

Kindergarten

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dents and parents adjust to school.

"What we do first is we have a kindergarten readiness test that is geared toward children who are coming into kindergarten to see if they are ready or not," said Mrs. Carol Harding, Kelsie's teacher. The screening session was the first time Kelsie and her parents met Harding.

The screening showed Harding what skills Kelsie had coming into kindergarten. This allows her to focus on special skills Kelsie may need help in developing.

"She's very nice," Kelsie said after meeting her teacher.

"For two days the kindergarten classes are broken down into small groups. The parents come with the children," said Harding. At this meeting Dave and Deneen were explained the curriculum. They also had an opportunity to ask questions of the teachers. Kelsie had the opportunity during small group to meet some of her classmates.

"She's a little nervous in her own way. I think it's hard meeting new kids and all."

Deneen Sincavage
Kelsie's mom

After the parents' meeting was over, Kelsie and her parents got an opportunity to see what a school bus is like inside. "The bus driver goes over the rules and safety of the bus," said Harding.

"The way they did it, it was very nice. They explained what they expect from the children and what to teach them at home and help them with," said Deneen.

"I have to do homework," Kelsie said with excitement. Before even going to her full first day of school the Sincavages know Tuesdays are going to be homework nights in their house.

The next step for Kelsie was her first bus day, August 31. The number 12 bus picked her



POST PHOTOS/HEATHER B. JONES

Kindertener Kelsie Sincavage loves books. She looks forward to learning how to read on her own.

up at her Little Meows Day Care. She stepped on the bus with the other children and began her journey. As she stepped off the bus in front of Dallas Elementary School, Kelsie looked a little scared and confused.

Mom, dad, and four grandparents waited with cameras and a video recorder for her big arrival at school. As Kelsie gave hugs to her family, and her big smile said everything was going to be okay.

The bus day is an important transition for the children. "We take it in stages to allow them to be as comfortable as possible," Harding said. Another reason for the bus day is for school bus drivers to learn where each child lives.

"Going on the bus," Kelsie said was her favorite part of school after the bus day. "School's going to be just like the one I'm at now."

The final step in acclimating the students to kindergarten came on Tuesday, September 4. Kelsie will be a morning kindergarten student from 9 to 11 a.m. each day. "Kindergarten is a really nice grade to teach because

it opens the world to them," Harding said. She enjoys the role she plays in the children's lives.

"Kindergarten children want to learn," Harding said. "They are so excited about coming to school. Their brothers and sisters have been there and they're finally getting to go to school. They want to learn. They want to learn how to read, so they are



A hug for grandma. Kelsie Sincavage says goodbye on her first day of school.

very excited. They don't even know they're learning."

Harding teaches her students by using a number of different types of media. Using songs, poems, and varying the day-to-day activities is one way of keeping the young students' attention.

"Learning to work as a group," is the biggest challenge Harding thinks her students face. She said it also takes time for children to adjust to school.

The kindergarten curriculum includes many different components, but one is primary. Phonics is the building block for the student's education. "They need to be able to identify upper case and lower case letters of the alphabet," Harding said. "They need to be able to say the sounds for the letter and words that begin with the letter." Harding said her students will master this by the end of the school year. Students will also be able to sound out words and rhyme before they enter first grade.

Everyday Math is integrated into the curriculum and everyday life. The children learn about money, number lines and how to count up to 180, Harding said. The children also play a lot of math games and are given games to take home to play with their families.

Technology is also playing a role in the kindergarten classrooms at Dallas Elementary. Harding's classroom has a computer she uses as a teaching tool. Students can use the computer individually or in groups, she said. She has software which teaches phonics and math.

"We go to the computer lab once a week so children have their own computer," she said. "They're not as afraid of computers and they have been brought up with them," she said. Making computers part of kindergarten helps reinforce school lessons.

Besides learning phonics and Everyday Math, students learn many more things in kindergarten. These 5-year-olds learn respect, helping their fellow students and how to work in groups. The children also learn about making mistakes, Harding said.

"They want to learn how to read, so they are very excited."

Mrs. Carol Harding
Kelsie's teacher

"We learn from our mistakes and that is why we come to school, so we can learn. Everyone makes mistakes and no one has all of the answers, even me," she tells her students.

Harding said one of the most important parts of teaching is making the school and classroom a comfortable place for students. "I try to make it for them to feel as safe as possible, and as positive as possible. It has to be an atmosphere where they want to learn and they are not afraid," she said. "It's like their home away from home. I stress that this is their family away from home, stressing the importance of helping each other."

"The kindergarten teachers take their jobs very seriously. They're very concerned about the children," Harding said. "They want to make sure the children are safe and happy and learn as much as possible. We take care of them as if they were our own children."

By the end of the year, it's hard to say good-bye to the children. "One of my main goals is to instill a positive love for learning. If you want to learn you are going to learn," Harding said. She also wants the children to be prepared to learn to read.

Harding enjoys simple things as rewards for her job. She said her biggest reward comes "when a child comes and gives me a hug."

For Kelsie Sincavage, and the rest of the class of 2014, kindergarten is opening up a whole new world, even if they don't know it yet.

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Painter

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man took over the business. "She never painted until she left here, but she always wanted to. She's getting better and better at it," said John. "We have four of her paintings up now and a lot of people ask about them. They love the work."

"I do miss the place. I miss the people. It was my life."

Janice Wertman
Former owner of J&J Deli

Jan joins with a group of other painters who meet once or twice a week at the Wintersteen Community Center at Harveys Lake. "I took some lessons there when it was the MAC Fine Arts Gallery," said Jan. "When that closed, I just started painting with a group of women. We do our own thing and get together when we can. I enjoy it."

Jan's subjects vary. She has several paintings of children that she has painted from pictures or just images she has. One is of the child in an old black-and-white Ivory soap commercial that she has painted in color.

"I've done some abstracts and now I'm doing a free-hand painting of flowers. I just finished an acrylic painting," she said.

Some of her paintings are for sale and the prices vary according to size, time involved and the cost of framing. You can check out her work at J&J Deli on the Memorial Highway in Dallas.

"I do miss the place," said Jan. "I miss the people. It was my life. You know, when you start something it's hard not to miss it."

Craft vendors wanted

The Wyoming Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold the Eighth Annual Country and Holiday Craft Fair at the Kingston Armory on Nov. 24 and 25. Limited vendor spaces are available. Crafters interested in participating should call Barbara at 823-7161. All crafts must be hand made.

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