Next Step: Kindergarten
A guide to help prepare parents and students for kindergarten
Kindergarten checklist

Follow this checklist to be sure your child is ready for their first day.

☐ December: Attend a school tour
   This is an event for parents only. More information is detailed in the letter from your principal in the pocket of this folder.

☐ January: Enroll
   Submit your Enrollment Form and photocopy of Birth Certificate

☐ February: Attend Kindergarten Orientation
   Parents are encouraged to attend this event along with their soon-to-be-kindergarten student. More information is included in the pocket of this folder.
   • Submit your child’s School Health Examination Form (completed by your child’s doctor) and Immunization Record (or signed waiver), if completed.

☐ Before the first day of kindergarten:
   If you haven’t done so already, submit the School Health Examination Form and Immunization Record to your child’s school at least one week prior to the start of school. These forms must be submitted before your child will be allowed to attend school.

Did you know?
Stillwater is rated one of the state’s best cities to raise a family in part because of our great schools.

Has your child participated in Early Childhood Screening?
Early Childhood Screening is a requirement for entry into all Minnesota public schools. Screening includes check-ups in the areas of vision, hearing, speech, motor and thinking skills, as well as general health and growth. This is a free service to all district residents. If your child has not yet been screened, please call 651.351.4022 or visit stillwaterschools.org/ec-screening to schedule an appointment.

“We love the teachers! They are all so amazing! They make it so fun for the kids! We love hearing and seeing how much their little minds grow in such a short amount of time! Our daughter comes home so excited about learning!”

- Erika Zignego, parent
Our schools are safe and welcoming places where all of our students receive personal attention from teachers who care about them. Teachers get to know the learning styles and unique abilities of each student. Lessons not only align with state standards, but take into consideration the individual needs of every child. We intentionally keep our kindergarten classes small so that our teachers can work one-on-one and in small groups with students. Your child will be challenged, supported, encouraged and engaged in lessons tailored to match their educational needs and goals.

Special Education
Stillwater Area Public Schools provide a variety of specialized services for students who qualify, including interventions and support for academic, social, behavioral and physical obstacles to learning. If you suspect your child has a disability, please talk with your building principal, visit stillwaterschools.org/SPED or call the district’s Student Support Services Office at 651.351.8604.

English Learner (EL) services
We help EL students develop communication skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing, which enables them to be successful within the academic mainstream classroom. The program also assists students through their cultural adjustment. We help them develop an understanding of American culture, while encouraging them to share their cultural backgrounds and realize the importance of their role in a multicultural society. For more information call 651.351.8317.

School meals
All of our schools offer nutritious and affordable meals to our students. Free and reduced prices are available to those who qualify. For more information, visit stillwaterschools.org/lunch or call 651.351.8326.

Don’t forget breakfast – Kindergartners eat FREE!
Breakfast is an important start to your child’s school day! Research has proven that students who eat breakfast do better at school, and thanks to state legislation, all kindergartners can eat breakfast for free.

We serve breakfast before school begins at all schools. Please check with the school office for serving times.

Healthy kids are happier and smarter kids
It’s true – what you eat impacts learning. Our school meals are loaded with healthy fruits, vegetables and whole grains. They are low in fat (with zero transfat) and provide the nutrition your child needs. Parents can check out menus online at stillwaterschools.org/menu or download the SchoolCafé app for you phone.
**School Age Care**

Adventure Club is a fee-based, school age care program providing high quality care before and after school. All-day care is also offered on non-school days and the summer at select sites. Adventure Club offers a variety of activities to match the interests of each child, and also incorporates learning opportunities in reading, math, science, world language, health, physical education and more. To learn more about Adventure Club, visit stillwaterschools.org/AC or call 651.351.8300.

**Transportation**

Transportation is provided to elementary students who live one or more miles from their neighborhood school. Families who choose to alternately enroll their children in a District 834 school other than their neighborhood school are responsible for providing their own transportation. For more information about transportation, visit stillwaterschools.org/bus or call 651.351.8377.

**School nurse**

Health offices at each school are staffed by health care professionals committed to keeping students well. We will work with you to address any special medical needs your child may have. For more information, visit stillwaterschools.org/nurse or call the district nurse at 651.351.6914.

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**Community Education**

Community Education offers enrichment and athletic opportunities at every age and every stage of life. Our learner-centered programs and services offer a variety of opportunities for learning, recreation and community involvement. From busy babies and t-ball to fitness and computer classes there’s something for everyone! stillwater.ce.feepay.com

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**FeePay**

FeePay - one place for families to pay for everything!
- School meals
- Before and after-school child care
- Field trips
- Community Education courses
- Athletics and activities

FeePay makes things easier for families by providing a secure way to pay online with credit or debit cards without the hassle of lost checks or cash or misplaced forms. stillwaterschools.org/Feepay

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**Track your student’s bus by downloading the Versatrans My Stop app.**

It compares GPS data to routing data to give families information as to where their school bus is located and what time it is expected at their stop. More info at stillwaterschools.org/mystop.
Parents play key role in student learning

Get involved at your child’s school!

Parent engagement in a child’s learning has been shown to significantly impact achievement and attendance, and increase engagement. In fact, the earlier parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects, according to Education Northwest. Here are several ways to be involved:

• **Volunteer!**
  There are many one-time and ongoing ways to volunteer. Check with your school. All volunteers must have a background check. Background checks are paperless and can be done with one easy step!

  Simply send an email to volunteer@stillwaterschools.org with your name and email address.

  You will then be emailed a link to “Trusted Employees” website. Once at the website, you can complete an electronic version of the background check and pay the $15 processing fee electronically. Most people complete the background check in 10 minutes or less!

• **Update your information in Skyward Family Access**

  Skyward is a web-based system that allows parents to view password protected information about their child, such as attendance, schedules, report cards and more. stillwaterschools.org/skyward.

• **Read your weekly newsletter**

  You will receive a weekly e-newsletter from your school that will list important dates and activities. Don’t miss it! It’s one of the best ways to stay informed. You can subscribe to other school newsletters, and the district newsletter, at stillwaterschools.org/subscribe.

• **Join the parent organization**

  Getting involved with PTA/PTO is the best way to stay informed, connect with other parents and stay up-to-date with what’s happening at your school.

• **Get to know your principal**

  Our principals are friendly and helpful. Each principal is highly qualified and comes from a rich educational background.

• **Attend parent-friendly activities**

  Each teacher will have optional family events throughout the year for students to present or perform what they have learned.
Ready for kindergarten

Here are the things your child will be working on as they enter kindergarten:

- Write their first name
- Identify and name colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, black, brown)
- Identify and name numbers 0-5
- Identify and name uppercase letters
- Identify and name lowercase letters
- Name sounds for letters they recognize
- Count to 31
- Regulate emotions and behaviors
- Separate from parents
- Follow directions
- Transition between activities
- Interact with peers
- Share and take turns
- Solve social problems

You are your child’s first teacher.
Here are things you can do to help prepare your child for school.

- Involve your child in conversation and discussion, taking turns listening and talking.
- Make a list or card file of words your child can read. Add to it as he learns a new word and point out that the list or file is increasing.
- While waiting in the doctor’s office or in line at the store, keep your child occupied by asking questions about their surroundings: “Can you find something that starts with the ‘B’ sound?”
- Count as you do daily activities with your child – the number of steps to the basement, the number of letters or catalogs that come in the mail, the plates or bowls you will need for setting the table.
- Play counting games in the car or as you walk down the street. Count the number of trucks you see on the way to the store or the number of dogs you see between home and school.
- As you prepare for a snack, ask your child “How many crackers do we need so that you and your friends each can have two?”
Next step: kindergarten!

Parents and other caregivers can provide important activities and experiences for children as they transition from the preschool years to kindergarten. Here are some things you can do at home to help your child be successful in kindergarten.

Emotional development:
• Respond to your child’s emotional and physical needs in kind and nurturing ways.
• Establish predictable family/life routines, but be flexible when necessary.
• Help your child identify and talk about their own feelings and the feelings of others.
• Model the use of appropriate words and actions when dealing with conflict and/or anger.

Approaches to learning:
• Plan activities and experiences that provide time for you and your child to learn together.
• Help your child explore and learn about your neighborhood and community.
• Encourage your child to try new things and solve problems.
• Monitor/limit the use of television, videos and computers.
• Talk to children every day about the things they see, hear and do.

Social competence:
• Listen carefully to your child. Encourage them to listen to others.
• Have regular conversations with your child and keep conversations going back and forth.
• Help your child identify and appreciate similarities and differences among people in your family and community.
• Model positive and appropriate ways to interact with children and adults.
• Use peaceful ways to resolve conflict with others.
• Encourage your child to help others in your family, neighborhood and community.

Physical development:
• Provide opportunities and time for outdoor large motor play.
• Provide opportunities for play with puzzles, blocks, beads, etc.
• Model and provide opportunities for writing and drawing at home.
• Serve healthy foods, eat regular meals and provide time for rest and relaxation.
• Make sure your child gets plenty of exercise and physical activity.
• Encourage your child to be independent when dressing, toileting, washing hands, eating, etc.
• Encourage your child to ask for help and be available to help when needed.
Apply now for 2020-2021

Give your child the unique gift of a second language! We're now enrolling kindergarten students (both English and native-Spanish speaking) in our Spanish Immersion program for 2020-2021.

Amigos Unidos, which means Friends United began in 2017 with its first class of kindergarteners - and families are raving! Immersion has shown great success in helping all kids develop high levels of language proficiency and literacy in both Spanish and English. Immersion students also demonstrate high levels of academic achievement in all subject areas.

Kindergarten students will learn language from a bi-lingual teacher, and spend the majority of their day immersed in the Spanish language. Learn more at stillwaterschools.org/immersion.

Interested in learning more?
We invite you to discover more about immersion and how it might benefit your child.

Spanish Immersion Information Night
December 2
6:30-7:30 p.m.
Lake Elmo Elementary School

Space in Amigos Unidos is limited. If interested in the immersion program, please complete the enclosed application by Jan. 15, 2020. A lottery will be held for all students who have applied by the deadline.

“After three years with the Spanish Immersion program we are seeing a confident bilingual child who is becoming more and more fluent in Spanish which is absolutely incredible.”

- Michaela Gwiazdon, parent
Get connected

The year before kindergarten is exciting and perhaps a bit overwhelming. As a parent, you probably have more questions than answers. Here’s where you can find the information you need as you prepare for the start of school.

Visit our website

Our website, stillwaterschools.org, has a wide variety of information, including:

• List of schools, staff contact information and links to school websites
• School start and end times
• School year calendar
• Attendance boundary map
• And much more!

Give us a call

District Receptionist ..........651.351.8340  
Enrollment........................651.351.8412  
Superintendent ..............651.351.8301  
Special Education.............651.351.8604  
Transportation...............651.351.8377  
District Nurse...............651.351.6914  
Nutrition Services.........651.351.8326  
School Age Care ..........651.351.8300  
Early Childhood Screening........651.351.4022

District 834 elementary schools

We invite you to get to know your school! Contact your building principal for ways you can become involved.

Afton-Lakeland Elementary School  
475 St. Croix Trail South  
Lakeland, MN 55043  
651.351.6500  
stillwaterschools.org/aftonlakeland

Andersen Elementary School  
309 North 4th Street  
Bayport, MN 55003  
651.351.6600  
stillwaterschools.org/andersen

Brookview Elementary School  
11099 Brookview Road  
Woodbury, MN 55129  
651.275.2500  
stillwaterschools.org/brookview

Lake Elmo Elementary School  
11030 Stillwater Blvd. North  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042  
651.351.6700  
stillwaterschools.org/lakeelmo

Lily Lake Elementary School  
2003 West Willard Street  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
651.351.6800  
stillwaterschools.org/lilylake

Rutherford Elementary School  
115 Rutherford Road  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
651.351.6400  
stillwaterschools.org/rutherford

Stonebridge Elementary School  
900 North Owens Street  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
651.351.8700  
stillwaterschools.org/stonebridge