



Welcome to Kindergarten!



**A Family Guide
to Starting School**

Welcome to Kindergarten

A group of approximately ten diverse young children, likely kindergarten age, are sitting on a colorful, patterned rug. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The children are dressed in casual clothing, including t-shirts, sweaters, and dresses. The background is a bright green wall.

The first day of school is an exciting event!

At Grand Erie, our caring educators and staff are ready to welcome your child to Kindergarten. Your child will be challenged and encouraged to do their best.

We appreciate that you have made Grand Erie your choice for education.

Welcome to Kindergarten

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How to Register Your Child

- Children eligible for Kindergarten must be **four years old** by **December 31st** of that year.
- Find your home school and register online at: **granderie.ca/kindergarten**
You can also call your nearest Grand Erie school today.

The following information will be required when you register your child:

- A document to confirm Canadian Citizenship and a birth date (one of the following): Canadian Birth Certificate, Canadian Citizenship Card, Permanent Resident Card, Other documents to verify status in Canada
- Your child's address including: 911 civic address (fire number), lot, concession, county and postal code
- Parent/guardian contact information, work and home
- Emergency contact person and telephone number
- Custody information, if applicable
- Doctor's name, address and telephone number
- Medical information - a Request for School Assistance in Health Care form, provided by the school, must be filled out if medication needs to be administered by school personnel



Voluntary Indigenous Self-Identification



Grand Erie District School Board recognizes the importance of student success for Indigenous students. Our dedicated staff members are committed to improving services and programs for all Indigenous students attending schools within our board.

With the goal to improving the overall student experience for Indigenous students, Grand Erie encourages the development of strong partnerships with Indigenous families, communities, and organizations – both on and off the reserve.

Voluntary Indigenous student self-identification is a way to advise the Grand Erie District School Board that a student is of Indigenous ancestry. A student may self-identify at any time. Simply complete and return the form to the school's principal.

For more information, contact ies@granderie.ca

Grand Erie's Kindergarten Program



The primary goals of the Kindergarten program are:

- To establish a strong foundation for learning in the early years;
- To help children make a smooth transition from home, child care, or preschool settings to school settings;
- To allow children to reap the many proven benefits of learning through relationships, and through play and inquiry;
- To set children on a path of lifelong learning and nurture competencies that they will need to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow.

Grand Erie's Kindergarten program will provide an interesting and interactive learning environment for your child. Here, your child will be engaged in a variety of learning activities.

Ask about **Before-** and **After-School Child Care programs** offered at many Grand Erie Elementary Schools or visit **granderie.ca**

Grand Erie's Kindergarten Program



Areas of Learning

Grand Erie follows the Kindergarten Program as set out by the Ministry of Education. This program is organized into four frames:

- Belonging and Contributing;
- Self-Regulation and Well-Being;
- Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours; and,
- Problem Solving and Innovating.



All play and inquiry in Kindergarten classrooms are structured around these four integrated areas of learning.

Children will be offered a variety of materials, in both the classroom and the natural environment, to promote inquiry and exploration.



Grand Erie's Kindergarten Program

Belonging and contributing means learning about and developing:



- A sense of connectedness to others;
- Relationships with others, and the importance of contributing as part of a group, a community, and the natural world;
- An understanding of relationships and community, and the ways in which people contribute to the world around them; and
- An understanding of the diversity among individuals and families within the school and wider community.



Grand Erie's Kindergarten Program

Self-regulation and well-being means learning about and developing:

- Independent thinking and feelings, and their recognition of, and respect for, differences in the thinking and feelings of others;
- The regulation of emotions, adapting to distractions, and assessing consequences of actions in a way that enables children to engage in learning; and,
- Physical health and wellness.



Grand Erie's Kindergarten Program

Demonstrating literacy and mathematics behaviours means:



- The ability to communicate thoughts and feelings through gestures, movements, words, symbols, representations and through the use of a variety of materials;
- Use of language, images, and materials to express and think critically about ideas and emotions, as they listen and speak, view and begin to read and write;
- Use of concepts of numbers and patterns during play and inquiry, and experience an emergent understanding of mathematical relationships, concepts, skills and processes;
- An active engagement in learning and developing a love of learning, which can instill the habit of learning for life.

Grand Erie's Kindergarten Program

Problem solving and innovating means learning about and developing:



- A natural curiosity about the world, in ways that engage the mind, the senses, and the body;
- A meaning of their world by asking questions, testing theories, solving problems, and engaging in creative and analytical thinking; and,
- Innovative ways of thinking about and doing things that naturally arise with an active curiosity, and applying those ideas in relationships with others, with materials, and with the environment.



Tips to Ease the Transition

Preparing for Kindergarten

There are a number of activities you can plan with your child leading up to the first day of Kindergarten to make their transition easier.

- Drive or walk to the school and look around the playground.
- Establish bedtime and morning routines: practice going to bed and waking up for the new school schedule.
- Have your child practice using lunch containers, thermos caps, zippers, buttons, ties and shoe fasteners.
- Read with your child and talk with your child.
- Play with your child and provide opportunities for your child to play with other children.



Things to bring to school:

- Choose comfortable, durable and easy-to-clean clothes.
- Choose clothes and footwear that are easy for your child to put on, take off and fasten.
- Mark all clothing, footwear, school bags and lunch containers with your child's name.
- Choose outdoor clothing that is weather appropriate.
- Have an extra set of clothing at the school for muddy days, spills or accidents.
- Provide your child with a school bag to carry notes, school work, lunches and snacks. It should be easy to open and close, and light to carry.
- Pack small snacks (peeled and cut fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, etc.) for your child to eat at school during their nutrition breaks.
- Please avoid pop, candy, peanut products, and hard-to-open containers.

Tips to Ease the Transition

Keeping routines

Kindergarten children can get very tired at night because they are doing so many new and exciting things. For this reason, it helps if you keep routines like bath time, meals and reading time as regular as possible. A good sleep each night is important.



Tips to Ease the Transition

Home work

Children are generally toilet trained before reaching Kindergarten. We encourage parents to work on this milestone before the start of school. If your child is experiencing a toilet training delay, please contact the school where they are registered.

It would be helpful for your child to:

- Know their first and last name.
- Know their caregiver's name and the name of their school.

Some schools have allergy policies

- Contact your child's school if they have allergies or if you would like to learn more about the school's allergy policy.

Special event days

Schools are allowed 10 special event days throughout the year where they are exempted from these standards. Although these days allow schools greater flexibility with food and beverages, schools are encouraged to offer healthy options.



Tips to Ease the Transition

Bell times

Scheduling information, including bell times that indicate the start and end of the school day, will be provided to you during registration.

Balanced School Day

All Grand Erie elementary schools run a balanced school day. The benefits include larger blocks of uninterrupted instructional time that result in greater task completion and improved student focus. As a result, there is more time for nutrition and less time lost through transition.

The school day is divided into three equal instructional segments totaling 300 minutes. The segments are separated by 40-minute nutrition and recreational breaks.



School year calendar

Grand Erie District School Board honours a gradual entry model for students who start Kindergarten. The calendar is approved in the spring before your child attends school in September. This calendar will be posted on the Grand Erie website at granderie.ca. Your child's school will inform you of their start date and gradual entry timelines.

Students With Special Needs

Specialized Services

Students enter school with a unique set of strengths and needs. The **Specialized Services** department in Grand Erie District School Board can support school staff with inclusive practices to ensure your child finds success upon school entry. If your child has specific needs related to developmental or physical disabilities, speech and/or language disorders, self-regulation, vision, and/or hearing, please inform your school principal as soon as possible. This will ensure more specific transition plans or supports can be discussed before the start of the school year.



Students With Special Needs

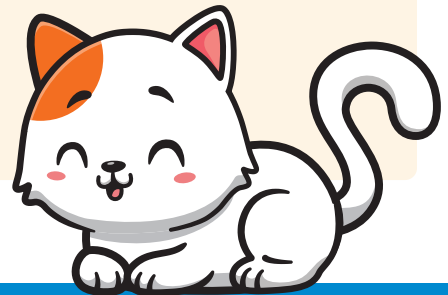
Speech and language programs

Communication Services staff includes Speech-Language Pathologists and Communicative Disorders Assistants. Communication Services staff work closely with Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators. Literacy development, academic success and social skill development are highly dependent on a student's underlying communication abilities. Senior Kindergarten students are eligible for these services. Kindergarten students may be eligible for service through the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Preschool Speech and Language system at Lansdowne Children's Centre. **Referral to this program must be made by March 31 of the student's Junior Kindergarten year.**

Communication Services staff provide:

- Assessment, consultation, collaboration and programming related to a student's communication needs
- Intervention sessions may be provided, either individually or in small groups, if deemed appropriate and beneficial by the Speech-Language Pathologist
- Development of home programs
- Referral to and liaison with School Based Rehabilitation Services
- Transition to school planning with preschool speech and language personnel
- Liaison with outside health-care providers

Your child's principal can help address any concerns you may have and direct you to the appropriate resources.



Multi-Lingual Learners (MLL)



Transitioning from home to school

In Grand Erie, our focus is on the success of every student where diversity is valued, and all members of the school community feel safe and accepted. Every child in Kindergarten is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning, and in an inclusive environment where all children see themselves reflected in the program, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment so that they can feel engaged in and empowered by their learning experiences.

Because of the diversity in Ontario schools, planning for an inclusive registration is important to make the transition from home to school a smooth one for MLL students.

Families can book an appointment by contacting **519-756-6301** ext. **281041** or by emailing: **welcome@granderie.ca**



French Immersion

Dual-track and single-track programs

To enable children to become fluent in French, Grand Erie has Dual-Track and Single-Track French Immersion programs. Dual-Track schools offer both French Immersion and an English program, while Single-Track schools only offer a French Immersion program.

Single-Track French Immersion (Kindergarten to Grade 8) is offered at **École Confédération Elementary School** and **École Dufferin Public School** in Brantford.

The sites that offer Dual-Track French Immersion serve the communities of Haldimand, Norfolk, and Brant counties.

Dual-Track French Immersion is offered at:

- **Burford District Elementary School**
(Kindergarten to Grade 8);
- **River Heights Elementary School**
(Kindergarten to Grade 8);
- **Lakewood Elementary School**
(Kindergarten to Grade 8);
- **Walsh Public School**
(Kindergarten to Grade 8).

Visit the **French Immersion** section at **granderie.ca** for registration updates and information.



Transportation

Student Transportation Services



Grand Erie is a member of the transportation consortium, Student Transportation Services Brant Haldimand Norfolk (STSBHN). This consortium provides transportation to students who meet the home-to-school distances and to students with particular special education needs.

Learn more at [stsbhn.ca](https://www.stsbhn.ca) or follow [@stsbhn](https://twitter.com/stsbhn) on X.

Kindergarten starter package



Families will receive a letter before the start of the new school year to inform them of their child's bus route and pick-up location.

For students who transfer between buses, animal names have been assigned to each of the routes in order to assist students in knowing which buses they are travelling on. The animal associated with each of your child(ren)'s bus will be provided in the letter you receive in the summer.

Students will receive a bus tag to attach to their backpack on the first day of school. Information contained on the bus tag will assist those who help children on and off the bus.

Bus cancellations and delays

In addition to accessing your child's transportation details, parents can subscribe through the parent portal at transinfobhn.ca Login to receive email notifications of delays or cancellations to their bus. You can also access this information through an app; two apps are available to Apple and Android smartphone users. More information on the apps are available at [stsbhn.ca/faqs](https://www.stsbhn.ca/faqs)

Being a Part of the School

Participation is key

Children perform better in school when their parents/guardians take an active part in their education.

Parent/Guardians are encouraged to:

- Communicate with your child's educator or educator team.
- Offer relevant information to the educator about your child.
- Ask the educator about your child's progress often.



Here are some ways you can help:

- Attend Parent/Teacher interviews
- Volunteer in the school library
- Join School Council or Home and School Association
- Help take care of the general school environment
- Volunteer to assist with a school trip

* Please ask your child's principal for volunteer information and how to submit a police check. All volunteers must have a police check according to **Procedure SO46 - Volunteers**.



Being a Part of the School

Encourage questions and exploration

As a parent/guardian, you have the important role of guiding your child through the world and answering all of the questions they have. Being a part of their learning process now will help them perform better in school later, so encourage your child to ask questions and to explore new things. Take them for walks, introduce them to new people, read books, listen to music and open their eyes to the wonders of the world around them.



Parent/caregiver involvement

Parents/guardians are the first and most important teachers in their children's lives. Grand Erie believes parent involvement starts at home, working directly with your child. For more ideas and ways to become involved, speak to your principal or visit the Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee (GEPIC); Indigenous Education Advisory Committee or School Council sections at granderie.ca



The Grand Erie Multi-Year Plan 2021-26

Our Vision

Learn

Lead

Inspire

Our Mission

Together, we build a culture of **learning**, **well-being** and **belonging** to inspire each learner.

Our Collective Priorities

Learning

We build a culture of learning to nurture curiosity and opportunity for each learner.

Well-being

We build a culture of well-being to support the cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs of each learner.

Belonging

We build a culture of belonging to support an equitable, inclusive and responsive environment for each learner.



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