Dear Kindergarten Parents,

The Boise State University Children’s Center welcomes you and your child to our Kindergarten program. It is a great pleasure to share in the experiences of a child’s early years of educational, social, and personal growth. We are looking forward to getting to know both you and your child.

Learning in Kindergarten is an active, engaged process which involves kids learning through play, skill practice, exploration, games, music, and more! The kids will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day that will require them to think critically, participate in conversations, and construct knowledge. As educators, we strive to teach the whole child. This means providing activities that develop not only the educational needs but also the emotional, social, and physical needs of each student.

The BSU Kindergarten provides students an enriched and extended curriculum, focusing on language arts experiences through drama, speaking, writing and reading. It provides enrichment in math, social studies, and science. The curriculum is aligned with the National Common Core Standards recently adopted by the State of Idaho. Students also participate in the State IRI (Idaho Reading Indicator) testing. In addition, the program is NAEYC Accredited and meets all standards outlined by the Academy. The literacy curriculum is rigorous with an emphasis on writing, reading and phonics. Numerous different tools are used to develop an vast understanding of literacy in your child. The math curriculum is framed around the concepts and teachings presented through the Math Teaching Initiative and aims at teaching your child to think mathematically and be a problem solver.

Educating a child is most successful when families and schools work together in the best interest of the child. We welcome your input and assistance in educating your child, after all, you are your child’s first teacher! Valuing education and the opportunities it provides are important first steps.

Going to school is one of the most important experiences in a child’s life. School can be an exciting place where children meet new people and participate in many new and different experiences. One of our primary goals for the children in Kindergarten is help develop a desire for lifelong learning. Many of the projects and activities that will be done will be geared toward fostering the child’s curiosity and interest in the world. We promise to work diligently to provide the children with wonderful learning opportunities.
A bit about the kindergarten teacher...

Mr. Eric Hovey, M.A.

Eric, a past Lead-Teacher in the preschool program, has been teaching at the Boise State University Children’s Center since 2008. Previously, he lived in South Korea where he taught English in a private Kindergarten. Eric comes to the Center with amazing leadership skills, a devoted passion for education, and a strong grasp on the fundamental role of education in the lives of young children. With over 10 years of experience working in elementary and early childhood education, his knowledge and determination to provide the students with the best possible experience is evident. Eric has a Bachelor’s degree in Education and a Master’s degree in Literacy Education. He also serves as the Preschool Supervisor for the BSU Children’s Center.

Helpful Reminders for School

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
On the first day of school, we ask that you bring your child directly to class. You can help them find their cubbies and hang their backpacks. After this, we encourage you to come in the room with them and help them find their seats. At this point, you can help your children get started on their “work” and then say goodbye. It will be helpful to keep your time in the room short and say a quick goodbye. Some of the children may have a hard time with saying goodbye on the first day, and this is not unusual. If this happens, just remind your child that s(he) will have a lot of fun.

Starting the second day of school, we encourage parents to allow their child to complete the daily tasks on their own (hanging up backpacks, finding their seats, etc.). These small jobs encourage independence and foster responsibility.

DROP OFF
It is extremely important that your child arrives at school on time every single day for many reasons. The first few minutes of the school day are an important time for the children to come in, greet their classmates, and settle into the school day. In addition to missing out on this time, late arrivals also disrupt the rest of the class. If you make a routine to be at the Center a few minutes before class starts, your child will be able to count on a smooth start to every day. The school day officially begins at 8:30 a.m. Children should be dropped off at the Kindergarten class between 8:20 and 8:30 a.m. Children may not be dropped off before 8:20 a.m. in the
Kindergarten classroom. Extended before school care is available at the Children’s Center. Please contact the front office for more information on this program.

**PICK UP**
The school day officially ends at 3:30 p.m. We ask that parents please wait in the hallway until the children have been dismissed by the teacher. The children who participate in the After School Program will be picked up from the Kindergarten classroom by Children’s Center staff.

**BEFORE SCHOOL CARE**
Children participating in the Before School Program should be dropped off directly in their assigned classroom. Breakfast will be served in the classroom shortly after 8:00 a.m. Breakfast will not be available to students who arrive after 8:20 a.m. Children’s Center staff members will take the Kindergarten students to their class at 8:30 a.m. No child should report to the classroom before 8:20 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE**
It is important that you child attend school every day. Attending regularly and being on time develops a positive attitude toward school life. Irregular attendance makes children feel insecure. The children will be learning many new things every day and it is difficult for children to catch up on missed lessons and work. Attendance is important but we understand that when children get sick it is best for them to stay home and get well. If your child will not be at school, please call the office at 208-426-4404. Please attempt to make doctor and dentist appointments after school hours.

**COMMUNICATION**
Open communication is vital to your child’s successful experience in Kindergarten. We welcome your comments, suggestions and concerns. It is important to keep the lines of communication open throughout the year. We encourage you to contact us if you have questions or concerns. We are happy to meet with parents before or after school. Please understand that the teachers are not able to have extended conversations with parents right before school starts or as the children are coming in to start the day.

*Daily Notes*
Each day you can expect to receive an email that summarizes your child’s day. The “Daily Notes” (as we refer to them) are an attempt to give you a glimpse into the group life of the classroom. They include descriptions of projects and activities, teacher observations, children’s comments, preview of upcoming activities or planned events, etc. Families have told us they value the level of detail and timeliness of these summaries. They often provide “talking points” and conversation starters regarding their child’s day. These updates will inform you of the units and skills that the students are focusing on in Language, Math, Composition, Phonics, Science, and Social Studies. Also, information will be given to keep you up to date about upcoming school and classroom events or to ask for parent assistance. If you prefer a paper update, please let your child’s teacher know.
**Classroom Folders**

Your child will be provided with a daily folder for transporting homework, finished work, and important notes to and from school. Many important messages, reminders, or forms that need to be completed and returned will be sent home during the school year. These notes will be sent home in your child’s daily folder. Please make sure you check this folder every night, and return important papers the following day in the folder.

**PARENT CONFERENCES and PORTFOLIOS**

Your child’s teacher welcomes parent visits and is happy to help with questions and concerns. However, if you need to speak with your child’s teacher about a concern, it is best to send a note in your child’s daily folder, send an email or call the Center to arrange a time to meet or talk by phone. Classroom teachers have a daily planning period that can be used for addressing your questions or concerns. Please understand that your child’s teacher cannot give you their full attention if you “drop in” unannounced while they are with her class.

At the end of the first grading period, teachers will hold a mandatory, individual parent conference to discuss your child’s progress. Again in the spring an optional conference can be scheduled to discuss your child’s progress. Parents will be contacted to arrange specific time and dates for these conferences. We offer the option of having your child be an active participant in the regularly scheduled family conferences. Students are invited into the assessment process by involving them in (1) reviewing and selecting work and (2) evaluating their own work performance and progress. In the Kindergarten classroom, each student will have their own portfolio and will be partners with the classroom teacher in determining what items should be placed in their portfolio. In making choices for portfolio inclusion, our students have an opportunity to express their thinking about their work and what it means to them.

Materials placed in the portfolios will be shared with families at conference time. Portfolios will be placed on the shelf above the cubbies. We encourage you to examine your child’s portfolio with your child at any time – not just at conference time. Because this portfolio belongs to your child, materials may be removed from the portfolio at any time as you and your child see fit. However, we ask one simple favor of you. Our expectation is that the contents of the portfolio will be shared with families at conference time and serve as a discussion point for those students who choose to be an active participant in the conference itself. If you decide to remove materials in advance of the conference we ask that you let us know so that we may make a copy of the work or photograph work for our documentation purposes before it leaves the classroom.

**CONTACTING THE OFFICE:**

Children’s Center Phone Number: 208-426-4404
Fax Number: 208-426-4406
Website: [http://childrenscenter.boisestate.edu](http://childrenscenter.boisestate.edu)
PROJECT DOCUMENTATION
There are two large bulletin boards outside our classroom that will be utilized to display children’s work and document their learning. While this features, major projects undertaken by the students– expect to see other documentation pieces in the classroom itself. We strongly believe in making learning visible and do so by documenting and displaying children’s thoughts, ideas and growth and construction of knowledge. I will use photo gallery for documenting action.

VISTING SCHOOL
Parents are welcome to visit the classroom. When you come to the Center, please report to the front desk to sign in. All visitors are required to wear a pass at all times for the safety of the children.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS
Throughout the school year there will be many changes for you to volunteer your time in class. Parent volunteers are an important part of our program. We encourage parents to volunteer in many ways that may include:

- Working as a reading or writing aide
- Serving as a guest reader
- Making items for the classroom at home. The items could include cutting, gathering or assembling materials for special projects
- Sharing special knowledge or expertise
- Serving as a parent to coordinate special events or activities in the classroom
- Chaperoning fieldtrips

Our families have also found innovative ways to contribute to class studies and projects as they develop a keen sense of what is taking place in the classroom and how they can complement these efforts. We are grateful for the many ways our families have contributed in terms of their time, talents, and materials to make our studies a deeper and richer experience for all students in our classroom. We believe the timely sharing of information facilitates this. We opt for special memorandums and emails as needs arise. We continue to look for ways to improve our lines of communication and always welcome your ideas and suggestions. If you are interested in volunteering please sign up at the open house or contact the Kindergarten teacher.

MEALS
Meals at the Children’s Center are prepared and provided by University Dining Services. Their trained chefs ensure that meals are nutritious as well as “child friendly” and meet USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.

Family style dining is used during all meals at the Children’s Center. Family style dining means teacher-caregivers and children sit down together to share and enjoy a meal. Adults play an important role in making mealtime a time of relaxation and enjoyment. We help create the atmosphere that makes mealtime a pleasant experience.
By eating together, children learn to socialize and share with others. They develop good eating habits and may be exposed to foods not served in their homes. As they take responsibility for serving themselves and making choices, they develop a sense of self-confidence.

As part of the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Children’s Center provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack for your child.

Children with medical food allergies will need a Medical Statement for Food Substitution Form filled out by the physician’s or doctor’s office. This form allows University Dining Services to supply an acceptable alternative. Non-medical food allergies will be the responsibility of the family to provide, in conjunction with University Dining Services.

Parents are always welcome to join the classroom for mealtime. Please let your child’s classroom teacher know if you will be joining them for a meal so they may notify the kitchen. If food is brought to school (with your teachers permission) for sharing among the children it must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers (per NAEYC accreditation requirements).

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Breakfast**

Please make sure your child eats breakfast every morning. It is very important that children have enough energy throughout the morning. Children participating in the Before School will be served breakfast at the Center shortly after 8:00 a.m. Breakfast will not be available to students who arrive after 8:20 a.m.

**Morning Snack**

A nutritional snack will be offered to students each morning. Children will be provided the opportunity to eat their snack in a relaxed social setting.

**Lunch**

Lunch will be served to students at 11:15 a.m.

**Afternoon Snack**

A nutritional snack is served at 3:45 p.m. to students participating in the After School program.
CUBBIES
Each student will be provided with individual cubbies to place personal items. To encourage independence and foster responsibility, please refrain from hanging up your child’s backpack and coat for them. Please allow them the opportunity to grow from these daily tasks. These cubbies will have each child’s name on it.

TOYS AT SCHOOL
The children should not bring toys from home into the classroom unless these is a special event happening.

RECESS
Kindergarten students will have a morning, lunch, and afternoon recess every day. Student will go outside unless the weather does not permit. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

CLOTHING FOR SCHOOL
In Kindergarten we will be spending a lot of time on the floor. We will be sitting on the rug to listen to stories, play games, and have conversations. The kids will be running around at recess and during games. Please send your child to school in clothes and shoes that he/she will be comfortable in all day. Please provide a change of clothes for your child to use in case of an accident. This should include shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Please update your child’s change of clothes to account for season/size changes. The clothes should be kept in bag labeled with your child’s name. This can be placed in the cubby on the first day.

HOMEWORK
The kids will be working hard at school every day, and we don’t believe that it’s necessary for them to have much work to do at home. The one activity that we do ask you to do every single day is provide your child with 20-30 minutes of reading time. This time should be spent reading with an adult. We want our students to see the relevance of education in their own lives. Homework assignments are optional; however, we strongly encourage you to support your child’s learning by taking part in the exercises as frequently as possible. This will allow you to learn about your child’s academic strengths and needs. Please spend no more than 5 to 10 minutes on an assignment unless your child’s interest and attention span warrants extra time. Homework, when assigned, will be found in your child’s daily folder. Four criteria will be considered before assigning homework. The homework:
1- Relates personally to the learner
2- Is an extension of/or preparation for work going on in the classroom
3- Emphasizes family involvement; encourages parent/child discussions that share information, thoughts, or points of view
4- Is motivating and fun; an activity that parent and child look forward to and find enjoyable.
FIELDTRIPS
We are fond of field trips and attempt to schedule them weekly. Fieldtrips provide a connection to the community and what is being learned in the classroom. Field trips run the gamut from simple and spontaneous nature walks- to a major outing such as the art museum that represents the culmination of weeks of study, thought, and preparation. We like to foster a connection with the BSU community as well. This can be an experience in the Art Metals Studio, the Ceramics Studio, a musical performance, introduction to track and field events, or a tour of the BSU greenhouses. Field trip information will be provided in advance of each trip. However, do keep in mind that spontaneous outings will occur from time-to-time.

REPORT CARDS AND GRADES
Kindergarten students are not given formal letter grades. Instead, students will receive an I (In progress), M (Meets Expectations), or an E (Exceeds Expectations) for a variety of skills on the report card. At the end of each quarter your child will receive a report card which will show progress for the academic areas, PE, fine arts, work habits, social skills, and conduct. Remember that the report cards are only a “snap shot” of what your child is learning at school.

VIP of the WEEK
In Kindergarten we will feature one student each week as our “VIP of the Week.” Typically, our selection of VIP is established alphabetically by first name (so this should give you some indication of when your child will be featured). Our overriding purpose in establishing this program is to learn more about each other: our families, our pets, our travels, our hobbies and special interest, etc. We go about this a variety of different ways-each as uniquely different as each of our students. In the past, many of our students have worked together with their families to create a poster that “tells their story.” Special space in the classroom is reserved just for VIP posters or other visual displays. VIP posters often include photographs and artistic embellishments that reflect the individual student’s artistic preferences. Students who are comfortable can share their poster in our large group gathering. Others may choose smaller group situations or spontaneous sharing with a special friend. Students who are featured as “VIP of the Week” will be encouraged to invite family members to join us for a meal. In the past, we have met parents, grandparents, and occasionally siblings. In order to allow the kitchen staff to plan for special guests, we only ask that you give us the courtesy of a 24-hour advance notice of when you will be joining us. If your schedule is extremely tight and you are only able to give a “today is the day” notice-we will, of course, “make this happen.” Teachers will find ways to draw attention to the VIP during his/her special week-small special privileges, identifying leadership opportunities, featuring the VIP’s special interests and incorporating it into the curriculum. Our students and families have enjoyed this program in the past and we find it to be an excellent vehicle for building a stronger sense of community within the classroom and to learn more about each other.
Overview of the Curriculum

The Children’s Center is NAEYC “National Association for the Education of Young Children” accredited and utilizes the Creative Curriculum. So will the kindergarten program! Similar to other classrooms, you will find a lesson plan posted weekly. Differences you might note are the frequency with which elements of the plan are modified and the length of time devoted to projects. Lesson plans will reflect children’s emerging interests. You are likely to see our students embarking on longer-term projects that take thinking and learning to a deeper level.

We strongly believe that it is our mission to foster a vibrant and innovative learning community where child-focused exploration, creativity, and collaboration inspire the curriculum. We view our students as capable researchers. As teachers, we support and extend the child’s chosen investigations. It is our ever-challenging role to serve as provocateur, researcher, and facilitator. Some projects will extend for weeks at a time, while others will be shorter-lived and often revisited. Recording and documenting children’s thoughts and ideas are pivotal when revisiting topics of interest.

Writing to foster Literacy

We will once again be utilizing the “Handwriting without Tears” curriculum. While a portion of our handwriting activities will be a large group-structured, many of our activities are more spontaneous, child-initiated, with real world applications that hold value for the child. We will foster writing through real world applications for the children. Focus will be writing upper and lower case letters, numerals, forming words and compositions. A writing center is planned.

Literacy

Our focus will be on learning to read and comprehend what we read. We will be utilizing the resources of the BSU Albertsons Library, where we have found state adopted best practices. The goal is to meet every student’s individual needs and provide the best instruction for them to learn to read. We will administer the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) just like public school Kindergartens. Along with NAEYC standards, we will follow the Common Core National Standards for Kindergarten. We will foster communication skills through, writing, reading, speaking, and listening. A listening center, class library, and computer access is planned.

Math

We have a partnership with BSU Math Education Department for use of resources. New standards for math are expected and we are at the ground level of these developments. We will be utilizing Common Core Standards and a curriculum that will foster mathematical reasoning. We will use practical real life experiences to work with mathematic concepts.
Science

All children need to foster critical thinking skills and observation skills in the classroom. Our science topics will develop from student interests or the reading we will do.

Art

We will be doing art projects from around the world. We will incorporate art appreciation into the classroom and basic art skills. I feel that art, along with science can help develop critical thinking skills in children.

International Focus

The Kindergarten students will learn about the world in which they live. International themes will be used to enrich the literacy and science curriculum. Each week the students will “travel” to a different country. Activities in the classroom will have some connection to a country we are visiting—whether we are exploring musical instruments unique to the country, cultural traditions, architectural influences, art forms original to that country, culinary specialties, etc. During the first week of the Fall semester, we will look at flags, the variety and purposes of different flags. Students will be asked where they were born, and we will locate and identify these places on our map. A multicultural center will be maintained.
Parent Orientation Night

Make Plans to attend the Parent Orientation Open House Night on Tuesday, August 18, 2015 from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Please take advantage of this informative evening to learn about the particulars of the Kindergarten program. During that time you will meet with your child’s teacher, help your child become acclimated to a new classroom, and tour the Center. This is also the time to make sure that all of your paperwork is in order and to sign up to participate and lead events that occur throughout the academic year. One or both parents are urged to attend.

First day of Kindergarten in Wednesday- August 19, 2015
Kindergarten School Supply List

- ✓ Large backpack labeled with child’s name
- ✓ Extra change of clothes labeled with child’s name
- ✓ A pair of running shoes to keep at school

All other needed supplies will be provided by the Children’s Center