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The Rockdale County Board of Education ("Board") desires that all students receive the benefit of an adequate education. With this view in mind, the Board prohibits unlawful discrimination against students because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability, or other protected group status or activity (e.g. opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the statutory complaint process) in its programs and activities or employment in its programs or activities. In keeping with this commitment, the Board will not tolerate harassment, discrimination, or other unlawful treatment of its students. As set forth herein, the Board designates the following employee of Rockdale County Public Schools ("District") to handle inquiries regarding the District's non-discrimination policies:

Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services or designee Rockdale County Public Schools 954 North Main Street Conyers, Georgia 30012 (770) 483-4713

# I am in Kindergarten!

My name is
I am years old.
I weigh pounds
I am inches tall.
My school is
My teacher's name is
My new friends are



INITY TIRST day of school was
The best part of my first day at school was when
My favorite activities are
I will go home by
(car, bus #, day care bus)
When I grow up, I want to be

# **Rockdale County Elementary Schools**

#### **Barksdale Elementary School**

Susan Norton, Principal 596 Oglesby Bridge Road Conyers, Georgia 30094-4144 770-483-9514

#### Flat Shoals Elementary School J. H. House Elementary School

Principal - (TBD) 1455 Flat Shoals Road, SE Convers, Georgia 30013-1885 770-483-5136

#### C. J. Hicks Elementary School

Tiwon Toney, Principal 1300 Pine Log Road, NE Conyers, Georgia 30012-4726 770-483-4410

#### **Hightower Trail Elementary** School

Dr. Penny Mosley, Principal 2510 Highway 138, NE Conyers, Georgia 30013-1102 770-388-0751

#### **Honey Creek Elementary School**

Hillary Meeler, Principal 700 Honey Creek Road Conyers, Georgia 30094-3516 770-483-5706

Kim Melly, Principal 2930 Highway 20, NE Conyers, Georgia 30012-2223 770-483-9504

#### **Lorraine Elementary School**

Dr. David Ray, Principal 3343 East Fairview Road, SW Stockbridge, Georgia 30281-5651 770-483-0657

#### Peek's Chapel Elementary School

Brian Travis, Principal 2800 Avalon Parkway Conyers, Georgia 30013-6396 770-761-1842

#### **Pine Street Elementary School**

Kim Vier, Principal 960 Pine Street Conyers, Georgia 30012-4504 770-483-8713

#### **Shoal Creek Elementary School**

Patrice Graham, Principal 1300 McWilliams Road Conyers, Georgia 30094-5736 770-929-1430

#### Sims Elementary School

Dr. Chara Moore, Principal 1821 Walker Road, SW Conyers, Georgia 30094-3128 770-922-0666

Grades: Grades PK-5 are taught in all elementary schools.

School Hours: Kindergarten, like other elementary school programs, is a full-day program. School begins each day at 7:35 a.m. and ends at 2:10 p.m.



# reetings from the Superintendent

#### Dear Parents:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Rockdale County Public Schools. Entering kindergarten is an exciting time for children and parents. While families are eager for their children to begin this new adventure, there may be apprehension. Let me assure you that we are prepared to help with this adjustment, address individual needs, and answer any questions you may have along the way.

Kindergarten is a whole new world of learning and maturing. Parents encourage this first big step with high expectations. We strive for your child's first learning experience to be a positive one that not only meets but surpasses expectations. We believe that family is the most important factor in the development of the individual. The key to success for any student is an environment where parents and teachers work together. There will be numerous opportunities for your involvement throughout the year.

It is our mission to empower students to shape their own future. The RCPS kindergarten program is designed to provide a strong foundation of learning experiences that your child will build on for years to come. It is our responsibility to challenge every student through a well-rounded curriculum that includes language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, writing, health education, and career and social awareness. Life skills such as accepting responsibility, working and sharing, developing good habits, and personal hygiene are incorporated into the curriculum as well.

We welcome and encourage you to share in your child's educational experiences. Our administrators, staff, and particularly our kindergarten teachers are looking forward to working with you and your child to make the transition from home to school successful and happy.

Sincerely,

Richard Autry Superintendent

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Requirements for admission to the Rockdale County Public Schools are established in accordance with the laws of the state of Georgia and the policies of the Rockdale County Board of Education. Student registration is conducted from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. weekdays at the Student Registration Center, 1143 West Avenue, Convers. The Center is open year-round except to observe most national holidays. The helpline telephone number is 770-761-1457.

# **Entry Age**

Georgia law requires that students attend a public or private school or home study program from their sixth through sixteenth birthdays. Free public kindergarten is available in every school system. Although attendance is not compulsory, a child who is enrolled in any public school program for 20 days before his or her sixth birthday is subject to the compulsory attendance law. A child must be five years old on or before September 1 to enter a state-funded kindergarten. A child must be six years old on or before September 1 to enter a state-funded first grade.

### Residence

Children must reside in Rockdale County with their parent(s) or legal quardian in order to be eligible to attend the public school system. Current proof of residence must be provided at registration. Acceptable verifications are:

- Lease agreement with current gas, electricity, or water bill.
- Lease agreement with automobile registration.
- Property tax receipt with current gas, electricity, or water bill. Property tax receipt with automobile registration.
- Statement of Legal Residence Affidavit (copies available at the Central Registration Office).

#### **Birth Certificates**

Every student should have proof of his/her birth date on file. Acceptable verifications are:

- An official birth certificate (not a hospital certificate);
- The birth date taken from an official document (such as passport or permanent record) and initialed by a school official (principal or designee).

The official document for verification should have originally required that the person prove the birth date on the document. Proof of birth date for kindergarten students must be presented at the time of registration.

#### Immunization Certificate - DHR Form 3231

DHR Form 3231 must be on file for every student enrolled in a Georgia school. Each child who enters school is required by law to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis), measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and hepatitis B. Immunization may be obtained through a private physician or the Rockdale County Health Department.

# Eye, Ear, and Dental Certificate - DHR Form 3300

Each child who enters school is required by law to have vision, hearing, and dental screenings before entering school. This certificate may be obtained from the Rockdale County Health Department or from your family doctor.

# Social Security Number

A child's social security number must be provided for every student admitted to a Rockdale County school. Exceptions: A child may be provisionally admitted to the school if the parent/guardian completes a postage-paid application for a social security number at the time of enrollment; or, a child may be admitted to the school if the parent/quardian provides a statement objecting to the requirement.

# Parent/Guardian Identification

Parent/Guardian photo identification is required. If not the birth parent, proof of custody/quardianship is required.



# **Transportation**

Bus transportation is provided to kindergarten students under the same rules and regulations as all other Rockdale County students. Some pertinent regulations are as follows:

- 1. Buses do not make stops for students in a distance less than one-tenth (1/10) mile.
- 2. All students who do not live on a bus route will be required to walk to a bus stop established by the Transportation Department if they live less than three-tenths (3/10) mile from such stop.
- 3. Students may be refused the privilege of riding buses for persistent misconduct.
- 4. The teacher must be notified in writing of any change in transportation home for a child (bus, car, nursery bus, etc.).
- 5. Parents may apply for transportation to a destination other than the student's home. This form may be obtained from the school office. Such a request may take up to 10 days to be approved or denied.

#### **Student Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is vitally important to each student since attendance affects a student's academic progress and the development of attitudes for his/her adult life. Once a kindergarten child is enrolled in the public schools for at least 20 days, he/she is subject to the Compulsory School Attendance Law regardless of age. A student who is absent from school for any portion of a school day must have a written excuse for the absence from his/her parent or guardian and must provide this to the school upon his/her return. Excuses provided more than three days following the student's return to school will not be accepted and the absence will be considered unexcused. If absences exceed 10 days in one school year, medical documentation for the absences may be required. See Policy JB for more details or review the Parent Handbook for the full Attendance Policy.

# **Safety and Health Policies**

Every precaution is taken to prevent accidents; however, arrangements should be made for emergencies. In case of emergencies, the parent/guardian is called. Please give the school all necessary phone numbers including emergency numbers. It is also very important that the school know the name of the family doctor and who should be notified when the parent/guardian is away from home. When head lice are evident or strongly suspected, the child will be sent home with a parent/guardian letter. The child will be readmitted upon proof of treatment (empty container or a statement from a physician) and with no nits.

# **School Closings**

There may be occasions when the schools are closed due to bad weather. The official TV station that broadcasts the Rockdale County Public Schools closings is WXIA-TV, 11Alive. You may also call the station at 404-873-9131 or check 11ALIVE.com for a current list of closings. In addition to this source, as soon as the decision is made to close school, we will use our Connect-ED system to call every family with a phone number in our student information database.

# **Report Cards/Parent Conferences**

Kindergarten students will receive report cards four times throughout the year. In an effort to ensure consistent and effective communication, parent conferences are scheduled during the school year. Parents/guardians are expected to attend these conferences. Additional conferences may be scheduled if the parent/guardian or teacher desires.



We believe all children are worthy individuals capable of success. We also believe that every child should have the opportunity to grow socially, emotionally, and physically as well as intellectually. Consequently, a balanced curriculum is planned for our kindergarten program.

The importance of an activity-oriented environment cannot be overemphasized in an early childhood classroom. The experiences should be developmentally appropriate because they are the foundation upon which all other education is built. We believe that kindergarten should foster a happy and nurturing environment in which children feel successful, build a positive self-image, and develop a positive attitude toward learning.

#### **Parental Involvement**

Parent participation is essential for a successful kindergarten experience and we strongly encourage and welcome parental involvement including the following:

- Attending parent education sessions.
- Scheduling parent-teacher conferences to discuss student progress.
- Reinforcing concepts introduced at school.
- Reviewing and assisting with homework.
- Participating in school-related activities, including PTA/PTO functions.
- Encouraging your child to follow school/class rules.
- Volunteering to help with school activities.
- Ensuring your child attends school every day on time, healthy, and well-rested.
- Reading daily with your child.
- Exploring how numbers are used in the real world (counting, money, time).



A planned curriculum is an essential element in a program for young children and includes more than the daily lesson plan or schedule of events. The kindergarten curriculum in the Rockdale County School System is an educational experience planned specifically for five-and six-year-old children, designed to meet their needs, and promote growth in intellectual, personal, and social areas.

The kindergarten curriculum is based on the following guidelines:

- A child-oriented environment (nurturing, warm, and flexible), with sufficient structure to achieve desired goals.
- A program that allows children the opportunity to explore, experiment, create, understand, and learn how to learn.
- A program positively planned to provide many opportunities for success.
- A program that develops problem-solving skills and promotes responsibility and independence.
  - A program to provide growing literacy experiences which will lead to success in reading.
- A program to provide concrete experiences which will enhance the development of number concepts and operations.
- A program to provide aesthetic and creative experiences.

Learning is a continuous experience and each child learns according to his/her own ability. A good school experience will offer the child many opportunities to continue growing. In kindergarten, the child will learn new ways of behaving and should make progress in his/her individual pattern of development.

For a complete list of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for Kindergarten, please visit **www.georgiastandards.org**.



We believe the learning environment should be positive, flexible, and relaxed, yet it should have sufficient structure to achieve desired goals. It should include the opportunity for the children to explore, discover, experiment, create, understand, and learn. The kindergarten learning environment is unique in that it includes a variety of experiences:

# **Concrete Learning Materials**

- Manipulatives (puzzles, games, blocks, counters, etc.)
- Art supplies (clay, paints, fingerpaint, paper, etc.)
- Musical instruments
- Books
- Dramatic play props (puppets, housekeeping equipment, etc.)
- Audiovisual equipment (tape recorders, CD players, etc.)
- Computers
- Appropriate software

# Field Trips

These trips broaden a child's experiences and concepts. Written parental consent is required.

# **Learning Centers**

- Science
- Social Studies
- Math
- Language Arts
- Housekeeping
- Blocks
- Art
- Writing
- Listening
- Computers



#### **Arrival**

During the arrival period, children browse through books, work with manipulative materials, share experiences, or participate in learning centers provided by the teacher. Students will be expected to unpack their own bookbag, coats, etc.

# **Morning Business**

The teacher or teacher assistant explains the activities for the day and discusses the weather, the time, and the calendar.

#### **Instructional Time**

The teacher introduces, develops, and reinforces appropriate units of study from science, social studies, health, language arts, and math.

# **Outdoor Activity Time**

Children climb, run, jump, and use large pieces of equipment. The amount of time spent outdoors will vary with the climate. Planned games and physical activities are included.

#### **Center Time**

Center activities are developed around the basic curriculum areas of language arts, math, science, health, social studies, art, and music. The children are given the opportunity at learning centers to make choices and to be involved in activities that are appropriate for their individual needs. This work may be performed independently or in small groups.

The teacher or teacher assistant may work with a single child, a small group, or the entire class. Included in the activities are opportunities for learning new concepts, reinforcing skills, reading and writing, dramatic plays, arts and crafts, blocks, listening centers, science experiences, and other activities designed by the teacher.

#### **Quiet Time**

Children engage in quiet activities, such as looking at books, listening to stories or soft music, and resting.

# **Preparation for Dismissal**

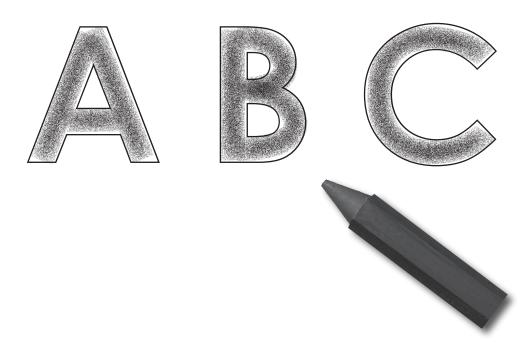
This time involves a discussion of the day's work, securing take-home projects, and getting coats and personal items together before departing school to go home.



Kindergarten teachers assess each child individually at the beginning of the school year to determine what he/she is ready to learn. Teachers check for recognition of colors, shapes, and letters, gross motor skills, number concepts, and oral language. This assessment, plus the teacher's observations about the child and any other pertinent information, helps the teacher in planning activities to meet each child's individual needs.

Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act (QBE) requires that all students enrolled in a public school kindergarten program undergo an ongoing assessment throughout the kindergarten year. The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) provides teachers with developmentally appropriate assessment procedures for use with five- and six-year-old children. The purpose of this testing program is to evaluate student performance, effectively place students, and plan instruction appropriate for a child's development. The ultimate goal is to prepare students with readiness skills to succeed at the first grade level and beyond and to communicate information about the student's progress to the parents/guardians and to the prospective first grade teacher.

In addition, each nine weeks, parents will receive a report card for their kindergarten student. The purpose of this report card is to communicate the current status of the child's progress toward mastery of the Georgia Performance Standards for Kindergarten.





- Label all jackets, coats, sweaters, hats, etc. with your child's name.
- Each child must have a bookbag.
- Each child must have a towel or mat for nap time. Check with your child's school to see which one is preferred.
- Place any money or notes to the teacher in a sealed envelope with your child's name, teacher's name, and room number clearly written on the envelope. Please specify the purpose of the money.
- If your child rides the bus, routing information will be available from the school and from the Transportation Department. Please send a written note to school if your child is not to ride the bus on any given day. Do not expect your child to tell the teacher that he/she will not ride the bus on a certain day.
- To get your child from school before 2:10 p.m., you must report first to the school office. Appropriate identification will be required. Early checkouts should be limited and take place before 1:40 p.m.
- Please observe school hours to assure that your child is on time for school. Elementary school begins at 7:35 a.m. and ends at 2:10 p.m.
- When your child is ill, please keep him or her at home until recovery is complete. Upon returning to school, please send a note explaining why your child was absent. It is also helpful to call the school when your child will be absent.
- If you have address, phone number, or bus route changes, please notify the school promptly. Please notify the school immediately if any emergency numbers have changed. At least three emergency telephone numbers should be on file with the school.
- Be sure that your child is well-rested and fed prior to beginning each school day. This assures that your child is prepared to enjoy school and learning.
- Please respond promptly to notes from the teacher and requests for completion of forms.
- Children may have "Show and Tell" when they are allowed to bring items to share with their classmates. Toy weapons of any kind are NOT ALLOWED.
- Be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the day's activities. For example, tennis shoes, not flip-flops, are a safer alternative for playground activities.
- Please help your child learn to tie his/her own shoes.
- Parents are needed to work with the school as volunteers or through the PTA or PTO.
   Interested parents are urged to talk with their child's teacher.



# Is reading taught in kindergarten?

The kindergarten year is the year of reading readiness. Much evaluation is conducted at the beginning of the year to determine a child's readiness to read. The children are actively involved in letter/sound awareness and language development activities. Exposure to the most frequent sight words (often referred to as the Dolch List) is part of the kindergarten curriculum. They are also immersed in books reading and hearing several stories each day. All of these provide a solid foundation for reading and often lead to students reading before leaving kindergarten. Because of the curriculum and the fact that many children are developmentally ready to read at age six, reading is often the wonderful result of the solid reading/language readiness program.

Children who master all of the pre-reading steps and are developmentally ready to move ahead are provided a program to meet their needs. For the majority of children, a year spent in the fundamentals that underlie the ability to master the reading process is time well spent for the future.

# Will my child learn handwriting in kindergarten?

Every child will be given numerous opportunities to develop hand-eye coordination and small muscle control. There will be continuous opportunities to see the teacher writing the child's name, thoughts, and ideas. As children display readiness for writing, instruction will be provided. Rockdale County teaches a manuscript style of handwriting (see page 15). Students will learn to print their names, all upper and lower case letters, and teacher selected words.

# What kind of creative writing can I expect from my child in kindergarten?

In kindergarten and first grade, children write stories using pictures, letters, and words spelled according to the way they sound.

At first the writing may be unreadable, but when your child shares his/her writing, please respond somewhat like this, "This looks interesting. I'd like you to tell me what it says." Then accept whatever your child says with, "Oh, I see. I like that." As the weeks and months pass, you will discover that what you see on the paper and what your child tells you will become more and more alike.

Research has shown in classrooms throughout the country that students become better writers when teachers let them begin writing as best they can as soon as they enter school. Teachers have found that when they wait until students can spell every word and write everything correctly most of the children have lost interest in trying to put their creative ideas on paper.

# Do you use workbooks?

Five-year-olds are physical learners, and they internalize concepts and master skills in many ways other than paper and pencil operations. In addition to the appropriate stories and workbooks included in the instructional programs, a variety of concrete experiences and hands-on activities are designed to meet the unique needs of the kindergarten child.

# When I ask my child what he learned today, the answer is, "We played." Is that all kindergarten children do — "play"?

What a great compliment of a kindergarten program that youngsters would describe it as a play experience or that a parent would comment that the learning activities seem to look more like play! The fact that children experience their most rapid growth in learning and personality development during times which feel and look like play is phenomenal. Play in the world of children is a serious scene through which they learn.

What appears to be play to the outsider observing a kindergarten program is a very carefully planned and staged program of instruction. This informal learning may resemble play, but it is not of a frivolous manner. As the problem-solver and the decision-maker, the child is building reasoning and thinking skills.

The kindergarten curriculum is one in which children learn by doing rather than through formal lessons which come later in the elementary school years. Play sounds weak as a central activity of a school. Free play sounds even worse. But young children's play is not a lighthearted activity. Through structured play activities, children develop concepts of size, shape, number values, physical development, vocabulary growth, socialization, and many other problem-solving skills necessary for success in all content areas in the upper grades.

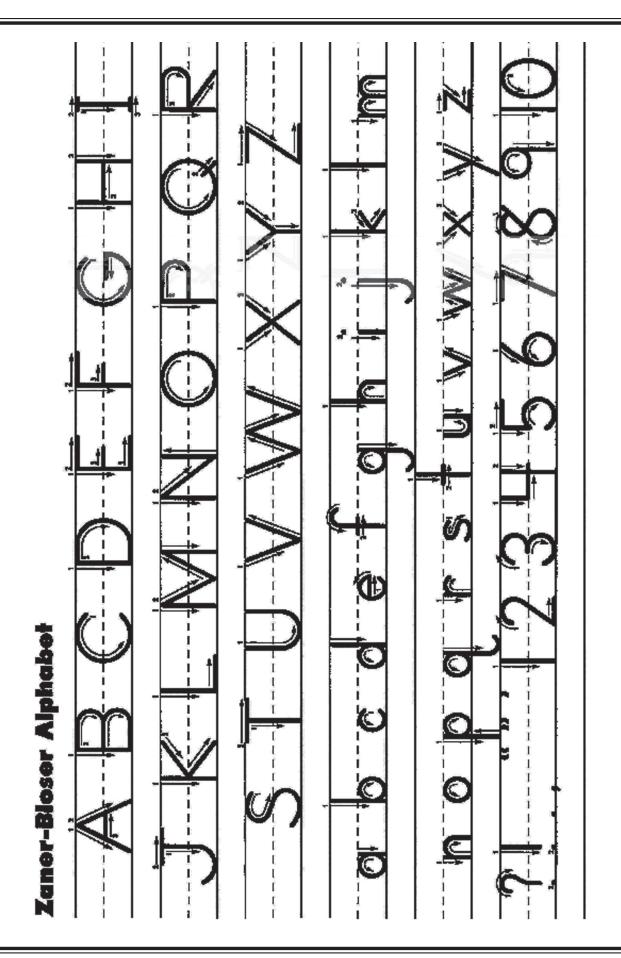
# What if my child is not progressing through the curriculum at expected performance levels?

If you or your child's teacher feel that your child is not making progress through the kindergarten curriculum at an appropriate rate, assistance may be requested from the Response to Intervention (RTI) team. This team may suggest interventions that are monitored to improve your child's performance. If the interventions do not improve the area(s) of concern, your child may be referred to the Student Support Team (SST) where more intensive interventions are tried. Sometimes additional evaluation may be warranted to pinpoint your child's needs and to help develop more interventions for the student. If there is any indication that a disability exists, your child may also be referred to Learning Support Services for further testing. Contact your child's teacher or the SST chair for additional information.



As a parent, you play an important role in getting your child off to a good start in kindergarten. There are many ways that you can help to ensure an easy and positive adjustment to kindergarten, and you are probably doing many of these things right now! The checklist below can provide some specific skills that you and your child can work on between now and the beginning of the school year.

you and your child can work on between now and tr	ie beginning of the school year.
Academic and Problem-Solving Skills  Literacy  Does your child have early literacy skills (holds a book and pretends to read, views print in books/magazines and in the environment, repeats or retells a story, draws pictures about a story, begins reading activities on his/her own)?  Does your child recognize his/her name in print?  Can your child name and recognize 10 or more letters?  Can your child listen attentively to a story, poem, or song?	<ul> <li>Physical Skills and Health</li> <li>□ Are your child's immunizations current?</li> <li>□ Has your child had eye, ear, and dental screenings?</li> <li>□ Does your child typically eat healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks?</li> <li>□ Does your child get proper sleep at night and rest if needed during the day?</li> <li>□ Does your child show balance and coordination skills (riding a tricycle, jumping, walking a balance beam, throwing and catching a ball, climbing stairs, etc.)</li> <li>□ Does your child have fine motor control (holds</li> </ul>
<i>Math</i> ☐ Can your child match, sort, and classify objects? ☐ Can your child recognize and name numerals up to 10?	a pencil/crayon with thumb and forefinger, independently cuts with scissors, strings beads, puts a puzzle together)?
<ul> <li>□ Can your child identify the shorter/taller, bigger/smaller of 2 things?</li> <li>□ Can your child recognize and name basic shapes (circle, triangle, square, and rectangle)?</li> <li>□ Can your child repeat simple patterns?</li> <li>□ Does your child have basic time concepts (morning, afternoon, evening; yesterday, today, tomorrow)?</li> <li>Arts</li> <li>□ Does your child show an interest and awareness of</li> </ul>	Communication Skills  ☐ Does your child respond to comments or questions in a conversation with others?  ☐ Does your child pronounce words and sentences clearly most of the time?  ☐ Does your child communicate his/her first and last name, his/her age, his/her parents' names, his/her gender, and tell something about him/herself?
music, arts, or drama?  □ Does your child use a variety of colors, figures, and details in his/her artwork?  □ Does your child use movement, songs, and makebelieve in creative or expressive ways?	<ul> <li>Self-Help/Life Skills</li> <li>□ Is there a daily routine in your child's day?</li> <li>□ Is your child responsible to take care of his/her personal belongings?</li> <li>□ Can your child follow a set of small step-by-step</li> </ul>
Science  □ Does your child attempt to learn about objects through investigation? □ Can your child observe, describe, and ask questions about living and non-living things as well as physical phenomena such as the weather and the earth? □ Does your child ask "what," "why," and "how"	directions?  Can your child ask an adult for help? Can your child take turns speaking with others? Can your child self-soothe and communicate needs to others? Can your child put on and tie his/her own shoes, remain seated during a meal, remain dry and unsoiled between bathroom trips, and wash
earth?	remain seated during a meal, remain dry a







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