Kindergarten Night
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is my child ready for kindergarten?
We would not send you out to the wild world of Elementary School unprepared. Unless we have had on-going and specific discussions with you, we believe your child is ready for kindergarten.

2. How will I know who is in my child’s class?
Many schools post their class lists several weeks before the start of school.

3. Can I request a class change if there are friends my child would be more comfortable with in another class?
No. It is very rare for a school to change enrollment unless there is a specific and serious issue involved.

4. How will I know drop-off and pick-up procedures?
Almost all schools, both public and private, have a kindergarten orientation before the regular school year begins. Most of the time this will be a day or two before the rest of the school begins so that children can get used to the campus without older children around. If you do not receive an invitation when you enroll, check with the school the week before school begins.

5. What if I am late dropping my child off?
School procedures vary, just as start times may vary. In general, any time after 8:00 AM will require you to sign your child into school at the office and it will be recorded as a “tardy” on your child’s attendance record. Many schools have a policy that, upon reaching a certain number of tardy and/or absent days, the child may be suspended from school a day or two. Your orientation should cover this policy.

6. My child has a hard time separating from me. Will I still be able to stay in the classroom while she adjusts?
Not likely. Most schools discourage parents from hanging around. They view it as a distraction. You will likely get the feeling you are being pushed out the door. Know that your child will get used to the new routine and will adjust without permanent damage to her psyche.

7. I want to know what is going on in the classroom. When is a good time to talk to the teacher?
In general, drop-off and pick-up times are not the best times to try and communicate with the teacher because she has to monitor a lot of children in motion. Send a note. The teacher will often slip a response into your child’s backpack or call you after school.

8. There are no bathrooms in the classroom. How will my child find the bathrooms?
The children will be given a tour of the campus and shown where the bathrooms are. Children are often lined up and escorted as a class to the bathrooms several times a day. If a child needs to go beyond that, they are usually paired with a peer to go. Adults will rarely escort a child.
9. But my child does not clean himself well. How will that be handled?
Children will not always be monitored in the bathroom. Wiping and washing will often be left up to the child. We worked hard to get your child in the habit of handling toilet procedures independently specifically because of this situation.

10. What if my child has an accident in class?
Almost all schools will be requesting a change of clothes be kept in the classroom for this issue. An adult may or may not be available to help change your child. You can ask for specific procedures during your school’s orientation. Again, we have been working with your child to establish independence in this situation.

11. Will my child be eating lunch in the classroom?
Not likely. Almost all schools have a cafeteria the child will be expected to eat in. The child will be escorted with the class to and from the cafeteria, but will not usually be eating with their teacher.

12. How will my child get a hot lunch?
Each school deals with prepared lunches differently. Most have a system where the child is given a card that is swiped into a reader. Some use a computer entry system. Others will require your child to carry money to the cafeteria. Your orientation should cover this information.

13. What if I forget to put money in my child’s lunch account?
Most schools will allow the child to borrow money from the office petty cash and then call to remind you to put money in the account. As they get older, the schools become less forgiving so it is a good idea to get into the habit of checking with the office every week or so to see the account status.

14. What if the school serves something my child is allergic to?
It is unusual for the child to lunch with the teacher. While the school nurse will have information regarding your child’s allergies, the lunch monitors will likely not know. The expectation is that your child will know what they can eat or not eat. The school will not likely have lunch options or item alternatives. If there are questions or concerns, the conservative approach would be to pack a home lunch for your child daily.

15. My child takes a long time to eat. Will there be enough time to get the food and eat?
In general, yes there is enough time. If you child sits a talks or eats slowly, when the time is up everything gets cleaned up. Your child may have to get used to the stronger schedule. It is not likely someone will be monitoring how much or how fast your child is eating.
16. Will my child get homework?
While every school is different, it is likely your child will get homework at some point in time. It is unlikely your child’s teacher will be calling home to let you know this. Your school orientation should cover policies and procedures for this situation.

17. What if I am late picking up my child?
It is likely that the person waiting with the child to be picked up in the front of the school is not going to be the teacher. If you are late, the child will usually be taken to the office where he can be supervised while waiting for you. You will likely have to sign your child out at that point. Your school orientation should cover policies and procedures for this situation.

18. Do I really need to buy all of these school supplies?
Yes. It is a really big list that may cost over $100 per child. Many schools pool the supplies. Others have the children keep theirs in designated areas. Often unused supplies are returned home at the end of the year. Everything should be marked with your child’s name, and the complete list should be purchased.

19. How often will I be updated on my child’s progress?
Unless there is a specific problem, you will get quarterly report cards and two parent-teacher conferences a year. If you need more information, you can request telephone updates or more formal meetings after school, but you will not likely be able to chat with the teacher on a daily basis.

20. What about extended day care and break care?
In general, school ends around 2:15 and Wednesday’s end an hour early. A-plus and other programs may be available, but they are not provided by the school. They are private programs with separate fees charged. The YMCA, Kamaʻaina Kids and other organizations may have programs to cover the breaks of a week or more. Your school may have information about those programs. Keep the school schedule where you can refer to it throughout the year. Random days, called waiver days, will appear that are not tied to holidays. They will generally not be covered by child care programs and you will have to find arrangements for your child.

While all of this information may seem harsh and scary, please be assured that you and your child will be OK, and may even enjoy elementary school. There are a lot of fun and exciting this to come. Just remember to breathe through the first couple of weeks, then everything will become second nature. Remember that we are still here to help you. Call or email us with questions or concerns. Many of us have been through this process with our own children – and survived!