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# PRE-K HANDBOOK

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2025-2026

Academic School Year

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## Vision

Spring ISD prekindergarten provides nurturing, child-stationed environments and high-quality educational programs that value and respect the needs, languages, and cultures of all students, families, staff, and community to ensure all children an equitable start to being college, career, and life ready.

In support of this vision, we believe:

- Every child develops (social emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development) at an individual rate, possesses unique characteristics, and uses an array of talents and interests regardless of family background, culture, special need, experience, or ability.
- Ongoing authentic assessment through collecting and interpreting data is fundamental to understanding a child's development and learning.
- The quality of the teacher-child relationship supports social-emotional development and has potential to exert a positive or negative influence on children's ability to succeed.
- Effective instruction provides children with developmentally appropriate settings, materials, experiences, and social support.
- Effective early literacy instruction encourages oral language and early forms of reading and writing.
- Meaningful family engagement in children's early development and learning supports school readiness and later academic success.

### These components are critical in achieving our Vision:

- Knowledgeable, nurturing, and culturally competent staff who are supported through continual professional learning.
- Intentionally designed classroom and outdoor environments.
- Teacher support in guiding and facilitating cognitive, social emotional, language, and physical development through purposeful play.
- Child-initiated exploration and discovery to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, persistence, and a growth mindset.
- Collaboration between families, teachers, schools, and community.

## Qualifying for Pre-K 3

To be eligible for enrollment in our Early Explorers Academy – PK 3 class, a child must be at least three years of age as of September 1 of the current school year **and** meet at least one of the following eligibility requirements:

- Is unable to speak and comprehend the English language; or
- Is educationally disadvantaged (which means a student is eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program); or
- Is homeless; or
- Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority; or
- Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty; or
- Is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care) following an adversary hearing; or
- Is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as: a peace officer; a firefighter; or an emergency medical first responder.

### Tuition-Free Prekindergarten for Non-Eligible Children

Spring ISD offers tuition-free Pre-K for 3-years old who do not meet state eligibility requirements on a space available basis. Families should complete the online registration application and process. Enrollment will be determined on a space-available basis in the Pre-K classrooms at each campus.

## Attendance

Pre-K 3 is not mandatory. However, upon enrollment in prekindergarten, a child **must** attend school. **All students are subject to compulsory school attendance rules while they are in enrolled in school.**

## Qualifying for Pre-K 4

To be eligible for enrollment in a prekindergarten class, a child must be at least four years of age as of September 1 of the current school year **and** meet at least one of the following eligibility requirements:

- Is unable to speak and comprehend the English language; or
- Is educationally disadvantaged (which means a student is eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program); or
- Is homeless; or
- Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority; or
- Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty; or
- Is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care) following an adversary hearing; or
- Is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as: a peace officer; a firefighter; or an emergency medical first responder.

### Tuition-Free Prekindergarten for Non-Eligible Children

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, Spring ISD began offering tuition-free Pre-K for 4-years old who do not meet state eligibility requirements on a space available basis. Families should complete the online registration application and process. Enrollment will be determined on a space-available basis in the Pre-K classrooms at each campus.

## Attendance

Pre-K 4 is not mandatory. However, upon enrollment in prekindergarten, a child **must** attend school. **All students are subject to compulsory school attendance rules while they are in enrolled in school.**

## Pre-K Programs in Spring ISD

Spring ISD currently serves eligible four-year old's at all 25 elementary campuses and three-year old's at 6 select elementary campuses. All campuses offer full-day Pre-K programs where general education, dual language one way, and a partnership with AVANCE Head Start (**select campuses only**) classes are offered. Please see school listings below:

- Anderson Elementary
- Bammel Elementary (PK 3 & AVANCE)
- Beneke Elementary
- Booker Elementary
- Burchett Elementary
- Clark Elementary
- Cooper Elementary
- Eickenroht Elementary (AVANCE)
- Heritage Elementary
- Hirsch Elementary
- Hoyland Elementary
- Jenkins Elementary
- Lewis Elementary (PK 3 & AVANCE)
- Link Elementary (PK 3)
- Major Elementary (PK 3)
- Marshall Elementary
- McNabb Elementary (PK 3)
- Meyer Elementary
- Northgate Crossing Elementary
- Ponderosa Elementary
- Reynolds Elementary
- Salyers Elementary
- Smith Elementary
- Thompson Elementary
- Winship Elementary (PK 3)

## Program Descriptions

ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction encompasses listening, speaking, reading, and writing, tailored to match each student's English language proficiency level. Language acquisition for second-language learners occurs on a continuum, with listening skills typically developing first, followed by speaking. Reading and writing emerge later in the natural progression of language development. Additionally, instruction emphasizes the importance of fostering multicultural awareness.

In Dual Language One Way (formally bilingual) Pre-K classrooms, instruction in reading, writing, social studies, and science occur in the student's first language. Math is taught daily in English. This approach supports bilingualism and biliteracy, building a strong foundation in both languages.

The AVANCE program is a collaborative effort between the AVANCE organization and Spring ISD to provide comprehensive early childhood education and family support services to families within the district. In this program, AVANCE personnel work closely with Spring ISD staff to support student growth, focusing on school readiness through play-based learning and strong parent engagement.

# Pre-K Growth & Learning

Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines <https://tea.texas.gov/pkg.aspx>

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides Prekindergarten Guidelines as a means to align prekindergarten programs with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines offer detailed descriptions of expected behaviors across multiple skill domains that should be observed in four- to five-year old children from the beginning to the end of their prekindergarten experience. These guidelines are organized into the following ten skills domains:

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| I. Social/Emotional      | II. Language & Communication |
| III. Emergent Reading    | IV. Emergent Writing         |
| V. Math                  | VI. Science                  |
| VII. Social Studies      | VIII. Fine Arts              |
| IX. Physical Development | X. Technology                |

## Curriculum

Prekindergarten uses a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines and is aligned to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. It is intentionally designed to engage students in a joyful approach to learning with high-interest materials and activities and plenty of opportunities to laugh and play. The Frog Street and Heggerty curriculum provides easy-to-follow lessons for whole group, small group, and station activities.

## Conscious Discipline

Prekindergarten uses Conscious Discipline, a classroom management and social emotional program that helps teachers create a learning environment where children will feel safe and cared for. From this foundation of safety and caring, children will begin learning how to solve conflicts, manage their emotions, and take responsibility for their actions. Conscious Discipline will help children transition from home to school each day with a Brain Smart start. Teachers will lead children through four daily activities to help them prepare their brains for optimal learning. The Brain Smart start includes activities for uniting, disengaging stress, connecting, and committing.

## Literacy Beginnings: A Prekindergarten Handbook by Gay Su Pinnell and Irene Fountas

Literacy Beginnings is a resource each prekindergarten teacher has to help them engage students in early literacy learning. Detailed descriptions of language and literacy behaviors and understandings are outlined as well as practical strategies for teacher use in the prekindergarten classroom.

## Progress Monitoring

Spring ISD carefully tracks the growth and development of prekindergarten students to ensure they are meeting important learning milestones.

### *Pre-K 4*

For **Pre-K 4** students, teachers use the state-approved CLI Engage Circle Assessment to measure progress in key skill areas. This assessment is conducted three times a year:

- **Wave 1:** Beginning of the Year (BOY)
- **Wave 2:** Middle of the Year (MOY)
- **Wave 3:** End of the Year (EOY)

The Circle Assessment is a one-on-one assessment where teachers gather reliable data on each child's strengths and areas for improvement. This helps teachers tailor small group lessons to meet individual learning needs and provide targeted support. In addition to these assessments, Pre-K 4 students receive four report cards and progress reports throughout the school year, ensuring families are regularly updated on their child's development.

### *Pre-K 3*

For **Pre-K 3** students, Spring ISD uses an in-district checklist at the Middle of the Year (MOY) and End of the Year (EOY) to monitor growth and development. Pre-K 3 students also receive report cards for four grading cycles, providing families with clear insights into their child's progress.

These tools ensure all children are supported in their learning journey and families remain informed every step of the way.

# Comprehensive Literacy Framework

The Spring Independent School District Prekindergarten Program will provide a strong literacy foundation to prekindergarten students utilizing research-based best practices and meaningful learning experiences. Instructional activities will support students' academic knowledge growth and social and emotional development. Thematic units incorporate domains from the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

Play and language are important tools for prekindergarten students as they develop literacy skills. Opportunities for play and language are infused throughout the day to provide a chance for children to learn about their world and themselves. To establish a foundation and culture for learning, literacy instruction is based on the following Literacy Essentials led by teachers.

## Essential Literacy Learning Experiences

1. Engage in oral language development and shared reading and writing opportunities during circle time.
2. Introduce and model literacy skills and behaviors of good readers.
3. Activate students' prior knowledge and build background knowledge.
4. Provide daily interactive read-alouds.
5. Provide opportunities for children to respond to books.
6. Have appropriate books for children to choose from the classroom library.
7. Plan and deliver instruction that focuses on Phonemic Awareness, Letters, and Phonics.
8. Provide opportunities for play throughout the day.
9. Provide frequent chances for students to collaborate.
10. Establish set routines that support children being interested and involved.

## Literacy Expectations

- Learn and use new vocabulary words
- Use grammatically correct sentence structure
- Recognize and use letter sounds
- Identify upper- and lower-case letters
- Learn about combining syllables into words
- Identify and produce rhymes
- Learn about onset and rime letter sounds
- Blend phonemes to make words
- Retell stories
- Answer questions about stories
- Write own first name
- Label pictures with words
- Write letters or symbols to tell a story

## Full-Day Pre-K Instructional Daily Schedule

Required Minutes	Time	Required Components
30 minutes	7:35-8:05	Threshold & Breakfast
20 minutes	8:05-8:25	Morning Circle
15 minutes	8:25-8:40	Heggerty
25 minutes	8:40-9:05	Whole Group Writing/Journal Time
20 minutes	9:05-9:25	Whole Group Instruction – Literacy
45 minutes	9:25-10:10	Literacy Stations/Small Group
30 minutes	10:10-10:40	Lunch
30 minutes	10:40-11:10	Recess
20 minutes	11:10-11:30	STEAM/Social Studies
20 minutes	11:30-11:50	Read Aloud - Oral Language Development
60 minutes	11:50-12:50	Rest Time/Snack Time
20 minutes	12:50-1:10	Whole Group Instruction – Math
45 minutes	1:10-1:55	Math Stations/Small Group
15 minutes	1:55-2:10	Frog Street Read Aloud #2
10 minutes	2:10-2:20	Music and Movement
45 minutes	2:20-3:05	Station Exploration
20 minutes	3:05-3:25	Closing Circle/Reflection Time

### Learning Block Details

Scheduled Component	What is it?	Example of Activities
<b>Threshold &amp; Breakfast</b>	The time when children arrive, settle in, and prepare for the day. Breakfast is served to ensure children start with energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat breakfast</li> <li>• Complete attendance</li> <li>• Engage in quiet activities like puzzles, journaling, or reading books.</li> </ul>
<b>Morning Circle</b>	A group activity where students begin their day by learning routines, reviewing the schedule, Conscious Discipline activities, calendar time, and exploring the theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sing songs or recite poems</li> <li>• Practice fingerplays</li> <li>• Morning message</li> <li>• Calendar time</li> <li>• Breathing and problem-solving activities</li> </ul>
<b>Heggerty</b>	A structured time focused on building phonological awareness, including recognizing sounds and syllables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clap out syllables</li> <li>• Identify rhyming words</li> <li>• Count words in sentences</li> <li>• Practice identifying beginning sounds.</li> </ul>

Scheduled Component	What is it?	Example of Activities
<b>Whole Group Literacy</b>	A group reading session where students explore a book and develop comprehension and vocabulary skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Predict story outcomes</li> <li>• Discuss characters and themes</li> <li>• Practice print concepts and letter knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Literacy Stations &amp; Small Groups</b>	Time for hands-on activities where students practice literacy skills in smaller groups or independently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic play</li> <li>• Letter matching and sorting</li> <li>• Playdoh letter making</li> <li>• Writing practice</li> </ul>
<b>Whole Group Writing &amp; Journal Time</b>	Writing activities that help children learn letter formation and express ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal writing</li> <li>• Practice writing names</li> <li>• Label pictures</li> <li>• Create shared stories with the teacher.</li> </ul>
<b>Oral Language Development</b>	Activities that encourage talking, listening, and building communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in role play</li> <li>• Answer questions</li> <li>• Describe objects or pictures</li> <li>• Practice new vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>Music &amp; Movement</b>	A time for physical activity and music to build coordination and rhythm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dance to music</li> <li>• Practice movement patterns</li> <li>• Use instruments like tambourines.</li> </ul>
<b>Whole Group Math Instruction</b>	A focused session where students explore numbers, shapes, and basic math concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count objects</li> <li>• Identify shapes</li> <li>• Sort items by size or color</li> <li>• Explore patterns with blocks.</li> </ul>
<b>Math Stations &amp; Small Groups</b>	Small group or independent math activities that reinforce skills learned in whole group instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play number games</li> <li>• Solve puzzles</li> <li>• Build with pattern blocks</li> <li>• Explore measurement with simple tools.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Studies &amp; STEAM</b>	Hands-on learning about the world, combining science, technology, engineering, arts, math and social studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build structures</li> <li>• Explore materials like sand or water</li> <li>• Conduct experiments</li> </ul>
<b>Station Exploration</b>	Free-choice time where children explore various activity stations in the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in pretend play</li> <li>• Create art</li> <li>• Build with blocks</li> <li>• Explore books or puzzles.</li> </ul>
<b>Closing Circle &amp; Reflection Time</b>	A wrap-up session where students reflect on their learning and share their thoughts about the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share what they learned</li> <li>• Discuss daily commitments</li> <li>• Plan for the next day</li> <li>• Sing a goodbye song.</li> </ul>

## Learning Stations

Learning stations in prekindergarten classrooms are thoughtfully designed to help children meet learning goals in fun and engaging ways. These stations allow teachers to focus on each child's unique needs, guide their learning step-by-step, and help them grow through exploration and play.

At these stations, children can explore new ideas, practice important skills, and develop their creativity while working with their teacher and classmates. Teachers also use these moments to encourage children to think critically, ask questions, and make new discoveries.

Learning stations provide a playful, interactive environment where children can build social skills, boost their confidence, and apply what they've learned in class. These experiences help make learning meaningful and enjoyable for every child.

Weekly theme stations are provided at the beginning of each week in the Frog Street teacher's guides. Children practice concepts and skills introduced in daily lessons.

In stations children:

- practice skills learned in whole-group and small-group instruction.
- learn independence, self-direction, and collaboration skills.
- work at their own level and pace as teachers provide appropriate support based on individual needs.
- learn to make decisions and choices.

### The Purpose of Learning Stations:

- Children learn by doing.
- Learning stations allow for multiple techniques and methods of exploration. All children can succeed – different levels of ability and experience can be easily accommodated.
- Learning stations provide opportunities for children to make choices. Choices allow individuals to match personal goals with instructional goals. Children develop decision-making ability.
- Learning stations support the social nature of a young child's world. Children interact with one another, learn from each other, and discuss their experiences.
- Cooperation and collaboration are practiced. Children develop and enrich their oral language and vocabulary development.
- Learning stations allow for personalized academic instruction.
- Children apply what they have learned. They have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts, skills, and strategies learned in large and small groups.
- Learning stations support developmental timetables.

## Learning Stations Descriptions

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ABC Station</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dramatic Play Station</b></p>
<p>The ABC Station helps children learn and practice naming and forming uppercase and lowercase letters. Activities use fun materials like magnetic letters, letter cards, play dough, and craft wires to make learning letters engaging.</p>	<p>The Dramatic Play Station allows children to explore their imagination by role-playing as characters like a parent, police officer, or teacher. With dress-up clothes, puppets, and kitchen furniture, this station fosters creativity, social skills, and teamwork.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Technology Station</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Science Station</b></p>
<p>The Technology Station introduces children to computers and educational software, helping them build skills in literacy, math, and science. Children use computers, headphones, and engaging programs designed for their age level.</p>	<p>The Science Station sparks curiosity and critical thinking as children explore the world around them. Hands-on activities like observing, sorting, and experimenting with natural materials encourage discovery and a love for science.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Writing Station</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Math Station</b></p>
<p>The Writing Station encourages children to explore letters and express themselves through writing. They can design cards or write notes, using materials like magnetic letters, markers, crayons, and colorful paper.</p>	<p>The Math Station helps children develop early math skills through activities like counting, sorting, and creating patterns. Fun tools such as counters, blocks, and stencils make learning math interactive and enjoyable.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Blocks Station</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Art Station</b></p>
<p>The Blocks Station encourages problem-solving and teamwork as children build towers, bridges, and other structures. Materials include wooden blocks, foam blocks, Legos and small building tools offering opportunities to design, test ideas, and work collaboratively.</p>	<p>The Art Station inspires creativity as children paint, draw, and make crafts with various materials. Students use items like markers, crayons, paint, scissors, and glue are used to create artwork, fostering fine motor skills and self-expression.</p>



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