

Hortonville Area School District

4-year Old Kindergarten (4K)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – PARENTS

BACKGROUND

What is 4-year-old Kindergarten?(4K)

4K is a voluntary comprehensive child development program for children who will be four years old by September 1st. The Hortonville Area School District 4K has implemented a community-collaborative model that builds on existing learning programs, child care centers and religious affiliated schools, in partnership with the site providers to provide quality early childhood education for 4 year olds. The program serves over 200 students at six sites.

Why are we doing this?

4K programming provides all young children the opportunity to participate in a quality early learning program which provides a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Children build the social and pre-academic skills that contribute to future success in school.

How will this impact our current elementary schools?

Community approaches bring together community leaders representing business, schools, child care, Headstart, parents, recreation, and parent education to explore the issues and develop community-based approaches to 4K. We are excited to offer an equal opportunity for all four year olds, regardless of where they live. We are reorganizing our operations which will maximize the use of facilities throughout the community. The net effect of this reorganization will make space available through school-based or community-based sites which will ensure that classes will be provided in an appropriate space for the foreseeable future.

What is the financial responsibility for parents?

There is a \$15 registration fee which is required for enrollment. There will be incidental costs for school supplies or field trips. The district will work with families that cannot afford these expenses. For families who reside within the district, there are no additional tuition charges for 4K programming. It is important to note that although no partner site will charge a fee for the 4K portion of their program, the private sites do assess charges for any additional services which are contracted by the parent. Additional services would include such things as enrichment opportunities, field trips, or day care before and after the hours of the 4K program.

Are there a minimum number of students that must attend a site to make that site eligible to participate?

There are no state regulations directing the teacher-child ratio for 4K. We look to the National Association for Education for Young Children (NAEYC) for guidance in the determination of class size and teacher-child ratio. Our HASD School Board is requiring a minimum of seventeen students to run a session. The number of students at each site will vary due to child care license ratio at each site.

Will children be transported to and from childcare sites?

Transportation will be provided at your site which is designated by the attendance area in which you reside. When transportation is requested the district designates both the site and session the 4K student will attend. In order for a child to attend a 4K site with wraparound care, parents must register directly with that site for that service by June 1st. Transportation will not be provided to and from the wraparound site. Additional details regarding routes will be mailed to the sites in early August. Bussing will be provided to St. Edward. Please note that if you are requesting transportation and your child is in AM 4K they will be bussed with other children on the regular route to Greenville or Hortonville Elementary and then shuttled to their assigned 4K site. After AM 4K, they will be transported to their home with 4K students. PM 4K students will be bused to the sites on a bus with just 4K students. At the end of the day, they will be shuttled back to the elementary sites and will return home on the regular bus route with other children. Please contact the Transportation Department at 779-7905 with any questions.

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ENROLLMENT

What age must a child be to participate in 4-year-old Kindergarten?

A child must be 4 years old on or before September 1, 2012 to participate. We do not have an early admission program for 4 year olds in the Hortonville Area School District.

When will 4K start?

The first day of school for 4K students will be the first day of school for the district. 4K sites follow the school district calendar, except on District early release days, 4K will be in session on those days.

Is there a supply list?

Supply lists will be mailed to you with a welcome letter from each site. There will be a \$15.00 district registration fee. This fee will be collected at Registration.

How many days per week will the program run? How long each day?

A 4K program must have 437 instructional hours and 87.5 hours of parent involvement opportunities per year to meet DPI requirements. HASD operates a 4 day program (Mon-Thurs) that runs 3 hours per day. AM hours are 8:00-11:00 am. PM hours are 12:00-3:00pm. The 5th day (Friday) is set aside for parent workshops, home visits, etc.

How are the children registered and enrolled?

Enrollment will remain open until the start of the school year. The team reviews attendance area information to balance classroom enrollments at each site. Attendance areas and transportation needs will determine sites. Letters will be mailed in July with placement information. Placement for 4K is not first come, first serve.

What about a child who has not attended a four-year kindergarten program in the past and is 5 years old on or before September 1st. If the parent elects not to send the child to regular kindergarten, will this child be eligible to be enrolled in 4K.

This is possible, but NOT encouraged. Children who meet the age eligibility for 5-year-old kindergarten are encouraged to enroll in that program; however, individual needs of children will be considered and a determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Can a child repeat the 4K program as a 4 year old and again as a 5 year old?

This is a decision that would need to be made on an individual, case by case basis. It would need to be done thoughtfully and carefully by a transition team that includes parents, teachers, and other educational professionals. It is not a routine practice and would be considered retention.

Can sites accept children who live in another school district?

Four year olds who reside outside HASD will be able to follow the Open Enrollment process only if their home district offers a 4-year kindergarten program. Appleton Area School District does not offer 4K.

Are parents required to enroll their four year old child in a 4K program?

No, the 4K program is a voluntary program of participation. Parents may opt into the program, or choose to wait and enroll their child into Kindergarten at age 5.

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CURRICULUM, OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

How does a 4K program differ from 5 year old kindergarten?

The 4K experience is a play-based experience that highlights learning through exploration.

What learning standards guide 4K?

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) provide a shared framework for understanding and communicating developmentally appropriate expectations for young children. The WMELS provide a framework for the development of program, curriculum, and assessment practices. Established DPI practices suggest the following proportions:

- Reading and language arts activities should be approximately 30 percent of the curriculum.
- Math, social studies, science, health, physical education, art, and music should be approximately 10 percent each of the teacher-directed curriculum activities for a total of 70 percent of the curriculum.
- Up to one-third of each day should be in student self-directed activities.

What qualifications are required of teachers?

All teachers will follow DPI licensure requirements.

Is specific curriculum used?

A research-based curriculum is implemented. The HASD 4K curriculum uses an integrated approach to address early language, literacy, math, social studies, science, and motor development. Skills are taught through a learning center approach that focuses on facilitation of play skills and developmentally appropriate experiences for preschool students. In addition, the 4K curriculum addresses social-emotional development and focuses on the essential skills of problem solving, emotion management, impulse control, and empathy.

Can religious instruction take place in the 4k classroom?

Not during the 4K program. 4K complies with state and federal regulations that specify the separation of church and state. If centers elect to offer religious instruction before or after the 4K program, they may do so, but staff and parents must understand that this is not affiliated in any way with the 4K program.

Can religious instruction be interspersed throughout the 4K day IF all the parents participating in a specific site agree?

The 4K program day must comply with separation of church and state.

Can parents be asked to provide snacks for the 4K classroom?

Parents may be asked to provide a snack. If parents do provide a snack they will need to follow prescribed guidelines given to you by the site your child will attend.

How will my child be assessed?

Student assessment will be ongoing; however, student growth will be monitored. Parent conferences will be held in November and February. Report cards will be sent home twice a year, in late January and at the end of the program.