

Cedar Falls Community Schools

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ADMINISTRATION

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Tara J. Estep, *Exec. Director of Elementary Education*
Dr. Jill Hayes White, *Exec. Director of Student Services*

Educating each student to be a lifelong learner and a caring, responsible citizen

January 14, 2026

Dear Cedar Falls Parents/Guardians,

The Cedar Falls Community School District is excited to offer a Kindergarten Prep program again for the 2026-2027 school year. This program, located at Orchard Hill Elementary, serves as a bridge between preschool and kindergarten. It is designed for students who may benefit from an additional year to develop their academic, emotional, and social skills before kindergarten.

To be eligible, children must be five years old on or before September 15, 2026. The Kindergarten Prep classroom will follow kindergarten standards, assessments, and reporting but will provide students with additional learning time. At the end of the year, students who exceed expectations may be recommended for first grade. Please note that a transitional kindergarten program in Iowa is considered a form of retention for students who subsequently enroll in kindergarten. Staff will collaborate with parents/guardians at the end of the year to determine whether your child will advance to kindergarten or first grade.

Kindergarten Prep will follow the same calendar and schedule as the Cedar Falls Elementary School kindergarten program. Breakfast and supervision will begin at 8:30 a.m., and the instructional day will run from 8:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., except on Wednesdays, when dismissal will be at 1:50 p.m.

Pre-registration will be available online from April 1 to April 10, 2026. The class will accommodate approximately 20 students, with preference given based on prior educational experiences and birthdates in early fall and summer. If demand exceeds capacity, your child may be asked to participate in a brief assessment. Families will be notified of acceptance into the program around May 1, 2026.

Transportation will be provided for eligible students according to District guidelines. Students transitioning to kindergarten or first grade the following year will attend their designated home school, as determined by the Cedar Falls Schools boundary map.

Please visit the district website for more details and online registration. An informational parent meeting will be held at Orchard Hill Elementary on **May 7 at 6 p.m.** Students accepted into the program will have the opportunity to visit the classroom at Orchard Hill on May 20, 2026. Feel free to contact us with additional questions.

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