

Preschool Transition to Kindergarten

*Greendale School District
Greendale, Wisconsin*

The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and the preschool and kindergarten teachers in the Greendale School District know firsthand the anxiety that families and students feel on the first day of kindergarten. To help these youngsters and their families, the school district developed the Preschool Transition to Kindergarten program, which includes the Kindergarten Adventure Program and Parent Information Night.

The Kindergarten Adventure Program is a 90-minute program that allows incoming kindergarteners and their parents to meet the principal, teachers, and other students. The children also participate in activities such as finger plays, songs, story time, and a short recess. Parents take advantage of this time to informally speak with the principal. At the end of the event, preschoolers are partnered with a kindergartener to participate in free-choice centers. Preschool students left with a school folder and school supplies. Students and their parents also left feeling excited and comfortable about the upcoming school year.

Parent Information Night is the second phase of the transition program. Families have a picnic one evening in August and then receive information about kindergarten. After the picnic, children played games with high school volunteers while parents received general school information and learned about volunteer opportunities, the kindergarten “phase-in” program, and developmental stages of 5-year-olds. As a follow-up to the Parent Information Night, the district holds a “Meet Your Teacher” hour before

the first day of school, giving children a chance to meet their teachers, see their classrooms, and drop off their school supplies.

The cost for implementing the Preschool Transition to Kindergarten is estimated at \$400 for refreshments and school supplies. The money was apparently well-spent, as parents reported that the anxiety surrounding their child’s first day of kindergarten decreased because of the program. They also noted their children had a good night’s sleep and were ready for a positive start to their school year.

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