

Preparing for Kindergarten

Before School Starts

Below are some opportunities for incoming kindergarten students and their parents to learn about school and begin to feel comfortable prior to the start of the year. Parents and students who live in flex zones are encouraged to participate in opportunities offered at each of the potential schools their child may attend.

- ▶ **Preschool Programs:** Each school has a preschool program available for students the year before they enter kindergarten. The program is generally an hour or less and usually includes a story in the library or other activities. Schools typically host 4-5 sessions. Parents and students who live in a flex zone can participate at any or all of the schools that they may potentially attend.
- ▶ **Kindergarten Information Night:** Elementary schools hold an evening orientation program for parents in the spring. Parents who live in flex zones can attend sessions at any or all of the schools their students may potentially attend.
- ▶ **Bus Safety Program:** In late August, prior to the start of kindergarten, students and parents can attend a bus safety program and take a bus ride.
- ▶ **Discussion:** We encourage families to talk with their children about the possibility of attending any of the schools within their flex zone. This may help to set realistic expectations and minimize any potential feelings of disappointment that your child may feel if they aren't assigned to a specific school.

Preparing for Kindergarten

Timeline

- ▶ **Age 4 and 5**
Preschool Program and 1,000 Book Program; Contact elementary schools for information.
- ▶ **January/February prior to entering kindergarten**
During the kindergarten registration process, families are given an opportunity to indicate a school preference among those designated for the flex zone.
- ▶ **Spring Events**
In the spring, each building will host a parent information session as well as a kindergarten screening event.
- ▶ **End of July**
Building placement of flex zone students will be determined.
- ▶ **August**
Families will be notified of their child's building assignment by mail. Families will shortly thereafter learn who their teacher will be. Bus Safety Program and practice bus rides will take place at this time.
- ▶ **Beginning of School**
Kindergarten Orientation will take place on the day before the first day of school.

For more information about flex zones:

Dana Mazzone, District Registrar
518-377-4666, x50714
dmazzone@niskyschools.org



ELEMENTARY FLEX ZONES in the Niskayuna Central School District

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES
LIVING IN FLEX ZONES



Niskayuna

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

1430 Balltown Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
518-377-4666

Elementary Flex Placements

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES LIVING IN FLEX ZONES

Niskayuna Central School District utilizes six flexible attendance zones, or “flex zones,” to help balance elementary school class sizes across the district’s five elementary school buildings. Flex zones are areas where newly entering students may be assigned to one of two or more potential schools based on their address in the district.

The district has been utilizing flex zones with each entering kindergarten class since 2015 when a committee of parents, elementary principals and district staff developed the flex zone plan. Flex zones have proven that if a cohort of students starts off in a balanced manner, it has the best possible chance to stay that way as they advance through elementary school.

Flex Zone	Schools
Flex Zone 1	Craig, Glenclyff
Flex Zone 2	Craig, Hillside
Flex Zone 3	Craig, Rosendale
Flex Zone 4	Craig, Hillside, Rosendale
Flex Zone 5	Birchwood, Hillside, Rosendale
Flex Zone 6	Birchwood, Rosendale

FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions about Flex Zones

➔ What are the benefits of the flex zones?

Flex zones are designed to favorably balance class sizes across the district’s five elementary schools. They have been utilized with incoming kindergarten classes beginning with the cohort that entered kindergarten in September 2015.

➔ Can families that live in flex zones indicate the school they would prefer?

Yes, when students who live in flex zones register for kindergarten, parents are given an opportunity to indicate their preference. The district will accommodate as many preferences as possible while still working toward the overall goal of balanced class sizes across the buildings. All preferences may not be possible, due to enrollment capacity.

➔ When are families who live in flex zones notified of their school assignments?

The district makes school assignments for flex zone students entering kindergarten at the end of July and promptly communicates this information by mail. Time to balance class sizes is necessary because enrollment continues through the spring and summer. Classroom assignments are made shortly after flex zone decisions and families are notified of their child’s teacher in August.

➔ What determines student building assignments?

There are a number of factors that go into this process including: class sizes, transportation routes, special education programming, as well as English as a New Language (ENL) program needs, enrollment capacity and parent preference.

➔ Will students attend the same school as their older siblings? What if the sibling has moved on to middle school?

When students with older siblings enter kindergarten, they will attend the same school as their siblings, unless the older sibling is placed in a building for a specific special education program. If the older sibling has moved up to middle school, the incoming kindergarten student will be placed back in the flex pool and their building will be determined at the end of July.

➔ Where do students who live in flex zones go for kindergarten screening?

All students that live in the district, whether in dedicated zones or flex zones, are assigned a home building based on their address. Flex students will be invited to the screenings that are taking place at their home school building. After flex zone students are screened, their final school placement will be determined at a later date and screening information will be shared with the child’s assigned school.

➔ Once students who live in a flex zone are assigned to a school, will they remain at that school?

Yes. The district wants continuity and stability for families. Once students are assigned to an elementary school for kindergarten, they will remain in the school for their elementary years and any younger siblings will attend the same school.

For a map and listing of elementary attendance zones by address, please visit: www.niskyschools.org/register-a-student

