



## Countdown to Kindergarten—Preparing for the Adventure of School | Issue 1, 2026

204.669.4043 • [kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca) • Supported by Child and Youth Services, Department of Families



### COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

Starting kindergarten is a major milestone in your child's educational journey. As you are preparing for the first day of school, know that your child's school and teacher are preparing to meet both you and your child. In River East Transcona School Division, we strive to make our classrooms safe, caring places of learning where students feel included, respected, secure, and valued. Your child will grow as a learner through activities that encourage inquiry, discovery, imagination, creativity, and problem-solving.

Our staff recognizes that you are your

child's first teacher and we look forward to collaborating with you to make kindergarten both a time for learning and a time for joy.

### Schools in RETSD

Need to find out which school your child is designated to attend? Use our School Locator, which you'll find at the top of the Schools section of our website. You'll also find a complete list of RETSD schools and their contact information ([retsd.mb.ca](http://retsd.mb.ca) > Schools). All the school websites list their bell times, parent association information, upcoming events and activities, and provide registration forms.

### Registering for Kindergarten

Registration begins on **March 2, 2026**.

When you register, please provide proof-of-age documentation for your child (e.g., birth certificate, baptismal certificate, passport, Manitoba Health Card, INAC status card, birth registration signed by the director of Vital Statistics).

You will also be asked for two types of identification for proof of residency (e.g., driver's licence, utility bill, Manitoba Health Card, tenancy agreement, offer to purchase documents). For your convenience, registration forms can be found at [www.retsd.mb.ca](http://www.retsd.mb.ca) > Schools > (click on designated school your child will attend) > Documents & Forms > Registration.





## Countdown to Kindergarten—Preparing for the Adventure of School | Issue 1, 2026

204.669.4043 • [kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca) • Supported by Child and Youth Services, Department of Families



### Language Options

Language options for kindergarten include English, French immersion, English-German Bilingual, or English-Ukrainian Bilingual. Please note that your family doesn't need to have made a final decision regarding a language program before registering for school. By registering in the spring, you have the opportunity to ask questions and gain information to help you with this decision. Let your local school know you are considering a language option and the staff will be happy to assist you.

### Does Your Child Have Additional Support Needs?

Concerned that your child may require additional support to participate in educational programming in kindergarten? Contact Lindsay Lawrence, director of student services, at 204.669.5643.

### Is Your Child Anxious?

As excited as your child may be about starting school, they may also be feeling a little bit anxious or worried. This is quite normal; after all, this is a pretty big life change for both of you! Here are some things you can do to help increase your child's comfort level and decrease anxiety.

Acknowledge your child's feelings of fear or uncertainty. Help your child to name these feelings and then problem-solve together. "It sounds like you're worried about starting school. Sometimes I get worried, too, when I'm trying something new. Here's an idea that works for me."

Practise or rehearse the first day. Go through your daily routine as if it was the actual day—waking up, getting dressed, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, and leaving the house on time. If your child is walking to school, take the route with them. When you arrive at the school, spend some time on the playground so it starts to feel familiar; then, pretend it's "home time" and you've arrived to pick them up. If your child will be taking the bus, do the same thing, except your route will take you to the bus stop.

Keep your daily routine as regular as possible. Predictable, orderly daily routines help children feel safe and confident, and allow them to step easily from the comfort of the home to the classroom. Bedtime is a great time to have a sincere conversation with your

child. Use this opportunity to listen with your heart, as well as your head, and send them to sleep feeling safe and cherished.

Be positive and optimistic. Make sure the attitude you are presenting to your child about this transition is positive and optimistic. Going to school is a normal part of everyone's life. If your child sees that you are feeling confident and at ease about this new venture, they will eventually feel that way, too.

### RHYME TIME

Help your child get excited for kindergarten by singing these special songs at home together.

#### Kindergarten, Here We Come

Tune: *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*

Kindergarten, here we come  
We know we'll have so much fun  
Lots of things to make and do  
Reading, writing, counting, too  
Kindergarten, here we come  
We know we'll have so much fun

#### Kindergarten in the Fall

Tune: *She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain*

We'll be going to kindergarten  
In the fall—Hooray!  
We'll be going to kindergarten  
In the fall—Hooray!  
Oh, we are going to school  
And it's going to be so cool  
Yes, we're going to kindergarten  
In the fall—Hooray!

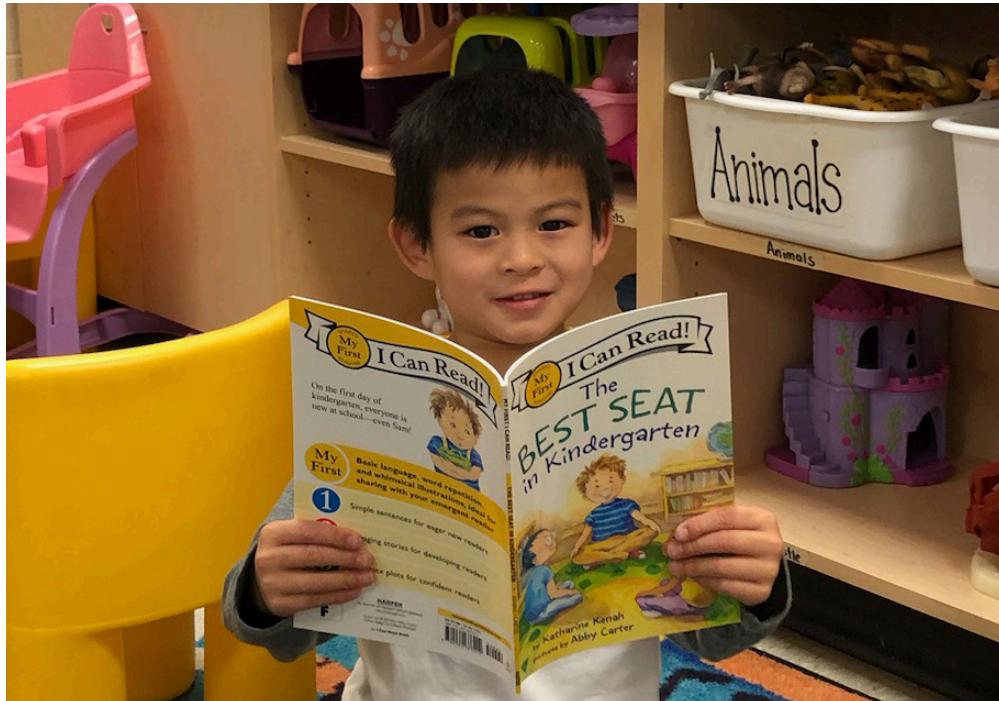
### STORY TIME

Cuddle up together with a good book about kindergarten. Visit your local library to pick up some nice kindergarten stories, including: *The Night Before Kindergarten* by Natasha Wing, *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, and *Kindergarten Rocks* by Katie Davis.



## Countdown to Kindergarten—Preparing for the Adventure of School | Issue 1, 2026

204.669.4043 • [kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca) • Supported by Child and Youth Services, Department of Families



### A TIME FOR LEARNING & JOY

#### Learning to Be a Friend

- Encourage your child to include others when they play.
- Praise your child when they are helpful or kind to others.
- Plan play times for your child with other children.

#### Learning to Be Independent

- Encourage your child to use words and politely ask for help.
- Help your child memorize their phone number and address.
- Spend a little time each day practising how to do zippers, buttons, and shoes.
- Encourage your child to look after themselves in the bathroom.

#### Getting Ready for the Classroom

- Make listening a family habit.
- Play memory and number games with cards and dice.
- Talk about signs in the neighbourhood.

### CHILDREN WHO ARE READY FOR SCHOOL....

- Are eager to try new things
- Are curious about the world
- Get along with others
- Follow rules and instructions
- Take care of their belongings
- Show an interest in books
- Know some letters of the alphabet
- Can print their own names
- Recognize numbers and can count

### WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN BAGS

Every family registering for kindergarten in 2026 will receive a FREE bag full of interesting materials, resources, and educational activities. This can be enjoyed by both parents and children during the months leading up to kindergarten.

The contents of the Welcome to Kindergarten bag have been carefully chosen by our staff to give your child the opportunity to practise their skills and get excited for starting school in

the fall! Items in the bag include an interactive calendar, crayons, scissors with instructions for use, math-related items such as cards and dice, and a pencil with a sharpener. A variety of parenting resources are also included.

### FREE COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMING

Starting kindergarten is a big step for both you and your child. As a parent/caregiver, you want your child to have a happy and successful school life.

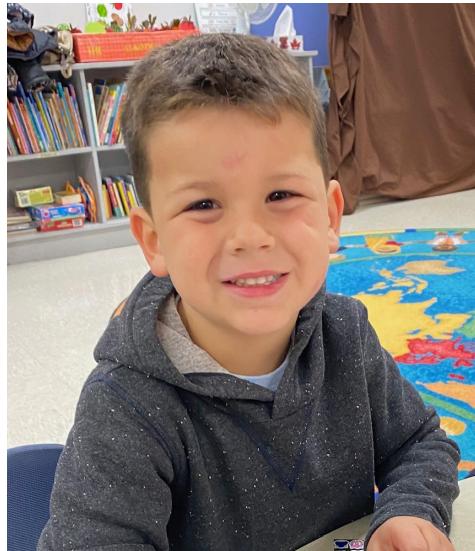
In RETSD, we are ready to help your family prepare for the adventure of school. We are pleased to offer many fantastic (and FREE!) programs geared towards getting your child excited to start kindergarten. Information on our free Countdown to Kindergarten programs will be available in late spring.

For updates on these programs, join the Kinder Links mailing list by contacting us at [kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca) or 204.669.4043.



## Countdown to Kindergarten—Preparing for the Adventure of School | Issue 1, 2026

204.669.4043 • [kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca) • Supported by Child and Youth Services, Department of Families



### FREE KINDER LINKS PROGRAMMING

Kinder Links programs provide young families—with children birth to age five—with the opportunity to play, learn, and connect with each other. These FREE parent-child programs feature fun, educational ways to explore literacy, numeracy, physical health and well-being, and creativity through art experiences, rhymes, stories, activities, and games.

Kinder Links programs are an excellent way for young children to develop a lifelong passion for learning, develop their skills and self-confidence, and

help prepare them for the adventure of school. They offer a welcoming, inclusive place where parents/caregivers can meet other families from the community, develop new friendships, and share parenting resources.

We are proud to offer high-quality parent-child programming seven days a week to meet the needs of families living in River East Transcona neighbourhoods. Join in the fun mornings, afternoons, evenings, and weekends from September to June. Visit the Kinder Links page on the RETSD website for a listing of parent-child programs, special events, and parenting support workshops.

### FREE BABY GIFT FOR NEW PARENTS

Did you just have a baby? RETSD and the Early Childhood Matters Parent Child Coalitions in River East and Transcona would like to help you celebrate this wonderful event. We have a book, *I Love It When You*, which we'd love to give to you to keep and enjoy. To receive your FREE book, contact us at [kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kinderlinks@retsd.mb.ca) or 204.669.4043. Please leave us your mailing address, child's name, and child's date of birth.

### THE EARLY LEARNING TEAM

We are pleased to provide early learning and family support to families living in River East Transcona. Feel free to contact us if you have questions regarding our preschool initiatives.

#### Ryan Francis

Assistant Superintendent—  
Educational Services and Planning  
204.667.7130  
[rfrancis@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:rfrancis@retsd.mb.ca)

#### Maureen Vaags

Manager of Community Initiatives  
204.669.9412  
[mvaags@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:mvaags@retsd.mb.ca)

#### Kelly Martino

Community Programming  
Co-ordinator—Preschool  
204.669.4043  
[kmartino@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kmartino@retsd.mb.ca)

## Your River East Transcona School Division Trustees

### Ward 1

Colleen Carswell (Board Chair)  
204.222.1486  
[ccarswell@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:ccarswell@retsd.mb.ca)

Sheri Irwin  
204.223.5079  
[sirwin@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:sirwin@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 2

Rod Giesbrecht  
204.391.8225  
[rgiesbrecht@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:rgiesbrecht@retsd.mb.ca)

Sheri Hanson  
431.278.0738  
[shanson2@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:shanson2@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 3

Brianne Goertzen  
204.955.6782  
[bgoertzen@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:bgoertzen@retsd.mb.ca)

Keith Morrison  
204.795.3357  
[kmorrison@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kmorrison@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 4

Susan Olynik (Board Vice-Chair)  
204.661.6440  
[solynik@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:solynik@retsd.mb.ca)

Brenda Bage  
204.221.2951  
[bbage@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:bbage@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 5

Shannon Hiebert  
204.771.8435  
[shiebert@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:shiebert@retsd.mb.ca)