Kindergarten
Junior Kindergarten
Montessori
Welcome to Traverse City Area Public Schools!

Enrolling your child in Kindergarten is a big step. At Traverse City Area Public Schools, our programs are designed to encourage each young learner to realize his or her potential in an engaging, inspiring and safe environment. We encourage you to learn about our traditional Kindergarten, Junior Kindergarten, and TCAPS Montessori programs.

You can prepare your child for Kindergarten and encourage learning by incorporating fun activities:

- Read every day to help prepare your child for a lifetime of joyful learning.
- Point out words and letters whenever you can.
- Provide pencils, markers, crayons, and paper for writing activities. Help your child begin to learn writing their name.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and to use words to communicate.
- Sort and count everything: toys, laundry, cereal.
- Open the door to math by cooking together. Talk about measuring, pouring, timing, and counting.
- Explore the outdoors. Talk about the things you see around you.
Traditional Kindergarten

Focused on building a solid foundation of skills necessary for reading proficiency, TCAPS incorporates five components of literacy:

- phonemic awareness
- phonics
- fluency
- vocabulary
- comprehension

Reading Fictional Text
- Retell a story and ask/answer questions about key ideas and details
- Ask/answer questions about text features and unknown words
- Compare/contrast the experiences of characters in familiar stories

Reading Nonfiction Text
- Ask/answer questions about key ideas and details to better understand the topic(s)
- Ask/answer questions about features of the text and unknown words
- Identify similarities/differences between two texts on the same topic

Writing
- Generate and show development of various topics
- Collaborate with adults and peers to make improvement and share writing
- Through shared research, write about a topic

Language
- Demonstrate development of letter formation and spacing
- Use new words/phrases when speaking and writing

Foundational Skills
- Understanding the layout of the book and the actions of a good reader
- Phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, segmenting, syllables)
- Develop grade-level phonics skills and age-appropriate word analysis skills
- Read emergent reader texts with purpose and understanding

Speaking and Listening
- Demonstrate appropriate listening
- Communicate ideas, needs, and experiences effectively with adults and peers

Whole Numbers
- Represent and write whole numbers up to 50
- Solve problems using whole numbers up to 20
- Develop counting skills with whole numbers up to 50; learn to count up, add on, and count down
- Write addition and subtraction equations with numbers up to 10

Describing Shapes and Space
- Describe the physical world using geometric ideas and vocabulary
- Identify, name, and describe basic two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes presented in a variety of ways
- Use basic shapes and spatial reasoning to model objects in the student's environment and to construct more complex shapes

Mathematical Practices for All Students
- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

Kindergarten math instruction focuses on two critical areas:
- whole numbers
- shapes and space.

More learning time in Kindergarten is devoted to developing a solid number sense than to other topics.
Academics: Science

Science Processes
- Become engaged through their natural curiosity
- Begin to form ideas and try to make sense of the world around them
- Learn to use their senses for observation and investigation
- Construct explanations and design solutions

Physical Science: Position, Motion, and Forces
- Develop an understanding of forces and their relationship to changes in motion
- Relate properties of objects and their movement
- Develop language for positions of items

Life Science: Living and Nonliving
- Investigate basic needs of living organisms
- Discriminate between living and nonliving

Earth Science
- Observe and describe materials found on earth
- Investigate what earth materials are required for plant growth
- Begin to link life science and earth science

Health
- Social and emotional health
- Nutrition and physical activity
- Safety
- Harmful substances
- Personal health and wellness

Academics: Social Studies

Students learn about the social studies disciplines of history, geography, civics and government, and economics through the lens of “Myself and Others.” To show understanding of social studies goals, students will:

- Use directions or positional words to identify significant locations in the classroom
- Develop a sense of time and chronology using events from their own lives to set a foundation for understanding the past
- Distinguish between yesterday, today, and tomorrow
- Form and express a reasoned opinion on a classroom issue
- Describe fair ways to make decisions
- Explore different symbols that represent ideals of our nation, such as the American flag
- Apply the ideas of rights and responsibilities in the classroom
- Experience what it means to be a classroom citizen
- Describe ways people use the environment to meet human needs and wants

Music
The seven strands of TCAPS Kindergarten music curriculum are: singing, playing instruments, music literacy, listening, movement, creativity, and music in relation to history, culture, and other disciplines. Students actively experience all seven strands through singing, creative movement, playing instruments, and dance.

Physical Education
Physical Education curriculum includes physical fitness, cognitive understanding, motor skills, leisure skills, and personal/social skill components.

Art
Kindergarten students create and learn about art concepts and explore ideas about themselves, their world and other cultures through various art processes. Art class helps develop fine motor skills and promotes personal creativity.

Library
The elementary library media centers are at the heart of education at TCAPS with resources for both school research and reading enjoyment. Each class has a special weekly library visit. Special reading promotions throughout the year encourage students to develop a love of reading and a desire to “find out more” at the library.

A Typical Day in Kindergarten

Students learn to be independent in Kindergarten and practice academic and social skills every day that will set them up for success.

Upon arrival, students will go to their classrooms and prepare for the day. They will be greeted by their teacher and check in, make lunch choices, and begin independent seatwork.

Students may attend art, music, or physical education class or make a trip to the library during the day.

Students will play outside for recess in the morning, after lunch, and in the afternoon, where they will practice social skills, creativity, and have fun!

A typical day will incorporate students learning and practicing language arts and math skills.

Students will learn in whole-group and small-group settings.

Students may have a hands-on science lesson or learn about their community and school in social studies.

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria with other Kindergarten students.

When it’s time to go home, students prepare themselves and are walked out by their teacher to either be picked up by a family member or board a bus.
Montessori Program

In a Montessori environment, children experience hands-on learning with concrete materials in all areas:

- practical life
- sensorial
- language
- math
- art
- science
- geography

The Montessori Directress or Director facilitates learning by encouraging the students to follow their interests, make appropriate choices, and take responsibility for their education. All TCAPS Montessori Directors and Directresses teaching kindergarten students have both Michigan elementary certification as well as Montessori certification.

Math
Math activities begin with a child’s sense of one-to-one correspondence and continue on to associating numeral to quantity. The Bead Chains give children an opportunity to practice skip counting, which is a precursor to multiplication. The Golden Bead materials teach an understanding of place value. These materials provide a concrete experience for adding, subtracting, and sometimes at this level, multiplication and division.

Art
A variety of materials for coloring, cutting, drawing, and gluing are available on a daily basis. A special art activity tied to cultural studies, art history, or seasons is presented weekly.

Writing
Youngers practice tracing Sandpaper Letters. Eventually, students write letters in a box filled with sand or rice. Soon their hands become stronger and more controlled by practicing making shapes with metal insets. Olders practice tracing letters each day on paper. Students write stories several times a week by valuing the ideas and thoughts that they put onto paper, beginning with pictures, adding words, and eventually writing sentences. Stories are kept in a writing folder and can be shared with the class.

Practical Life
Practical life activities develop the muscles of the hand for writing. They also develop concentration and coordination. Activities develop practical skills that transfer to a child’s sense of self-esteem.

Sensorial
Sensorial puzzle games provide children with a chance to work with dimension, color, shapes, texture, smell, sound, and sometimes taste. The senses are the direct pathway for information to the brain. These basic skills prepare the young child for reading and math.

Language
Language work provides children practice in one-to-one correspondence, sequencing, letter recognition, associating sound to symbol, blending sounds, building words, rhyming, word families, and sentence building.
Science
Children love to learn about the world around them. They develop observational skills by using their senses, learn the importance of recording their observations, and begin to draw conclusions from what they observe.

History / Culture / Geography
Children learn to appreciate a sense of time, differences in the way people live, and how they are affected by where they are on this planet. Maria Montessori strongly believed that an understanding and appreciation for the diversity of our world would lead to a greater chance for world peace.

Specials
Students participate in physical education, Spanish, and music every week.

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Snack
Snack is an important part of the Montessori curriculum. The menu encourages healthy and tasty choices. Children have an opportunity to help prepare their snack, socialize, wash their own dishes, and prepare the table for the next person.

The Peace Corner
At times, children need to separate from a challenging situation and regroup. Often, thinking about the effects of one’s behavior leads to a change for the better. If a quiet place is all that is needed, The Peace Corner is available.

Montessori Program
“…education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being.”
~Maria Montessori~

Junior Kindergarten

Sometimes, students benefit academically or socially from the gift of an extra year prior to entering a traditional Kindergarten program. The Junior Kindergarten program exists to serve this purpose. Typically, these students are also some of the youngest Kindergarten eligible students that we serve. The program is the first year of a two-year Kindergarten experience and is designed to provide children additional time to develop their skills prior to entering kindergarten. Students learn core competencies to set them up for success in Kindergarten. Students have more time for purposeful play and participate in programming like other elementary students. Program availability and locations are determined by enrollment and annual interest. Transportation is available for children residing within the host school’s boundary.

A Typical Day in Junior Kindergarten

Upon arrival, students will go to their classrooms to get ready for the day. They will be greeted by their teacher and check in, making lunch choices and starting on some independent seatwork.

Students benefit from the same special classes as all students in their school, including art, music, and physical education.

Purposeful play is an essential part of each student’s day. Sometimes this will happen at one of three daily recess breaks, and sometimes it will follow as a way of practicing something the students have learned.

A typical day will incorporate students learning and practicing language arts and math concepts and skills. They may have a hands-on science lesson or learn about their community and school in social studies.

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria with other kindergarten students. After lunch and recess, there is typically some sort of quiet activity to prepare students for an afternoon of learning.

When it’s time to go home, students prepare themselves and are walked out by their teacher to either be picked up by a family member or board a bus. Junior kindergartners will sleep well at night after a busy day of learning and fun.
Additional Services

TCAPS is committed to meeting the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children. Services and supports are available to meet the unique needs of each student.

Special Education
A full continuum of programs and services is available for students who are eligible for special education services. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) outlines the needs, accommodations, goals, and services that constitute a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for each eligible student.

English Learner Program
An English Learner (EL) program ensures academic achievement for students who qualify for English language services. To ensure access to this service, all families are required to fill out a home language survey form during registration.

STEP - Students in Transition Empowerment Program
STEP, Students in Transition Empowerment Program, provides free supportive, education-related services to students who lack fixed, regular, and adequate housing. STEP ensures the educational rights of families and youth as required by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The goal of the program is to ensure school stability and empowerment, remove barriers to full participation in education, and support academic achievement while children are in residential transition.

Section 504
Section 504 offers protections and supports accessibility for your child within the general education curriculum and school environment. Students identified with a disability are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Education. Modifications, accommodations, or interventions will be put into place, regardless of mitigating factors. In some cases, a 504 Plan, which is an accommodations plan for a student with a disability, may be needed. Any accommodation provided for a child with a disability must be aligned with the impairment to support equal access.

Medication Information
TCAPS policy requires a Medication Treatment Form on file for any medication or medical treatment administered during the school day. The form should include written instructions, including the student’s name, name of the medication, dosage, time to be given, healthcare provider’s signature, and written parent permission. The Medication Treatment Form is available at www.tcaps.net/parents/health-information.

Registrations are welcome at all TCAPS elementary schools or the Tompkins/Boardman Administration Center, 412 Webster Street.

The following forms are needed to complete the enrollment process before a student may begin school:

- Completed Registration Form
- Certified Birth Certificate
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Immunization or waiver
- Home Language Survey
- Medication Treatment Form (if applicable)
- Transportation Request Form (if applicable)
- Open Enrollment or School of Choice Form (if applicable)
- Kindergarten Waiver Form (if applicable)

Kindergarten Age Requirement
Michigan law states a child must be five years old on or before September 1 of the enrollment year to be eligible for Kindergarten enrollment. If your child is not eligible for enrollment per the state guideline, but will be five years old by December 1 of the enrollment year, you may complete a Kindergarten waiver form to enroll your child in school. The waiver form is available at www.tcaps.net/enroll.

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Special Medical Conditions
For all special medical conditions, please call the TCAPS Health Coordinator office at (231) 933-1789. Care plans are needed for any potential life threatening medical condition. Special medical conditions such as hearing or vision impairment, diabetes, seizure disorders, asthma, severe allergies, etc. should also be recorded on the bottom of page two of the student registration form under the health information section.

Immunization Requirements
All children who enter and attend school in Michigan are required to have a certificate on file prior to the first day of school showing completion of the minimum requirements of immunization, or a signed waiver from the local health department. Please contact your child’s health care provider or the Grand Traverse County Health Department at (231) 995-6131 for assistance.

Vision/Hearing Examination
The State of Michigan requires vision and hearing evaluations prior to starting Kindergarten. Please contact your health care provider or the local health department for screenings.

Physical Examination
A physical examination by your physician is required for preschool/child care attendance. It is not required but strongly recommended for grades K-12.
General Information

TCAPS Transportation
TCAPS provides safe transportation to approximately 70% of TCAPS students and local private and parochial school students daily. Routes include more than 3,000 bus stops within a 300-square-mile area. All eligible students must submit a Transportation Request Form to their school office to participate in transportation services.

For safety reasons, all Kindergarten students must be accompanied to and from the bus stop by a parent/guardian or older sibling. Other authorization may be designated by the parent or guardian and received in writing.

Students are assigned to an approved bus stop location. It is TCAPS policy that all children who ride the bus must get on or off the bus at their stop location unless the school receives a bus pass. Bus passes are only issued for emergencies and must include written permission from a parent/guardian.

Elementary students utilizing TCAPS transportation services will receive a colored identification tag at the beginning of the school year noting the student’s bus route and bus stop location. The tag allows school and transportation personnel to ensure students reach their destination safely. Tags should be placed on the student backpack.

For more information, please call the transportation hotline at 231.933.1955 or email: partlodo@tcaps.net.

Childcare Before and After School
TCAPS provides quality tuition-based child care at our elementary schools both before and after school. Program hours operate from 7:00 a.m. until the start of school, and from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m. Childcare is not available on weekdays where a half-day of school is scheduled. Availability may vary by location.

Activities focus on fun, safety, and the importance of peer interaction. Daily activities may include literary activities, arts and crafts, games, science and nature projects, sports, computer projects, individual projects, recreation (gym and playground), homework, and study time.

TCAPS childcare programs are licensed by the State of Michigan. Fees are based on the number of sessions enrolled. Programs participate in the State of Michigan Child Development and Care Program offered through the Michigan State Department of Human Services (DHS) for qualifying families. If financial aid is needed, please contact DHS at (231) 941-3900 for assistance.

Please contact your school to learn about childcare rates and enrollment information. Learn more at www.tcaps.net/extendedday or call TCAPS Licensed Child Care Programs at: (231) 933-1759.

2022-23 Pricing (Note: Meal pricing is subject to change)
*In response to COVID-19, breakfast and lunch meals are free to all students regardless of income for the 2021-2022 academic year.

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<thead>
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<th>Meal</th>
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<tr>
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Questions?  
We are here to help!

**Special Education:** Contact Brooke Laurent, Executive Director of Special Education, at 231.933.1780 or by email at LaurentBr@tcaps.net.

**Childcare:** Visit www.tcaps.net/programs/extendedday/ or contact the district’s licensed child care office at 231.933.1759.

**Montessori Programming:** For additional Montessori information or registration assistance, please contact Montessori Office at 231.933.6420 or sieversli@tcaps.net.

**Kindergarten & Junior Kindergarten Programming:** Questions regarding enrollment should be directed to Mary Beth Stein at steinma@tcaps.net or 231.933.1718.

**Immunizations, Physicals:** Contact TCAPS’ health coordinator at 231.933.5610 for more information or visit: www.tcaps.net/parents/health-information/

**Medical Needs:** TCAPS’ Health Coordinator, Liisa Szarapski can provide assistance for your family to develop a care plan and in training your child’s school staff on the care plan. Contact Liisa at 231.933.1789 or szarapskli@tcaps.net.

**Food Service / Food Allergies:** Please reach out to your building’s Kitchen Leader with any questions or visit: www.tcaps.net/about/departments/food--nutrition-services/

**Transportation:** For transportation concerns/routing questions, call 231.933.1933 or visit: www.tcaps.net/about/departments/transportation/

**What school am I?:**  
Visit: www.tcaps.net/about/district-boundary-map/

Contact us: info@tcaps.net