



Kindergarten  
Junior Kindergarten  
Montessori

**TCAPS**

Traverse City Area Public Schools

**FIRST STEPS**



# Welcome to:

Traverse City Area Public Schools!

# TCAPS educates, inspires, and supports all learners to maximize individual excellence and success.



Enrolling your child in Kindergarten is a big step. At Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS), our programs are designed to encourage each young learner to realize their potential in an engaging, inspiring, and safe environment. We encourage you to learn about our traditional Kindergarten, Junior Kindergarten, and TCAPS Montessori programs.



You can prepare your child for Kindergarten and encourage learning by incorporating fun activities:

- Read every day to help prepare your child for a lifetime of joyful learning.
- Point out words and letters whenever you can.
- Provide pencils, markers, crayons, and paper for writing activities. Help your child begin to learn writing their name.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and to use words to communicate.
- Sort and count everything: toys, laundry, cereal.
- Open the door to math by cooking together. Talk about measuring, pouring, timing, and counting.
- Explore the outdoors. Talk about the things you see around you.

## Elementary School Locations



**231.933.5700**  
1625 Sawyer Road  
Principal: Kirk Ranney  
ranneyki@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/blair



**231.933.3580**  
5858 Culver Road  
Principal: Angela Camp  
campan@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/silverlake



**231.933.5910**  
301 West Seventh Street  
Principal: Jana DuGuay  
duguayja@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/centralgrade



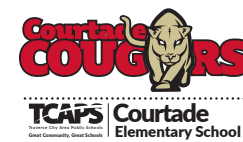
**231.933.6420**  
4053 Franke Road  
Head of School: Tracy Rucker  
ruckertr@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/montessori



**231.933.8940**  
1800 Three Mile Road  
Principal: Victoria Derks  
derksvi@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/cherryknoll



**231.933.3500**  
933 Rose Street  
Principal: Bryan Kay  
kaybr@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/traverseheights



**231.933.5800**  
1111 Rasho Road  
Principal: Andy Phillips  
phillipsan@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/courtade



**231.933.7900**  
1500 Fisher Road  
Principal: Toby Tisdale  
tisdaleto@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/westwoods



**231.933.5600**  
1600 Eastern Avenue  
Principal: Jonathan Swegles  
sweglesjo@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/eastern



**231.933.8540**  
1250 Hill Street  
Principal: Angela Sides-McKay  
sidesan@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/willowhill



**231.933.7800**  
7600 North Long Lake Road  
Principal: Kate Burwinkel  
burwinkeka@tcaps.net  
www.tcaps.net/longlake



# Traditional Kindergarten

Traditional Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten are offered at all TCAPS elementary schools. Students attend a full day, Monday through Friday. School times vary based on location.



Focused on building a solid foundation of skills necessary for reading proficiency, TCAPS incorporates five components of literacy:

- phonemic awareness
- phonics
- fluency
- vocabulary
- comprehension

## Reading Fictional Text

- Retell a story and ask/answer questions about key ideas and details
- Ask/answer questions about text features and unknown words
- Compare/contrast the experiences of characters in familiar stories

## Reading Nonfiction Text

- Ask/answer questions about key ideas and details to better understand the topic(s)
- Ask/answer questions about features of the text and unknown words
- Identify similarities/differences between two texts on the same topic

## Writing

- Generate and show development of various topics
- Collaborate with adults and peers to make improvement and share writing
- Through shared research, write about a topic

## Language

- Demonstrate development of letter formation and spacing
- Use new words/phrases when speaking and writing

## Foundational Skills

- Understanding the layout of the book and the actions of a good reader
- Phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, segmenting, syllables)
- Develop grade-level phonics skills and age-appropriate word analysis skills
- Read emergent reader texts with purpose and understanding

## Speaking and Listening

- Demonstrate appropriate listening
- Communicate ideas, needs, and experiences effectively with adults and peers

## Whole Numbers

- Represent and write whole numbers up to 50
- Solve problems using whole numbers up to 20
- Develop counting skills with whole numbers up to 50; learn to count up, add on, and count down
- Write addition and subtraction equations with numbers up to 10

## Describing Shapes and Space

- Describe the physical world using geometric ideas and vocabulary
- Identify, name, and describe basic two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes presented in a variety of ways
- Use basic shapes and spatial reasoning to model objects in the student's environment and to construct more complex shapes

## Mathematical Practices for All Students

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning



Kindergarten math instruction focuses on two critical areas:

- whole numbers
- shapes and space

More learning time in Kindergarten is devoted to developing a solid number sense than to other topics.



# Traditional Kindergarten

## Academics: Science

### Science Processes

- Become engaged through their natural curiosity
- Begin to form ideas and try to make sense of the world around them
- Learn to use their senses for observation and investigation
- Construct explanations and design solutions

### Physical Science: Position, Motion, and Forces

- Develop an understanding of forces and their relationship to changes in motion
- Relate properties of objects and their movement
- Develop language for positions of items

### Life Science: Living and Nonliving

- Investigate basic needs of living organisms
- Discriminate between living and nonliving



### Earth Science

- Observe and describe materials found on earth
- Investigate what earth materials are required for plant growth
- Begin to link life science and earth science

### Health

- Social and emotional health
- Nutrition and physical activity
- Safety
- Harmful substances
- Personal health and wellness

### Music

The seven strands of TCAPS Kindergarten music curriculum are: singing, playing instruments, music literacy, listening, movement, creativity, and music in relation to history, culture, and other disciplines. Students actively experience all seven strands through singing, creative movement, playing instruments, and dance.

### Physical Education

Physical Education curriculum includes physical fitness, cognitive understanding, motor skills, leisure skills, and personal/social skill components.

### Art

Kindergarten students create and learn about art concepts and explore ideas about themselves, their world, and other cultures through various art processes. Art class helps develop fine motor skills and promotes personal creativity.

## A Typical Day in Kindergarten

Students learn to be independent in Kindergarten and practice academic and social skills every day that will set them up for success.

Upon arrival, students will go to their classrooms and prepare for the day. They will be greeted by their teacher and check in, make lunch choices, and begin independent seatwork.

Students may attend art, music, or physical education class, or make a trip to the library during the day.

Students will play outside for recess in the morning, after lunch, and in the afternoon, where they will practice social skills, creativity, and have fun!

A typical day will incorporate students learning and practicing language arts and math skills.

Students will learn in whole-group and small-group settings.

Students may have a hands-on science lesson or learn about their community and school in social studies.

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria with other Kindergarten students.

When it's time to go home, students prepare themselves and are walked out by their teacher to either be picked up by a family member or board a bus.



## Academics: Social Studies

Students learn about the social studies disciplines of history, geography, civics and government, and economics through the lens of "Myself and Others." To show understanding of social studies goals, students will:

- Use directions or positional words to identify significant locations in the classroom
- Develop a sense of time and chronology using events from their own lives to set a foundation for understanding the past
- Distinguish between yesterday, today, and tomorrow
- Form and express a reasoned opinion on a classroom issue
- Describe fair ways to make decisions
- Explore different symbols that represent ideals of our nation, such as the American flag
- Apply the ideas of rights and responsibilities in the classroom
- Experience what it means to be a classroom citizen
- Describe ways people use the environment to meet human needs and wants



### Library

The elementary library media centers are at the heart of education at TCAPS with resources for both school research and reading enjoyment. Each class has a special weekly library visit. Special reading promotions throughout the year encourage students to develop a love of reading and a desire to "find out more" at the library.





# Montessori Program

*The Montessori Kindergarten program, also referred to as the Primary Program, is an all day program for students of Kindergarten age. The Primary Montessori Program is a multi-age setting, serving children three to six years of age. The Montessori methodology is used with the goal of providing children the opportunity to develop independence and to be a contributing member in their learning community. Transportation is not provided for this program.*

In a Montessori environment, children experience hands-on learning with concrete materials in all areas:

- practical life
- art
- sensorial
- writing
- language
- science
- math
- geography

The Montessori Directress or Director facilitates learning by encouraging the students to follow their interests, make appropriate choices, and take responsibility for their education. All TCAPS Montessori Directors and Directresses teaching Kindergarten students have a Michigan elementary certification as well as a Montessori certification.

## Practical Life

Practical life activities develop the muscles of the hand for writing. They also develop concentration and coordination. Activities develop practical skills that transfer to a child's sense of self-esteem.

## Sensorial

Sensorial puzzle games provide children with a chance to work with dimension, color, shapes, texture, smell, sound, and sometimes taste. The senses are the direct pathway for information to the brain. These basic skills prepare the young child for reading and math.

## Language

Language work provides children practice in one-to-one correspondence, sequencing, letter recognition, associating sound to symbol, blending sounds, building words, rhyming, word families, and sentence building.



## Math

Math activities begin with a child's sense of one-to-one correspondence and continue on to associating numeral to quantity. The Bead Chains give children an opportunity to practice skip counting, which is a precursor to multiplication. The Golden Bead materials teach an understanding of place value. These materials provide a concrete experience for adding, subtracting, and sometimes at this level, multiplication and division.

## Art

A variety of materials for coloring, cutting, drawing, and gluing are available on a daily basis. A special art activity tied to cultural studies, art history, or seasons is presented weekly.

## Writing

Youngers practice tracing Sandpaper Letters. Eventually, students write letters in a box filled with sand or rice. Soon their hands become stronger and more controlled by practicing making shapes with metal insets. Olders practice tracing letters each day on paper. Students write stories several times a week by valuing the ideas and thoughts that they put onto paper, beginning with pictures, adding words, and eventually writing sentences. Stories are kept in a writing folder and can be shared with the class.





# Montessori Program

## Science

Children love to learn about the world around them. They develop observational skills by using their senses, learn the importance of recording their observations, and begin to draw conclusions from what they observe.

## History / Culture / Geography

Children learn to appreciate a sense of time, differences in the way people live, and how they are affected by where they are on this planet. Maria Montessori strongly believed that a global understanding would lead to a greater chance for world peace.

## Specials

Students participate in physical education, Spanish, and music every week.

## Snack

Snack is an important part of the Montessori curriculum. The menu encourages healthy and tasty choices. Children have an opportunity to help prepare their snack, socialize, wash their own dishes, and prepare the table for the next person.

## The Peace Corner

At times, children need to separate from a challenging situation and regroup. Often, thinking about the effects of one's behavior leads to a change for the better. If a quiet place is all that is needed, The Peace Corner is available.

# Junior Kindergarten

Sometimes, students benefit academically or socially from the gift of an extra year prior to entering a traditional Kindergarten program. The Junior Kindergarten program exists to serve this purpose. Typically, these students are also some of the youngest Kindergarten-eligible students that we serve. The program is the first year of a two-year Kindergarten experience and is designed to provide children additional time to

develop their skills prior to entering Kindergarten. Students learn core competencies to set them up for success in Kindergarten. Students have more time for purposeful play and participate in programming like other elementary students. The Junior Kindergarten program is available at all TCAPS elementary schools. Transportation is available for children residing within the host school's boundary.

*"We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being."*

*~Maria Montessori~*

## A Typical Day in Junior Kindergarten

*Students learn to be independent in Junior Kindergarten.*

Upon arrival, students will go to their classrooms to get ready for the day. They will be greeted by their teacher and check in, make lunch choices and start on some independent seatwork.

Students benefit from the same special classes as all students in their school, including art, music, and physical education.

Purposeful play is an essential part of each student's day. Sometimes this will happen at one of three daily recess breaks, and sometimes it will follow as a way of practicing something the students have learned.

A typical day will incorporate students learning and practicing language arts and math concepts and skills. They may have a hands-on science lesson or learn about their community and school in social studies.

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria with other Kindergarten students. After lunch and recess, there is typically some sort of quiet activity to prepare students for an afternoon of learning.

When it's time to go home, students prepare themselves and are walked out by their teacher to either be picked up by a family member or board a bus. Junior Kindgartners will sleep well at night after a busy day of learning and fun!

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15



# Registration Information



## Additional Services

TCAPS is committed to meeting the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children. Services and supports are available to meet the unique needs of each student.

### Special Education

A full continuum of programs and services is available for students who are eligible for special education services. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) outlines the needs, accommodations, goals, and services that constitute a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for each eligible student.

### English Learner Program

The English Learner (EL) Program ensures academic achievement for students who qualify for English language services. Every student who enters the district will be required to fill out a home language survey indicating the student's first language and the primary language spoken in the home. If a student meets the requirements for screening and qualifies for services, they will receive additional support to become more proficient in English.

### Student Support Network

The Student Support Network (SSN), is a program administered by Traverse City Area Public Schools that provides free, supportive, education-related services, and non-academic supports to help overcome obstacles that may create barriers to learning for all students, ages 3-20.

For more information, contact SSN Coordinator Katie Kubesh at 231.933.1789 or [KubeshCa@tcaps.net](mailto:KubeshCa@tcaps.net).

### Section 504

Section 504 offers protections and supports accessibility for your child within the general education curriculum and school environment. Students identified with a disability are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Education. Modifications, accommodations, or interventions will be put into place, regardless of mitigating factors. In some cases, a 504 Plan, which is an accommodations plan for a student with a disability, may be needed. Any accommodation provided for a child with a disability must be aligned with the impairment to support equal access.

Registration for TCAPS Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten programs is now completed entirely online.

Visit [www.tcaps.net/enroll](http://www.tcaps.net/enroll) to get started.

The following forms are needed to complete the enrollment process before a student may begin school:

- Completed Registration Form
- Certified Birth Certificate
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Immunization or waiver
- Home Language Survey
- Medication/Treatment Authorization Form (if applicable)
- Transportation Request Form (if applicable)
- Open Enrollment or School of Choice Form (if applicable)

### Kindergarten Age Requirement

Michigan law states a child must be five years old on or before September 1 of the enrollment year to be eligible for Kindergarten enrollment. If your child is not eligible for enrollment per the state guideline, but will be five years old by December 1 of the enrollment year, you may complete a Kindergarten waiver form to enroll your child in school. The waiver form is available at [www.tcaps.net/enroll](http://www.tcaps.net/enroll).

### Medication Information

TCAPS policy requires a Medication/Treatment Authorization Form on file for any medication (including over-the-counter, vitamins, and/or herbal supplements) or medical treatment administered during the school day. The form should include written instructions, including the student's name, name of the medication, dosage, time to be given, healthcare provider's signature, and written parent permission. The Medication/Treatment Authorization Form is available at [www.tcaps.net/parents/health-information](http://www.tcaps.net/parents/health-information).

### Special Medical Conditions

For all special medical conditions, please contact TCAPS' Nursing Department at 231.933.8389 or 231.933.7314 or by email at [szarapskli@tcaps.net](mailto:szarapskli@tcaps.net) or [johnsoner@tcaps.net](mailto:johnsoner@tcaps.net). Care plans are needed for any potential life threatening medical condition. Special medical conditions such as hearing or vision impairment, diabetes, seizure disorders, asthma, severe allergies, etc. should also be recorded on the student registration form under the health information section.

### Immunization Requirements

All children who enter and attend school in Michigan are required to have a record on file prior to the first day of school showing completion of the minimum requirements of immunization, or a signed waiver from the local health department. Please contact your child's health care provider or the Grand Traverse County Health Department at (231) 995-6131 for assistance.

### Vision/Dental/Hearing Examination

*(Kindergarten Only)*

The State of Michigan requires vision, dental, and hearing evaluations prior to starting Kindergarten. Please contact your health care provider or the local health department for screenings.

### Physical Examination *(Green Health Form)*

A physical examination by your physician is required for preschool/child care attendance. It is not required but strongly encouraged for grades K-12.





# General Information



**TCAPS Food Service: Breakfast and Lunch Programs**  
TCAPS Food and Nutrition Department works with local farms through the Farm to School Program to provide fresh, high quality foods, and a variety of healthy options for students. Hot breakfast and lunch are prepared and served on site daily. Meals come with a beverage.

### TCAPS Lunch Buddies Program

In collaboration with noon duty staff, the Lunch Buddies program sets out to create an engaging and supportive school environment. Lunch Buddies are hosted at every elementary building in the district on a specific day of the week. TCAPS invites individuals who are passionate about contributing to the growth and success of TCAPS students to join Lunch Buddies as mentors.



### TCAPS Transportation

TCAPS provides safe transportation to approximately 70% of TCAPS students and local private and parochial school students daily. Routes include more than 3,000 bus stops within a 300-square-mile area. All eligible students must submit a [Transportation Request Form](#) to their school office to participate in transportation services.

For safety reasons, all Preschool and Kindergarten students must be accompanied to and from the bus stop by a parent/guardian. Other authorization may be designated by the parent or guardian and received in writing.

Students are assigned to an approved bus stop location. It is TCAPS policy that all children who ride the bus must get on or off the bus at their stop location. Bus passes are only issued for emergencies and must include written permission from a parent/guardian. Bus passes are initiated at the school.

Elementary students utilizing TCAPS transportation services will receive a colored identification tag at the beginning of the school year noting the student's bus route and bus stop location. The tag allows school and transportation personnel to ensure students reach their destination safely. Tags should be placed on the student backpack.

For more information, visit [www.tcaps.net/transportation](http://www.tcaps.net/transportation) or call 231.933.1933.



## TCAPS Extended Day

### Before and After School Extended Day

TCAPS provides quality tuition-based child care for the majority of our elementary schools (both before and after school). Programs operate from 7:00 a.m. until the start of school, and from the end of the school day until 5:30 p.m. Extended Day is not available on half-days or early release days. Availability may vary by location.

Activities focus on fun, safety, and the importance of peer interaction. Daily activities may include literary activities, arts and crafts, games, science and nature projects, sports, computer projects, individual projects, recreation (gym and playground), homework, and study time.

TCAPS Extended Day programs are licensed by the State of Michigan. Fees are based on the number of sessions enrolled. Programs participate in the State of Michigan Child Development and Care Program offered through the Michigan State Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) for qualifying families. If financial aid is needed, please contact DHHS.

Learn more at [www.tcaps.net/extendedday](http://www.tcaps.net/extendedday) or call TCAPS Licensed Child Care Programs at: (231) 933-1759.



TCAPS' Summer Explorers Clubs is a tuition-based summer program designed to engage Kindergarten through fifth grade learners in late June through mid August. Each week features different theme-based activities, field trips and/or special guests. Sign up for every week or just a few. Choose your weekly adventure and let the exploring begin!

Explorers Clubs are licensed by the State of Michigan to assure safety, health, and quality measures are met. Staff are certified in CPR/First Aid and have met all training and regulation standards. All staff have education and/or experience working with children and have cleared state and federal background checks.

TCAPS reserves the right to revise or change program offerings based on enrollment, facility availability and/or other factors. In such cases, the district will provide notification and work with its enrolled families.

For more information, visit: [www.tcaps.net/explorers](http://www.tcaps.net/explorers) or call (231) 933-1759.



# Questions? We are here to help!



**Special Education:** Contact Executive Director of Special Education at 231.933.1780 or [pomavillti@tcaps.net](mailto:pomavillti@tcaps.net).

**Childcare:** Visit [www.tcaps.net/programs/extendedday/](http://www.tcaps.net/programs/extendedday/) or contact the district's licensed child care office at 231.933.1759.

**Montessori Programming:** For additional Montessori information or registration assistance, please contact the Montessori Office at 231.933.6420 or [sieversli@tcaps.net](mailto:sieversli@tcaps.net).

**Kindergarten & Junior Kindergarten Programming:** Questions regarding enrollment should be directed to your school's front office or for general questions, call 231.933.1710.

**Immunizations, Physicals, and Medical Needs:** TCAPS' Nursing Department can provide assistance for your family and develop a care plan and training to your child's school staff on a care plan.

Contact TCAPS' Nursing Department at 231.933.8389 or 231.933.7314 or by email at [szarapskli@tcaps.net](mailto:szarapskli@tcaps.net) or [johnsoner@tcaps.net](mailto:johnsoner@tcaps.net). or visit: [www.tcaps.net/parents/health-information/](http://www.tcaps.net/parents/health-information/)

**Food Service / Food Allergies:** Please reach out to your building's Kitchen Leader with any questions or visit: [www.tcaps.net/about/departments/food--nutrition-services/](http://www.tcaps.net/about/departments/food--nutrition-services/)

**Transportation:** For transportation concerns/routing questions, call 231.933.1933 or visit: [www.tcaps.net/about/departments/transportation/](http://www.tcaps.net/about/departments/transportation/)

**What school am I?:** Visit: [www.tcaps.net/about/district-boundary-map/](http://www.tcaps.net/about/district-boundary-map/)

## Contact us: [info@tcaps.net](mailto:info@tcaps.net)