



# All Kids



## Go To School

Information for Parents of  
Kindergarten Students with  
Special Needs



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**NANAIMO LADYSMITH**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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## Acknowledgments

**Transition to School: An Information Guide for Parents prepared by Children & Youth with Special Needs Subcommittee Make Children First, Prince George and Victoria Health Authority.**

**Thanks to NLPS Parents, Staff and Therapists for their invaluable input.**

# The Journey Begins

Starting Kindergarten is a big adventure for you and your child. All the new services and routines can be confusing. This booklet is designed to explain terms used in schools and to give you an idea of what's ahead. It can be a record of your contact with school personnel and a place to record questions and/or information you want to share. We invite you to use this guide to begin your child's journey to school.

## You're Not Alone

Successful transitions for students with special needs involve communication and teamwork. School staff highly value the information that you give us about your child. You are the parent; you know your child best.

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child best.**



We also count on the professionals who worked with your preschooler, to share their knowledge and expertise. Along with you and the Kindergarten Teacher, the School-Based Team (S-BT) that will support your child might include:

- School Principal
- School Support Teacher (SST)
- Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)
- School Psychologist
- School Counsellor
- Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Physiotherapist (PT)
- Inclusion Support Coordinator (ISC)
- Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI)
- Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDHH)
- Education Assistant (EA)

Some team members provide direct service; others contribute on a consultative basis. The person who coordinates support is called the **Case Manager**.

# Kindergarten Registration

The first step to starting school is registration. Kindergarten registration begins the first week of January and is online only. You'll need your child's Birth Certificate, Passport, Immigration Canada document, Certificate of Citizenship or Permanent Resident Card and proof of residency.

Full Day Kindergarten is in place in all Nanaimo-Ladysmith elementary schools. Register at [www.sd68.bc.ca](http://www.sd68.bc.ca). If you have questions please email [ereg@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:ereg@sd68.bc.ca).

## Exchange of Information

We need your permission to talk with, and receive reports from, any individuals or organizations that have worked with your child. This information exchange allows

us to learn about the needs of all the children who will be coming to Kindergarten and to determine the resources that will be required across the district, at neighbourhood schools and in particular, with specific children.

Some families may choose to register their child without providing information from the preschool years. It might be their hope that their child will fit in or manage without prejudice. It is our strong belief that it is in the child's best interest to have as much information available to the school as possible. Acquiring additional supports for the student may be delayed as resources are distributed by documenting diagnoses and assessments. Consent for Exchange of Information forms are available at schools and at the Child Development Centre (CDC).



# Designation

Designation is a British Columbia Ministry of Education term connected to programs and services. In recognition of the cost of providing programs for students with special needs, there are funds available for some categories of disability. There are relatively few of these students—that is, there is a **Low Incidence** of these students in the general population.

If your child's special needs do not fall into a Low Incidence Category, there is still support available at your school. The School-Based Team (S-BT) will review your child's needs, develop an individual plan called a Student Support Plan (SSP), and call on school-based resources as needed.

The Low Incidence categories are:

- A. Physically Dependent with Multiple Needs**
- B. Multiple Disabilities Deaf/Blind**
- C. Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities**
- D. Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment**
- E. Visual Impairments**
- F. Deaf/Hard of Hearing**
- G. Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Designation in one of these categories requires appropriate assessment and an Individual Education Plan (IEP).



# Placement Options

The typical placement for all students is in their neighbourhood school in a regular classroom, with their age and grade peers. We have one district program that serves students whose severely challenging conditions require support beyond school based resources. The class size is small and programs are designed to meet highly individualized student needs. Referral to this program is made by the School-Based Team (S-BT).

# Individual Education Plan

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written record of planning that is developed in consultation with parents, teachers and other service providers. The IEP identifies how the school program will be adapted or modified to meet the special learning needs for your child. One member of the team is appointed Case Manager and is responsible for coordinating services and monitoring the IEP. As members of the team, parents can offer ideas and information that will help formulate the goals for your child. The IEP is written in the fall and must be reviewed and updated at least once in the school year.

The IEP is a working document that the team uses when monitoring progress and adjusting plans. You will receive a copy of the IEP and be part of the annual review process. The IEP is kept in your child's Permanent Record file which you can request to read any time.

# Education Assistants

Education Assistant (EA) time is assigned to each school. The Principal and S-BT work together to determine the amount of EA time each classroom receives.

While schools and parents cannot choose a specific EA, they can suggest the skills the EA needs to have. When jobs are filled, the EA with the appropriate qualifications and the most seniority will be assigned to the school. If there are particular health care concerns, training will be provided for the EA and an alternate EA by Nursing Support Services (NSS) or an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.

The S-BT will create a substitute care plan for your child in the event that the EA is absent, attending meetings or on a scheduled break.

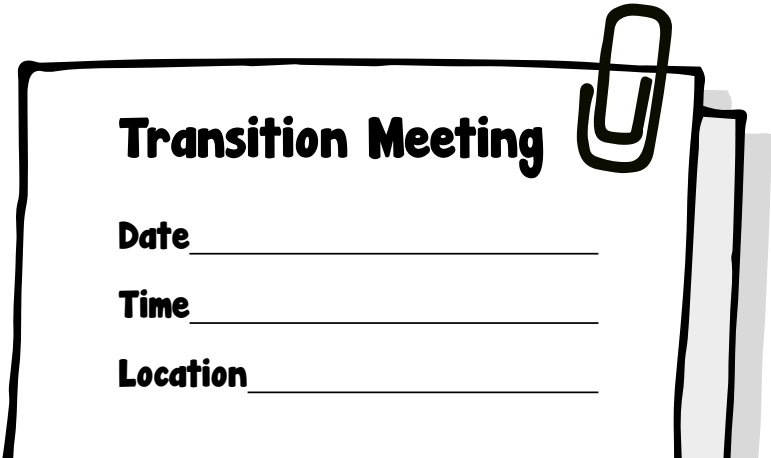
The EA works under the direction of the classroom teacher and/or Case Manager and supervision of the Principal. All communication with the S-BT should be with the teacher or through a Home/School Communication form and not directly with the EA.



# Transition Meeting

In May or June, the School Support Teacher will organize a transition meeting so that you and your preschool team can tell the S-BT about your child's strengths and needs. It is an opportunity for everyone to ask questions, voice concerns and determine the resources that need to be in place for a smooth start to Kindergarten. This might be your first time dealing with a school as a parent rather than as a student. We look forward to getting to know you and hope you'll find belonging to the team to be helpful and productive. You're welcome to bring along a friend or family member to lend support and help you advocate for your child.

The **Transition to Kindergarten Planning Tool** can be used to guide the discussion. If possible, bring the completed form to the meeting. Your child's preschool teacher or a representative from the CDC team could help you complete the form. Whether the form is completed or not, the meeting is a good time to tour the building and determine if there are any accessibility issues in the physical environment of the school, to discuss your child's particular familiarization / orientation needs and if needed, arrange an opportunity for a team member to observe your child at preschool.



**Transition Meeting**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location** \_\_\_\_\_



# Sample Kindergarten Transition Planning Tool



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## Transition to Kindergarten Planning Tool

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Preschool/Daycare:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Starting Kindergarten at:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preschool Teacher CDC Team Member** \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Physical Accommodations</b> Are there any physical needs such as space for physiotherapy, help with toileting, a place for rest, space for equipment, etc?</p>		
<p><b>Level of Support</b> This refers to the level of support the students will need for day to day functioning and for support in a classroom. Example: Does the child require one-on-one support to participate in group activities?</p>		
<p><b>Tech Support</b> Is this person supported by assistive technology such as switches or an augmentative communication aid? If so, list equipment.</p>		
<p><b>Sensory Issues</b> Does the child have any sensory issues that need to be addressed? E.g. tactile, odor, sound, visual, personal space, etc.</p>		
<p><b>Health Concerns</b> Are there health concerns that we should know about such as allergies, protective equipment used against injury, visual or hearing impairment?</p>		
<p><b>Socialization Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social rules</li> <li>• Turn-taking</li> <li>• Initiating</li> <li>• Engaging others</li> <li>• Peer relationships</li> <li>• Imitation of others</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Understanding non-verbal behaviour</li> </ul>		<p><b>Helpful Strategies Used:</b></p>
<p><b>Communication Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressive language ability</li> <li>• Receptive language ability</li> <li>• Understanding of body language/facial expression</li> <li>• Understanding of jokes, social rules</li> <li>• Initiates/sustains conversation</li> </ul>		<p><b>Helpful Strategies Used:</b></p>
<p><b>Food Preferences</b> Are there any favorite foods?</p>		
<p><b>Food Avoidance</b> Are there foods that child dislikes or tries to avoid?</p>		

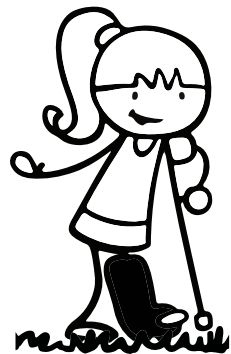
# School Age Therapy

Your child may have received therapy from a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP), Occupational and/or Physiotherapist at the CDC. At the end of preschool, to support the transition to school, the therapists write summary reports which outline assessments they've done, your child's current level of functioning and recommendations for school support.

Occupational and physiotherapy is available on a limited basis in our school district. Students must meet criteria involving either acute health needs, deteriorating physical conditions or pervasive feeding issues. If your child is an appropriate candidate the Case Manager will request therapy services.

The OT and/or PT become part of the S-BT and train EAs and/or provide therapy at school as needed.

Each school has part-time service from a Speech and Language Pathologist. SLPs can provide direct assistance to students as well as training and support to parents and staff. SLP time at each school is limited, so the School-Based team sets priorities and consults the SLP to determine whether referrals are warranted. Parents must give signed consent for service.



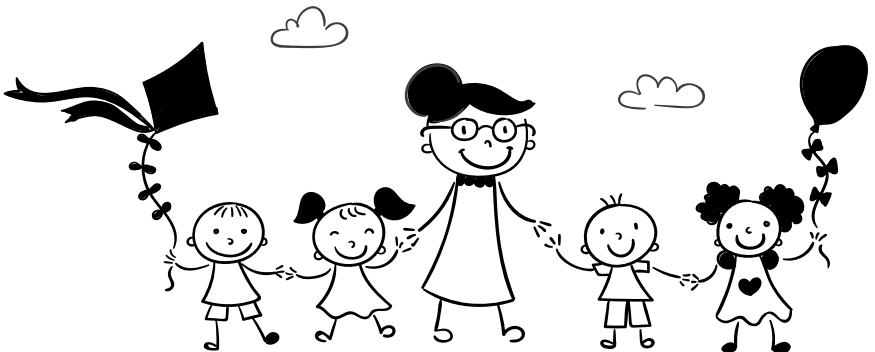
## Kindergarten Orientation

All schools in our district participate in the **Welcome to Kindergarten** program. This is an opportunity to meet the Kindergarten teacher and perhaps other children in the class and their parents. During the event you and your child participate in a series of centre-based activities that include: letters, storytelling, crafts, printing, snacks and play dough. At the end of the session you will receive a bag of materials to use with your child over the summer as you anticipate the beginning of the Kindergarten year. Individualized orientation that may not involve the centre-based activities can be arranged if that would be more suitable for your child.

## Gradual Entry

In most schools a gradual entry system is scheduled to try to ensure that new Kindergarten students feel comfortable and confident in their new classroom. Children may come in small groups or for partial days or only part of the first few weeks.

The entry routine for your child may be the same as all the other students, or customized to suit your child's needs. The School-Based Team will help set up your child's entry routine for Kindergarten.



# Transportation



Some students are eligible for bus service to and from school. Priority is given to students who have physical mobility limitations. If scheduling and space permit, students with other disabilities may be accommodated. Criteria for bus ridership are reviewed annually and are subject to change. If your child is an appropriate candidate, the S-BT must complete a **Special Needs Busing Ridership Application** and submit it to Learning Services. If the application is approved, the District Transportation Manager will contact you and a pick-up/return schedule will be set up. An EA will be assigned to meet the bus when it arrives at school and deliver your child safely to the Kindergarten classroom.

## Resources

### **Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools website**

[www.sd68.bc.ca](http://www.sd68.bc.ca)

### **Individual Education Plans: A Guide for Parents (available in multiple languages)**

<http://bccpac.bc.ca/resources/individual-education-plans-guide-parents>

### **Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines—September 2013**

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg.htm>

### **The Learning Team—A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs**

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626683/learning-team-handbook-for-parents.pdf>

# Alphabet Soup—some common acronyms

<b>AT</b>	Assistive Technology
<b>BSP</b>	Behaviour Support Plan
<b>BCAAN</b>	BC Autism Assessment Network
<b>CDBC</b>	Complex Developmental Behaviour Conditions
<b>CDC</b>	Child Developmental Centre
<b>CYFSW</b>	Child Youth Family Support Worker
<b>CYMH</b>	Child Youth Mental Health
<b>DAC</b>	District Administrative Centre (School Board Office)
<b>ELL</b>	English Language Learner
<b>FBA</b>	Functional Behaviour Assessment
<b>ISC</b>	Inclusion Support Coordinator
<b>IEP</b>	Individual Education Plan
<b>IRP</b>	Integrated Resource Package
<b>LSST</b>	Learning Services Support Team
<b>MCFD</b>	Ministry of Children and Family Development
<b>NSS</b>	Nursing Support Services
<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapist
<b>PT</b>	Physiotherapist
<b>RTI</b>	Response to Intervention
<b>S-BT</b>	School-Based Team
<b>SSP</b>	Student Support Plan
<b>SLP</b>	Speech and Language Pathologist
<b>UDL</b>	Universal Design for Learning
<b>VICAN</b>	Vancouver Island Children's Assessment Network

# Countdown to Kindergarten

## January to June

- ❑ Online registration begins
- ❑ Sign Consent for Exchange of Information form and return to your neighbourhood school

## February / March

- ❑ Ready, Set, Learn events at most elementary schools
- ❑ March 1, 6 p.m. All Kids Go To School Info night at the Nanaimo Child Development Centre
- ❑ March 8, 4-7 p.m. Healthy Start to Learning Fair at the Country Club Centre

## April/May

- ❑ Therapists currently working with your child begin to write summary reports
- ❑ Preschool Teacher or Support Worker help with Transition to Kindergarten Planning Tool
- ❑ A Teacher may observe your child in preschool
- ❑ Attend Ready, Set, Learn events at your school

## May/June

- ❑ Transition to Kindergarten meeting to exchange information and plan for the fall
- ❑ Attend Welcome to Kindergarten events as appropriate

## July/ August

- ❑ Family time—rest and relaxation
- ❑ Talk about starting Kindergarten—highlight the positives

## September

- ❑ Kindergarten begins--gradual entry at most schools

## October/November

- ❑ Teachers/support staff get to know your child
- ❑ IEP meeting—the School-Based Team plans appropriate goals for this school year with you

# Notes

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# Contacts

Position/Name	Number
Kindergarten Teacher	
Case Manager	
School Support Teacher	
School Secretary	
Inclusion Support Coordinator	
Speech and Language Pathologist	
Physiotherapist	
Occupational Therapist	
<b>Department of Learning Services</b> <b>District Vice-Principal</b> M. Jane Carroll <b>Assistant Superintendents:</b> Tim Davie (Elementary Schools) Bob Eslinger (Diversity and Equity)	250 754 5521

## Getting to Know Each Other

The Department of Learning Services will host an information evening at the Child Development Centre on **Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 at 6:00 pm**. This booklet will be reviewed and questions answered. Families who wish to meet privately to discuss their child's needs can reserve a spot after the presentation. Call 250-741-5237 to book an appointment.

