

Dear Families,

Kindergarten is such an important year for your child. Your child will grow academically and spiritually. Here at Saint Francis DeSales Catholic Academy, we strive to do that. Our Kindergarten class is a self-contained class with 26 students. There will be a teacher and a paraprofessional working with your child throughout the day.

Kindergarten provides your child with an opportunity to learn and practice the essential social, emotional, problem-solving, and study skills that he will use throughout his schooling.

- **The development of self-esteem** is one of the important goals of kindergarten. This is the process of helping your child feel good about who she is and confident in her ability to tackle the challenges of learning.
- **Kindergarten teaches cooperation:** the ability to work, learn, and get along with others. A year in kindergarten provides your child with the opportunity to learn patience, as well as the ability to take turns, share, and listen to others — all skills that he will use through his school years and beyond.
- Most children are naturally curious, but some do not know how to focus or use this curiosity. Kindergarten is a time for **sparking and**

**directing your child's curiosity** and natural love of learning.

We offer many programs in Kindergarten. In reading, we will be using Wit and Wisdom. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of rich texts. In Phonics, we will be using Wilson's Foundations. In Foundations, students will learn their letters and sounds. They will learn how to correctly form letters. In Math, we will be using Go Math. In Religion, we will be using Sadlier Religion. In Reading and in Math, your child will be assessed individually, small groups, or the whole class. I will be assessing the kids using a leveling system called Fountas & Pinnell. The children will be leveled two times throughout the year. Reading is a huge part of success!

I am looking forward to a wonderful year. If you need to reach me you could send a DOJO message or you can send me an email at [jstathis@stfrancisschoolbh.net](mailto:jstathis@stfrancisschoolbh.net). I truly believe in keeping the lines of communication open.

Dear Family:

A new school year has been launched! This year, I'll be using a program called **Fundations**<sup>®</sup> to teach some important basics of reading and spelling. However, I am going to **need your help**.

We know that when a child has a "Coach" in addition to a classroom teacher, the child makes significant progress. We will work together as a "team" – I'll be the teacher, and you the coach.

I will do my best to provide you with the necessary tools to take on that role. I'll keep you informed of "what is happening" in the classroom and provide suggestions and a guide as to "what can be happening" at home.

I look forward to a very successful year as we work together with your child in Fundations. We will have fun teaching and helping your child build a strong foundation for literacy!

The next letter will include Unit 1 and related activities.

Once again **thank you** for your interest and cooperation.

Sincerely,

*Ms. Stathis*





## *You are likely wondering, “What is Foundations?”*

Research indicates that **systematic** and **explicit phonics instruction** is effective for all children. Foundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. We will combine this instruction with the **reading of good literature**, which is just as important for your child's development.

### **Foundations is systematic**

because it follows a very definite sequence for teaching and it follows a very definite procedure to teach those concepts.

### **Foundations is explicit**

because this program does not leave room for guessing. It teaches all concepts directly. The children will review letters and how to form these letters. They will learn sounds using keywords to help them remember. They will soon move on to blend the sounds into words.

As the year progresses, Foundations introduces many aspects of word structure and sentence structure. I shall be sending home guides and activities for all of this.

*You are also probably wondering, “How can I become a successful ‘Coach’ in this reading program?”*

### **As a ‘Coach’ you can:**

- 1.** Read the Foundations letters that I send home. These letters will contain updates, program information, and activity suggestions.
- 2.** Set aside time to do the “home activities” with your child.
- 3.** Monitor your child's progress and share successes as well as concerns with me.

I feel certain that you will find working with your child in Foundations very rewarding.  
Your child will treasure your involvement!



## Help Develop Oral Expression And Vocabulary

You can help your child develop **oral language** (the spoken word) with the following ideas. Do these anytime you are with your child:

### 1. Encourage your child to answer “wonder” statements.

Say such things as “I wonder why a dog barks.” Or say, “I wonder if Grandpa likes spinach.”

### 2. Help your child expand his/her vocabulary by rephrasing.

When your child says something such as, “He’s scared,” you could say, “Yes, the dog barks because he is frightened, you are correct!”

### 3. Ask open-ended questions.

Do not ask, “Are you raking leaves?” (The child would simply answer, “yes.”) Instead, ask, “What are you doing with your rake?” The child will answer you and then you can rephrase the answer to further develop vocabulary (see # 2).

### 4. Limit the amount of TV

However, if your child watches a children’s program, talk about it (see #'s 1, 2, 3).

### 5. Provide household props that encourage pretend play.

Use spoons/pans in the bathtub; cups/teapots/dolls; small rakes/shovels. While playing, be sure to talk through your actions (see #'s 1, 2, 3).

Verbally interacting with your child simply means taking every opportunity to talk with your child. With our busy lives, interactions between adults and children are often directive (“do this,” “do that,”) or negative (“stop hitting,” “don’t run.”) Try to break this pattern whenever possible. Both you and the child will have pleasant experiences and you will be helping to develop oral expression and vocabulary.

# WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

## WHAT IS MY KINDERGARTEN STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 1?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

### Module 1: The Five Senses

Module 2: Once Upon a Farm

Module 3: America Then and Now

Module 4: The Continents

In this first module, we will study the five senses. Studying the five senses lays a foundation for knowledge of human biology. We will learn how we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell as we ask the question: *How do our senses help us to learn?*

## OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE BOOKS:

### Picture Books (Informational)

- *My Five Senses*, Aliki
- *My Five Senses*, Margaret Miller
- *Rap a Tap Tap*, Leo and Diane Dillon

### Picture Books (Literary)

- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault; illustrations, Lois Ehlert
- *Last Stop on Market Street*, Matt de la Pena; illustrations, Christian Robinson

### Articles

- "Great Depression," Children's Encyclopedia
- "The Harlem Renaissance," Brian Brown

## OUR CLASS WILL WATCH THESE VIDEOS:

- “Bojangles Step Dance”
- “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom”
- “Eight-Year-Old Tap Prodigy Little Luke”

## OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE PAINTINGS:

- *Flower Day*, Diego Rivera
- *Le Gourmet*, Pablo Picasso

## OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- What are our five senses?
- How do people use their senses to learn about the world?
- How does CJ use his senses to learn about the world in *Last Stop on Market Street*?
- How do our senses help us learn from *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*?
- How do our senses help us learn from *Rap a Tap Tap*?
- How do our senses help us learn?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME:

As you read with your Kindergarten student, ask:

- *What do you notice and wonder?*

## BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *Geraldine, the Music Mouse*, Leo Lionni
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Bill Martin Jr.
- *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* Bill Martin Jr.
- *The Listening Walk*, Paul Showers
- *Drum Dream Girl*, Margarita Engle
- *Hello Ocean*, Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *Rain*, Manya Stojic
- *Owl Moon*, Jane Yolen
- *Snowy Day*, Ezra Jack Keats

- *Little Fur Family*, Margaret Wise Brown
- *Every Second Something Happens: Poems for the Mind and the Senses*, Christine San José
- *Ada Twist, Scientist*, Andrea Beaty
- *No One Saw*, Bob Raczka

### PLACES YOU CAN VISIT TO TALK ABOUT THE FIVE SENSES:

Visit an art museum or art exhibit together. Take time to look at the art and ask:

- *What are you wondering about the five senses after looking at this art?*
- *What do you notice?*
- *What's happening in this work of art?*
- *How do people use their senses to learn about the world?*