



A Year in the Life of a PS11 Kindergartner*

*The staff of PS11 has carefully planned for this coming school year. However, all great educators understand that even the best made plans need to be reflected upon, and edited depending on the needs of the students at any given time. While we do not imagine the scope of this year to be drastically different than we have planned, this guide should be considered a framework, rather than a specific and exact plan. We try to keep these pages as up to date as possible, but typos are inevitable. If you see an error, please send an email to ps11slt@gmail.com. Thank you.

8/2011

A TYPICAL DAY IN KINDERGARTEN AT PS11

Welcome to Kindergarten!

School begins each day at 8:50am promptly. Starting at 8:30am, kindergarten students and their families will enter through the main entrance on 21st Street and meet their teacher at an assigned table in the cafeteria at 8:45am.

The kindergarten day is packed with exciting and engaging learning experiences, including reading, writing, math, science, art, read-alouds, singing, making friends and playing. A sample day is provided below. Each class's daily schedule will differ due to scheduling, but all periods run the same length of time. Depending on unit foci, outside programs and classroom goals, studies may change. Students will have math, reading and writing every day.

Sample Daily Schedule for Kindergarten

8:45	Pick up by teacher in cafeteria
8:50-9:30	Morning Routines, Morning Meeting, Word Study
9:30-10:20	Reading Workshop
10:20-10:30	Snack
10:30-11:20	Writing Workshop
11:20-12:22	Lunch/Recess
12:22-1:00	Math Workshop
1:00-1:26	Science/Social Studies
1:26-2:16	Specialty Class
2:16-2:30	Read Aloud
2:30-3:00	Choice Time/Little Yard
3:00-3:10	Dismissal (in playground)

Lunch and Recess

Kindergarten students eat lunch before going outside for recess. During recess, teachers, coaches and school aides monitor students. Our Fourth Grade Lunch Leaders will also assist kindergarten students. Both organized activities and free play options are offered. If the weather is cold, be sure to dress your child appropriately, as students go outside all year round, even in colder months.

Morning Program

Each September, and at various times throughout the year, teachers identify students who could benefit from additional academic instruction in a small group setting. These students are invited to attend Morning Program where they will receive small group, targeted instruction.

Morning Program will begin for kindergartners in October and be held on Wednesday and Thursday from 8:00-8:50am. Students should be dropped off *before* 8:00am in the front lobby and will be sent upstairs to their Morning Program classroom. They will be sent directly to their regular classroom at 8:50am. *It is imperative that students are on time.*

After School Program

Students registered for the PS11 After School Program will be escorted to the cafeteria at 3:10pm by their classroom teacher. Students registered at other after school programs will be picked up by program employees in designated areas.

Late Arrival

All students arriving late for school (AFTER 8:45am) will enter through the main entrance (eastern set of doors) on 21st Street and must wait in line in the cafeteria to obtain a late pass before going upstairs to their classroom. Late students will not be permitted to enter a classroom without a late pass. Family members are not permitted to escort students to classrooms.

Late Pickup

Parents or guardians who arrive late for dismissal (AFTER 3:10pm) will find their child in the Main Office on the second floor. As there will not be staff members available to supervise children, if the Main Office is unable to contact you, your child may be taken to the NYPD 10th Precinct on West 20th Street.

LITERACY CURRICULA

PS11 uses a research-based reading and writing curriculum developed by Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP). TCRWP is a research and staff development organization housed at Teachers College at Columbia University. The teacher-educators are involved in long-lasting collaborations with teachers around the world. The Project has a lasting and deep affiliation with six hundred schools, and develops ideas that are foundational to literacy instruction across the globe. Through our affiliation with Teachers College, PS11 staff members visit Columbia a few days a year for specific professional development seminars. In addition, we have a staff developer who visits the school throughout the year to support our professional practice.

For more information on TCRWP, please visit their website:
<http://tc.readingandwritingproject.com>

Literacy Assessments

Teachers use many forms of assessment to ensure that they are constantly aware of where your child is performing and how they can best help him or her succeed. These include:

Concepts of Print: This assessment reveals what students know about how books work. For example, can they identify the front and back of the book? Do they know the difference between pictures and words or letters and words? Do they know that print goes from left to right and that we turn pages as we read a book?

Letter and Sound Identification: This reveals which lower case and upper case letters students can identify and what letter sounds they know.

High Frequency Word Lists: High Frequency Words are the words that occur most often in print. Students need to read these words “in a snap.” Having students read word lists shows which words they identify quickly and which words we need to help them learn.

Spelling Inventory: This is a list of words that a teacher dictates and students write. When students miss a word, teachers look carefully at **what** they missed as they spelled that word. For example, if the word is “CAT,” did the child know that it starts with the letter C, ends with T and has an A in the middle? If the child wrote, “CT,” the teacher knows that the child knows beginning and ends of

words and that we need to begin to teach short vowels in word study. Rather than giving students words to memorize, teachers help them learn spelling patterns that they can apply to many different words. The spelling inventory shows teachers the best instruction for each individual child.

Running Records: During a running record, a child sits with a teacher and reads a book or an excerpt from a book aloud. As the child is reading, the teacher takes notes about what the child does as he/she reads. What miscues (errors) does he/she make and what does the reading sound like? Is it expressive, smooth, choppy, monotone? The child then retells what was read and answers some comprehension questions about what literally happened in the text and questions that require the child to “read between the lines” (we call this inferring). The teacher then uses all of this information to determine a reading level as well as goals and instruction for that individual child.

Conference: A teacher sits with a child during reading or writing and they talk about the work the child is doing. Perhaps the child will read to the teacher. The teacher gives the child positive feedback about his or her work, and then chooses a particular strategy to teach the child that day, prompting the child to try out the new strategy.

Student Writing: Teachers look at student writing to see what writing strategies they are using and how they are progressing with their goals. This includes “on demand” pieces where the students write for one full period independently, as well as published pieces from the end of each writing unit. Teachers also offer feedback to students on their published pieces.

READING CURRICULUM

Students gain a love of reading and appreciation of books through daily **Reading Workshop**. During this time, students learn the features of books, concepts of print, decoding, and comprehension skills to help them become successful, lifelong readers.

Units of Study in Reading *(subject to change)*

Unit 1	Launching Reading Workshop
Unit 2	Emergent Storybooks

Unit 3	Superpowers
Unit 4	Pattern Books
Unit 5	Being a Reading Teacher
Unit 6	Non Fiction Reading
Unit 7	Readers are Brave and Resourceful
Unit 8	Stamina, Reading Plans, Character Clubs
Unit 9	The Gift of Reading
Unit 10	Ramping up to 1 st Grade/Summer Reading Plans

You will receive more in-depth information about what each unit entails during the beginning of year grade breakfast, and through monthly Classroom Newsletters.

Mini-lesson: Each Reading Workshop begins with the class convening on the rug for the mini-lesson. During this time the teacher models a new skill or strategy that students will need to become proficient readers. The students are then given a chance to “try it out” with teacher support before being sent off to their seats to practice it on their own during independent reading time.

Read Aloud: Reading aloud exposes students to books on and beyond their current reading level. This enables students to enjoy and appreciate the world of literature, while giving them a glimpse into their future reading lives. It is a way to expose students to cultural and social issues they are faced with daily. This exposure leads to rich conversation and reflection about both the literature and important worldly topics. Reading aloud is typically done in a whole class setting with time set aside for partnership discussion.

Shared Reading: During shared reading the teacher uses an enlarged text to teach skills and strategies. Skills and strategies are based around self-monitoring for meaning while reading, accumulating information, developing thoughts around the "big ideas" and making connections to what we already know about the world and ourselves. The text is enlarged so students can see and follow along in the learning process. Texts may include letters, short stories, poems, advertisements, newspaper articles, songs or non-fiction materials.

Small Group Instruction: Guided Reading: This instruction happens with groups of students reading at the same reading level. The teacher introduces a set of skills necessary to move on to the next reading level. This instruction incorporates strong teacher support as students become comfortable navigating more difficult texts. Teacher supports include book introductions, vocabulary exposure, tools to support students with new reading skills and in-depth book discussions.

Small Group Instruction Strategy Lessons: This is a time when the teacher works with a small group of students with the same needs. These students may not be on the same reading level but they need the same work with specific reading skills and strategies. Students are taught strategies to practice right then and there. They work within their own books so the work is authentic. Discussions ensue about the usefulness of the strategy and how it can be incorporated into further learning. Often students set goals during this time for how they will practice this strategy in their future reading. Based on need, strategy groups are commonly held 2-3 times on the same strategy so that it becomes a natural tool for the student to use while reading.

Independent Reading: During independent reading, students are reading books at their “just right” reading level. Each week, students “shop” for new books from their classroom library. The books are easy enough for students to read on their own, yet present challenges for them to work through using the lessons and strategies they are learning. Most one-on-one conferences occur during this time, with the teacher moving from one child to the next as the rest of the class reads. Students also bring "just right" books home to read each night.

Word Study: Star Name: Kindergartners begin the year by studying the most important words they need to know—the names of the students in their class! This is a great way for the students to get to know each other as they learn all about the letters, sounds, and syllables found in their names. Each child will have a chance to be featured as the star name child.

Word Study Foundations: This word study program is used to help students learn their letters and sounds. Each letter of the alphabet has a corresponding picture. This consistency helps the child identify

the sound of each letter. *Foundations* also focuses on handwriting and proper letter formation of both lowercase and uppercase letters.

Word Study *Words Their Way*: This word study program also teaches letter sounds, but puts an emphasis on more complex spelling features including vowel patterns, digraphs, and blends. *Words Their Way* uses ‘sorts’ to help the students learn new spelling features. Each sort focuses on one spelling pattern/rule, and it is the student’s job to sort the words based on the given pattern.

WRITING CURRICULUM

In the classroom, kindergartners are surrounded by their own writing. During **Writing Workshop**, they learn the skills and strategies needed to create their own written work while exploring many different genres from story writing to poetry to "All About" books. They use their favorite authors as mentors and are considered authors themselves right away. Teachers guide students through the process of idea generation and selection, drafting, and revising, and at the end of each unit each child publishes a finished piece that is put on display or read aloud.

Units of Study in Writing *(subject to change)*

<i>Unit 1</i>	Launching Writing Workshop
<i>Unit 2</i>	Small Moments
<i>Unit 3</i>	Listing and Labeling
<i>Unit 4</i>	Writing Pattern Books
<i>Unit 5</i>	Raising Quality of Small Moments
<i>Unit 6</i>	How To Books
<i>Unit 7</i>	Information Books
<i>Unit 8</i>	Authors as Mentors
<i>Unit 9</i>	Science Writing
<i>Unit 10</i>	Poetry and Songs
<i>Unit 11</i>	Choice Writing/Summer Projects

Mini-lesson: Just like in Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop begins with a mini-lesson. During this time, the teacher instructs the class on a writing technique that is not just appropriate to the unit of study they are working in, but also to their lives as writers. Again, students have the opportunity to practice each skill while on the rug before independent writing time.

Shared Writing: During shared writing, the teacher and students work to create a writing piece together. Students generate the ideas and sentences, while the teacher does the physical writing. It is a time for students to practice writing skills as a whole class with teacher support. The resulting writing piece is posted in the room and can be referenced as an example during their independent writing time.

Interactive Writing: During interactive writing, the teacher and students share the pen. In this mode of instruction, students take turns writing on the board. Ideas and sentences are either teacher generated or jointly created with the students.

Independent Writing: Independent writing is similar to independent reading in that the students are working at their own “just right” writing pace. During independent writing time, students have the opportunity to generate their own writing pieces. Students learn how to go through the writing process, taking a seed idea to a published piece. It is during independent writing that most one-on-one conferences occur.

Small Group Instruction: Teachers pull small groups of students aside based on their needs as writers. This instruction can include revisiting old strategies, reviewing the day’s lesson, or even learning something brand new. Teachers may use interactive or shared writing during small group instruction time.

MATHEMATICS CURRICULUM

The PS11 math curriculum is based on the *TERC Investigations* program, designed to create critical thinkers and problem solvers through a deep understanding of mathematics.

The *Investigations* curriculum is designed to:

- Support students to **MAKE SENSE OF MATHEMATICS** and become mathematical thinkers
- Focus on **COMPUTATIONAL FLUENCY** with whole numbers
- Provide substantive work in areas of rational numbers, geometry, measurement, data and early algebra —
- **AND THE CONNECTIONS AMONG THEM**
- Emphasize **REASONING** about mathematical ideas
- **COMMUNICATE** mathematics content
- Engage the range of learners in **UNDERSTANDING MATHEMATICS**

In addition to the *TERC Investigations* curriculum, teacher instruction and assessments are based around the *Common Core State Standards*. These standards can be found online at <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

Mathematics Assessments

In kindergarten, several comprehensive assessments are used to track where students are performing in math. This lets the teacher determine how best to support a student's progress.

Unit Assessments: Before starting each unit, students are given an assessment to gauge prior knowledge. Students are not expected to know what they are being tested on at the beginning of a unit; this assessment allows the teacher to adapt the curriculum and plan for small group and individual instructional time based on individual student needs. All assessments are created by the teachers and are designed to address the expectations of each unit. At the end of the unit, the assessment is administered again. This post-assessment ensures that the students have met the expectations of the unit after the instruction has been given. For skills that are still not mastered, teachers will continue to work on those areas with students during small group and individual conference time.

Curriculum-based Assessments: The *Investigations* curriculum has developed a series of skill checklists and assessments that are given throughout the course of each unit to test students' mastery.

Addition/Subtraction Assessment: This assessment is administered three times a year. Students are given addition and subtraction sheets with 10 problems on each page. This is a way to note students' mental mastery of one- and two- digit addition and subtraction facts. You will find the benchmarks in your child's portfolio during the first parent teacher conference. While the standards for kindergarten addition and subtraction become more of a focus in the second half of the year, we still assess these skills early on in order to meet the needs of students who demonstrate early understanding of these concepts.

Units of Study in Mathematics (*subject to change*)

<i>Unit 1</i>	Who is in School Today?
<i>Unit 2</i>	Comparing & Counting
<i>Unit 3</i>	What Comes Next?
<i>Unit 4</i>	Measuring & Comparing
<i>Unit 5</i>	Make a Shape, Build a Block
<i>Unit 6</i>	How Many Do You Have?
<i>Unit 7</i>	Sorting & Surveys
<i>Unit 8</i>	Money
<i>Unit 9</i>	Time

Essential Math Concepts

The essential math concepts for Kindergartners are categorized below by mathematical strand. **Please note that many math skills are incorporated during Morning Meeting and throughout the day, in addition to the work done in Math Workshop.*

Number and Operation in Base Ten (Place Value)

- Know the number names and the count sequence
- Work with 11-19 to gain foundations for place value

- Count to tell the number of objects
- Compare numbers

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from

Measurement

- Describe and compare measurable attributes
- Classify objects and count the number of objects in categories

Geometry

- Identify and describe shapes
- Analyze, compare, create and compose shapes

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies curriculum is developed by PS11 kindergarten teachers, based on the NYC Scope and Sequence for **Social Studies**. The focus is on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills and building a rich vocabulary for speaking and listening during class discussions. Hands-on experiences and literacy-rich materials to help students grow ideas and become “experts.”

Assessments for Social Studies

Performance-Based Assessments: During the course of each unit, students will participate in performance-based assessments that demonstrate student understanding of the topic through both independent and group projects. These might include contributing to a class mural or collecting and sharing information through a journal.

Teacher Conferences and Observations: Teachers observe and meet with students during content lessons just as they would during other learning times, offering guidance and support. These conferences also allow teachers to assess and track student development and progress.

Units of Study in Social Studies *(subject to change)*

Unit 1	Welcome to Kindergarten! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind & Gentle • Star Name • Class Rules & Mottos • Classroom & School Community
Unit 2	Me, Myself & Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings • Friendship • Diversity • Commonalities • Needs & Wants • Traditions
Unit 3	Family Study New Year’s Resolutions & New Rules
Unit 4	Neighborhood Study & Community Helpers
Unit 5	Reflection: How Much We’ve Grown & Kindergarten Memories

SCIENCE

The Science curriculum is developed by PS11 kindergarten teachers and based on the NYC Scope and Sequence for **Science**. FOSS Science kits are introduced to enhance the curriculum. Students continue to develop problem-solving skills and critical thinking, and build a rich vocabulary for speaking and listening during class discussions. Emphasis is placed on hands-on experiences and literacy-rich materials to help students grow ideas and become “experts.”

Assessments for Science

Performance-Based Assessments: During the course of each unit, students will participate in performance-based assessments that demonstrate student understanding of the topic through both independent and group projects. Possible projects include contributing to a class mural or collecting and sharing information through a journal.

Teacher Conferences and Observations: Teachers observe and meet with students during content lessons just as they would during other learning times, offering guidance and support. These conferences also allow teachers to assess and track student development and progress.

Units of Study in Science *(subject to change)*

Unit 1	Sky Tree Study Launch
Unit 2	All About Farms Apples & Pumpkins + 5 Senses
Unit 3	Fall Study
Unit 4	Winter Study
Unit 5	Properties of Matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sink/Float, Making Boats
Unit 6	Spring Study
Unit 7	Animal Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat • Life cycles • Animal needs • Babies • <i>Butterflies/frogs/ fish in class</i>
Unit 8	Summer Study <i>(Last visit to Sky Tree!)</i>

CHOICE TIME

Choice time, or "centers", quickly becomes many Kindergartners favorite time of the day. Students choose their own organized play activities based on their own interests and strengths. During this time, students are developing their communication skills and practicing appropriate peer interactions.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing friendships is one of the most important parts of kindergarten. Being a friend means sharing, caring and compromise, but these invaluable skills aren't always easy. Through community building activities, turning and talking, and organized and free play, students learn how to handle conflicts and how to respond appropriately to their peers and to adults.

Throughout the year, students develop listening and speaking skills. This includes following directions, looking at the speaker, thinking about what is said and raising hands during class discussions. There is also an emphasis on vocabulary and saying more than just "yes" or "no."

An important part of kindergarten is developing skills to become more independent. Early in the year, students learn how to unpack their own bags and prepare for the day. Later, students learn how to develop their own projects and direct some of their own learning. To help students better monitor their own behavior, most kindergarten classrooms use a visual system that reminds students when their behavior is on track and when it isn't.

SPECIALTY CLASSES

Each school day, kindergartners participate in a different specialty class or "Special," taught by certified staff members.

Music: Kindergartners start the *Music and the Brain* keyboard program and *Piano Book 1*. The program focuses on singing, rhythms, and patterns and taking those skills to the keyboard. Warm up exercises are introduced for their voices. They'll learn, sing and perform songs in unison and games in both English and other languages. Students will learn to play some pitched and unpitched instruments to reinforce the rhythmic patterns, dynamics and tempi that they are learning.

Theatre: Kindergartners will dramatize storybooks and build their own dramas based on them. They will create characters and dramatic storylines, stretch their imaginations and PRETEND!

Gym: Kindergarteners will focus on developing loco motor skills (skipping, hopping, etc.) with an emphasis on spatial awareness. Students will participate in fun group activities that support this and hopefully encourage them to participate in physical activities on a daily basis. Through a collaboration with *The City Soccer Initiative*, Kindergarten students train with a professional soccer coach. This program promotes sportsmanship, teamwork and the basic fundamentals of soccer.

Computers: Kindergarten students come to the computer lab to work on one of several software programs to extend their classroom studies in literacy, math, and social studies. They use *Kid Pix* to put text and graphics together to express their voice. They use *Kidspiration* to explore geometry and math concepts. And they use Thinking Things to become better problem solvers.

Art: Students use drawing, painting, oils, clay, ceramics, mosaics and collage to learn about and practice various techniques and styles of art.

Dance: Kindergartners create their own Jungle Boogie Warm-Up, make a human alphabet with body shapes, and begin Language of Dance Motif Writing. We'll create a Leaf Dance, a Snow Dance, a Seed Dance. They will focus on locomotion and motor skills.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework in kindergarten is to establish a daily work time at home while sharing some of the learning experiences of the day. Homework should not be challenging for students. Use this time to talk with your child about their learning.

Kindergarten homework should take less than 15-20 minutes each night and may increase over the course of the year. Kindergartners should also read with or to a parent for at least 15 minutes each evening.

Each teacher's homework system varies. Specifics will be given during the class breakfast at the beginning of the year.

OUTSIDE PARTNERSHIPS

CookShop: CookShop is a program sponsored by the Food Bank of NYC that helps introduce students to healthy produce. The students explore foods grown by local farmers. After learning about where the produce comes from, the students have the opportunity to cook with each week's ingredient, taste what they made, and bring recipes home.

Education in Dance: Teaching artists from this non-profit, integrated arts enrichment program work with Kindergartners once a week from November through February. They teach movement, basic dance skills, music, and familiarity with major composers, healthy eating, visual arts, and acrobatics. The work is focused on kindergarten-friendly topics and themes including shapes, directionality, and the seasons. This program culminates in a performance by all kindergarten students, to which parents are invited.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Field Trips: Field trips provide rich learning experiences outside of the classroom. Kindergarten trips include the Atlantic Theater/Theatreworks, the Bronx Zoo, Union Square Farmers Market, the Highline, the American Museum of Natural History, the Transit Museum, Queens County Farm, and apple picking.

100th Day of School: Students in grades K-2 celebrate the 100th Day with activities relating to the number 100 throughout the day. Each class visits the Auditorium for part of the day to experience an array of 100th Day activities arranged by the PTA.

Enrichment Cycle: Kindergartners take part in a 10-week enrichment cycle, during which they participate in an activity of their choice along with a mixed group of K-2 students for one period a week. Enrichment activities change each year with our teachers' interests. Mosaic Murals, Puppets Around the World, Swimming, Origami, Merengue, Calendar Making, Jewelry Making, Cheerleading and Mask Making are just a few of the options offered in the past.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Kind & Gentle: The PS11 community revolves around a philosophy called "Kind & Gentle". More than just words, "K&G" means all the actions and language of "doing unto others what you would have them do unto you." Throughout the school, there are clear expectations for students to behave in a kind and gentle way towards others within our community and beyond. Students are encouraged to maintain this attitude towards others throughout their years at PS11. Some examples of ways teachers foster K&G in the classroom include: using kind words, complimenting one another, and picking a secret K&G and being extra kind to that person all day or all week.

Family Friday: One Friday morning each month is designated as "Family Friday". All families are invited to come into the classroom and take part in activities that reflect an element of the school day. This is a great opportunity for families to see all the amazing work that is going on in the classroom. Activities in the past have featured reading workshop, art projects, Family CookShop, publishing celebrations and poetry centers.

PS11 Garden: Students will have the opportunity to work and learn in our amazing vegetable and flower gardens all year. Throughout the year, food from our garden will be harvested and served in our lunchroom.

SLT and PTA Events: Throughout the year, PS11's School Leadership Team (SLT) and PTA sponsor community-building events, as well as family workshops that support parents as partners in their children's education. You will find information about these events on the PS11 website, in the monthly Classroom Newsletter, and in flyers coming home in your child's home folder.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CITIZENSHIP

We believe very strongly in community service at PS11. Throughout the year students will be engaged in activities that will benefit our local, national and global communities.