



**Meridian Hills**  
**Cooperative Nursery**  
**School & Kindergarten**

A Cooperative Preschool Established in 1960

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MERIDIAN HILLS KINDERGARTENER

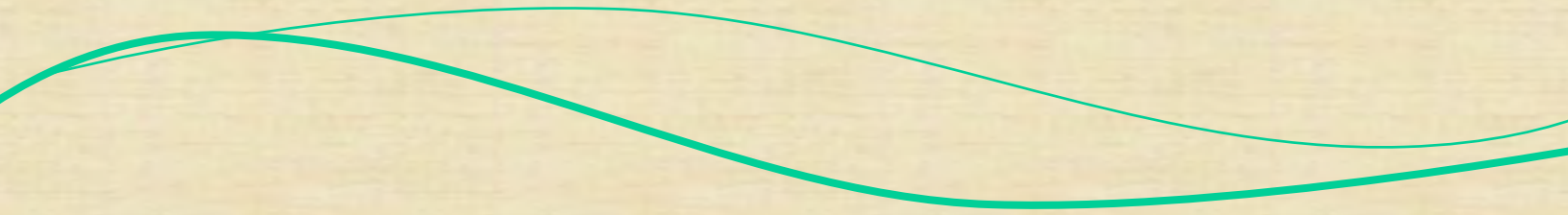
OUR GOAL is to prepare children for first grade, guided by Indiana standards, common core standards and children's interests. In our program, children learn through active exploration and social interaction, which is how children this age learn best. While no two days are ever exactly the same, the kindergarten schedule provides comfort in predictable structure and routine. It is a fast-paced day, enabling the children to learn many things in different ways, while accommodating their high level of energy.

**AGE REQUIREMENT:**  
5 YEARS OLD BY SEPT. 1



**CLASS TIMES:**  
TUES., WED., THURS.  
9 AM - 2 PM






**ARRIVAL & FLOOR GAMES:** As children arrive, they answer a question of the day with the parent who drops them off, and the parent reads any notes that are on the whiteboard outside of the classrooms. The children say goodbye to the parent at this point and come to the table to greet the teacher and discuss a provocation on display that is connected to the day's activities or project work. There is a basket on the table for the children's homework folders and any notes or information for the teacher. (Note: Homework is typically a fun 2-5 minute exercise that reinforces printing or other fine motor skill.) After the greeting, each child hangs up his/her backpack and coat, and washes hands. Then all children participate in "floor games" in the climbing room – typically three to four different hands-on games or activities (e.g. board games, cooperative games, Tinkertoys, Lego, peg boards, floor puzzles).

**MEETING:** Meeting begins with a greeting song and a review of the day's schedule. The teacher leads the class through the reading of a daily message, focusing on all aspects of that sentence. Then the teacher leads an interactive printing, spelling and/or reading lesson. This is when the most conspicuous language arts learning occurs. The lesson is appropriate for children at a variety of levels. We also use this time for class discussions, to read stories and practice mindfulness and breathing exercises. We focus on making connections to each other's comments and contributions and asking thoughtful questions. Lastly, the group will discuss the current project and prepare for any activity connected to that project.

**PROJECT WORK:** The kindergarten class uses an emergent curriculum. This means that instead of weekly or monthly themes, we spend our year working on extended projects based on the children's interests. The teacher provides a variety of different open-ended learning experiences, challenges, activities and opportunities, and closely observes how the children interact with the materials, what questions begin to develop and the directions in which their natural curiosities steer their learning. The projects are highly individualized, incorporate reading, writing, mathematics and art, and are child-driven to ensure maximum interest and engagement. All of the projects have some kind of culminating presentation component to help share with our community and our parents all that we have been studying, learning and creating. This can include a museum, a class book, a play or musical performance and is chosen and planned by the children.

**PLAY & EXPLORE:** During this time, children are free to move among the three rooms (Art Room, Block Room, Climbing Room) and engage in activities of their choosing. Painting, drawing, board games, manipulatives, dress-up, wooden blocks and sensory table are always available. Other activities include wooden climber, gigantic Tinkertoys, sports, cooking, working at a simulated store or creating a special art project. This is a time where imaginative play is highly encouraged and is allowed to occur uninterrupted. Throughout the week, the teacher will pull students one on one or in small groups to work for a short time on a variety of literacy or math skills.

**WRITER'S WORKSHOP & NATURE JOURNALS:** Writing in its various forms is an important part of most of our activities. We use the Writer's Workshop model in which the children plan, create, revise and publish books throughout the school year. These will be ongoing and will have a variety of different focuses and associated whole group and small group mini-lessons that address aspects of the writing process. Children will share their finished work and we will practice giving feedback and compliments on one another's writing process. Nature journals are used to document our observations and thoughts during our Forest Kindergarten time and on nature-based field trips.



**CALENDAR:** While there is no formal calendar instruction, we will talk about our daily, weekly, monthly and annual schedules and make connections between our wall calendar and the changing seasonal world around us. This will be woven in throughout the different activities during our days.

**LUNCH:** The children bring their lunches and eat together each school day.

**OUTDOOR PLAY:** Unless conditions are dangerous, children experience outdoor play on the school's well-equipped, half-acre playground every day. Children are free to play on all playground equipment. They also have access to tricycles, sand toys, sleds and other seasonal toys. The participating parent and teacher are present around the playground to ensure a safe and fun playtime. We encourage the children to have fun and we expect them to get dirty!

**REST/QUIET READING/YOGA:** Children rest on carpet squares with dimmed lights and calming music. During quiet reading time, the children read and/or look at books independently or in small groups. We will also do brief daily yoga exercises during this quiet time.

**MATH:** The teacher leads a mini-lesson, then children break into small groups, rotating through three hands-on math centers or participating in age-appropriate math games. Activities include practicing writing numbers, manipulating small objects which help teach pattern recognition, sequencing, length/weight comparison, spatial relations, and addition and subtraction.

**CHAPTER BOOK:** Throughout the year, the Kinderbird class has an ongoing chapter book that we read from each day. This is a much beloved part of our curriculum as we collectively share in the magic of losing ourselves in a story. It is also an opportunity for students to practice narrative skills, patience and executive functioning, as they hold on to the characters and the storyline from one day to the next.

**MUSIC:** A music teacher visits the classroom once a week and leads the class in a music lesson. This is a very interactive and often physical lesson, in which the children learn about pitch, rhythm and tempo, and often play instruments.

**FOREST KINDERGARTEN:** We spend one afternoon a week in the woods on the school property. We participate in a variety of academic and exploration activities in the forest setting. The children make observations about the world around them through the changing seasons and become conscientious stewards of the natural world. This continues throughout the school year. Once a month we have a full Forest Day where the class meets and spends the whole school day outdoors at Holliday Park.

**SPANISH:** We have a Spanish teacher who visits the classroom weekly for "immersion Spanish." She leads a developmentally appropriate Spanish lesson that includes songs, games, vocabulary and hands-on activities. The class is divided into two small groups to allow for maximum opportunity to practice conversing using their Spanish vocabularies.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Field trips are a great way to extend in-class learning, and fit in well with our hands-on learning philosophy. The children prepare for trips and follow up with related activities. We take trips monthly. We primarily take field trips that are connected to our projects and units of study. Typical field trips include hikes, an orchard trip, Conner Prairie, the Indiana State Museum, The Nutcracker Ballet, a horse barn, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art.