recycled. Make artwork and crafts using recycled materials.
5. Encourage your child to consider other people's feelings. You might ask your child: "What do you think it would feel like if the other children would not let you play?"
6. Singapore is a diverse place and so is our school! When talking about diversity, point out human similarities first, then help your child appreciate people's differences. You might say: "Everybody needs food, shelter and love, but people have different ways of doing things. Our family's way is just one way."



"Pleased to meet you!"

We have received some information about your child from our admissions office, but we'd like to know more! Please help us to get to know your child by answering these questions. Please detach and return this completed page to us by Friday, August 15.

Child's full name: _____

Name your child prefers to be called: _____

Languages spoken at home: _____

Other languages your child speaks: _____

Describe your child's English language abilities: _____

Is your child (please circle one):

Left handed? Right handed? No preference? Don't know yet?

Does your child have any brothers and/or sisters in the school? Please include names, ages, and grade level: _____

Please confirm whether your child has any allergies or medical conditions: _____

Any special dietary requirements? _____

Describe your child's strengths? _____

What would you like your child to develop this year? _____

Does your child have any special talents or interests? _____

Describe your child's feelings about starting Kindergarten 1: _____

Any other information that you think is important for me to know: _____
