

# KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION

Everything you need to know to navigate  
the transition to LBUSD Bixby Elementary

# Congratulations!

You've survived the first 4 or 5 years of your child's life! You are probably on this website because you have a child entering kindergarten in the Fall, and either Bixby Elementary is your home school, or you are hoping to attend through the LBUSD School of Choice program.

This information was put together by a group of parents whose children entered kindergarten at Bixby Elementary in the Fall of 2019. We had the experience of stumbling through and upon a lot of information that we felt would've been helpful to have written down and explained somewhere for those of us "newbies." While the frustration of muddling through certainly helped us build our network at Bixby, we wanted future incoming kindergarten parents to have a better experience. That's how this information packet was born! Here, you will find information that has been grouped roughly into six categories:

- [Things to Know Before Kindergarten Starts](#)
- [General Information About the Kindergarten Schedule](#)
- [Staying in The Know](#)
- [School Activities and Events Explained](#)
- [In The Classroom](#)
- [Childcare](#)

We hope this information is helpful to you as you and your child prepare for this next big and exciting step forward!

# Before Kindergarten Starts

1. *Registration:* For an excellent infographic spelling out some of the more general information about School of Choice Applications and Kindergarten Registration, please see [LB Littles very helpful infographic](#).
2. *School of Choice:* For the 2020/2021 academic year, School of Choice (SOC) applications can be submitted between February 11 and March 20, 2020.
3. *Enrollment at School of Choice:* You will be notified of whether you were accepted into one of your SOCs by April 24, 2020, and you will have until May 8, 2020 to accept or decline your enrollment at the SOC.
  - a. All of this is done through [ParentVue](#), the district's parent website. [Here you can find additional information on ParentVue](#) registration and use in both English and Spanish.
4. *Kindergarten Hours:* Kindergarten throughout LBUSD is (for now) only part-day. Here is some additional information on [how the kindergarten scheduling works](#). Obviously, COVID has changed how the scheduling will work and more information will be forthcoming. For now here is a look at the district's [sample schedule for Kindergarten](#).
5. *Notification of Early or Late Start:* Elementary schools throughout LBUSD decide independently when they notify parents if they are early- or late-start. Bixby Elementary typically informs parents via ParentVue less than one week prior to the start of school.
  - a. During the 2019/2020 academic year, for example, school started on a Wednesday, and parents were notified on the Friday before at 5PM (yes, this is unnecessarily anxiety provoking for working parents or parents who need to arrange childcare in advance—it's not up to us! Please see our notes on [Childcare](#) for more information that may help put you at ease!).
  - b. In ParentVue, you will find information to indicate your child's teacher and their room number. There will also be an "A" or a "B" next to the room number; A = early start (8:00AM), B = late start (9:40AM).
6. *Kinder Meet & Greet:* Bixby Elementary typically has an event the day before the official "first day of school" where parents, caregivers and families can bring their child to meet their teacher and see their classroom.
  - a. Bring a lawn chair or a picnic blanket! I know, it's an elementary school and there are cafeteria tables, but the event is held on the "kindergarten lawn" (which is pretty dried up grass). Some of us didn't know this, and had to stand around looking awkward while other families seemed very prepared.
  - b. Bring a snack or a lunch for you and your child. Typically the PTA provides cookies and maybe some water bottles, but most families bring food to eat together. The event is also typically held at noon, which is very difficult for working families, we

know. We are working with the school, the kindergarten teachers and the PTA to brainstorm alternate times.

- c. It's a very unstructured, casual time. Mr. Platis, the principal, will eventually say a few words to welcome new families to Bixby, and the PTA president usually also speaks, but overall it's mostly unprogrammed.
  - d. At some point, the teachers will open the doors to their classrooms, and you can take your child to go see the classroom. This is a good way to meet the families of incoming kindergarten students who will be in class with your child.
  - e. There will be a table to [sign up for the PTA](#) (cost is \$10/person), but that can also be done online.
  - f. There will also be a chance to order Bixby Spirit Wear, and some sample sizes for you to figure out what size to order. Spirit Wear is different from school uniforms, although it can be worn in place of uniform shirts.
7. *Uniforms:* Speaking of uniforms, Bixby does have a specific [uniform policy](#). Basically, it's navy blue, hunter green, or white tops, navy blue bottoms, and close-toed, rubber-soled shoes. We would recommend avoiding white tops because kindergarten is messy and you want these clothes to last as long as possible.
- a. A few ideas for places to buy uniforms include:
    - i. [Old Navy](#)
    - ii. [Target](#)
    - iii. [Primary](#)
    - iv. [French Toast](#)
  - b. We are hoping to have a uniform swap at the start of school where parents can offer their too small uniforms to younger students.
8. *School Food:* [Menu and nutritional information](#) is available for breakfast and lunch:
- a. Once on the website, select Elementary/K-8 Menus - select the month - download PDF
  - b. LBUSD provides [information on meal costs, payment plans, and free or reduced meal](#) costs.
  - c. Some parents "pre-pay" for their child's food and keep money on the account. This is accomplished via My School Bucks (myschoolbucks.com). [Information for LBUSD and My School Bucks](#).
  - d. If you are entitled to free- or reduced-fee breakfast and/or lunch or would like to apply for it, you must complete an [online application](#).
    - i. If your student qualifies, you will be notified in August via paper mail. That document will have your student's pin number on it, a 5-digit code that they will give the cashier at the end of the lunch line. \*Pro-Tip: If you have a tablet, make the tablet password/code the child's pin number; they learn it pretty quickly that way!
      1. Don't worry if your child cannot memorize their pin before the first day of school. The cafeteria also has a card for every child, sorted by grade and teacher/room number, that has the child's code on it. As long as they can recognize their name (and there is an adult there to help) they will be able to get their food in the cafeteria.

# General Information About The Kindergarten Schedule

\*COVID Note\* This information was prepared before the current situation so things may change please review the [sample schedules provided by the district](#).

Yes, part-day kindergarten kind of stinks. Yes, parents have been trying to get it changed to full-day. No, it's not simple. On the bright side, every kindergartener gets at least 1.5 hours per day that they are in a class of only 11-15 students getting high quality, small-group instruction with their teacher. Here's the broad-strokes run-down on kindergarten times, childcare, and transportation.

*Early Start Schedule:* Early start students, or "early beavers," start kindergarten at 8AM. They have recess from 9:20AM to 9:35AM. They are released at 11:20AM.

*Lunch:* Both early and late beavers have lunch at 11:20AM.

*Late Start Schedule:* Late start students, or "late beavers," start kindergarten at 9:40AM. They return from lunch at 12:00PM. They have recess from 12:45PM to 1:00PM, and they are released for the day at 1:40PM.

- One of the main things to know about the late-start kindergarten schedule is that it *is* affected by the minimum day schedules. When the 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> graders have minimum days, late-start kindergartners start at 9:10AM and are released at 1:10PM.

*Before-School and After-School Care + Transportation:* Typically, because SOC families are not notified until late April, they are on a waitlist for on-site childcare (Kid's Club), so they often use off-site childcare.

BUT WHAT IF I WORK? HOW DOES MY CHILD GET FROM KINDERGARTEN TO A CHILDCARE SITE? Some of us (not me, just some other parents.... ok, yes, me!) might have panicked for a long time before figuring out that "before school care" is an option for late-start students, and that programs will also transport from the school back to their site after both early-start and late-start release.

If your child is not enrolled in on-site childcare, don't worry! There are multiple other options (see our [Childcare](#) section for more information) that provide before- and after-school care, *and transportation*, regardless of early- or late-start times.

# Staying In The Know

1. *PTA:* You belong in PTA! ...and so do your relatives, neighbors and friends... Spread the word!
  - a. The [Bixby Parent Teacher Association](#) is the easiest way for you to benefit your child and help your school.
  - b. The PTA offers a variety of programs for students and parents. The PTA provides opportunities to meet other parents and teachers, building rapport and discussing issues that are on your mind. You can share ideas, concerns, and experiences.
  - c. You will receive regular information from PTA on school events, and PTA meetings.
  
2. *Principal's Weekly Update:* Each week Principal Platis shares a weekly update. The updates include information about the school, reminders, and musings. If you miss an update you can always go back and find all of the [20-21 updates](#) in one spot.
  - a. You should receive these messages through your email. If you are not we would suggest checking the settings on School Messenger (info below) and/or checking that you have the correct email address in ParentVue.
  
3. *Room Parent:* Each kindergarten classroom will have a room parent (or two) and it could be you! I know it sounds daunting to take on the role in your first year but trust us you will not be alone. You have a whole community to help you.
  - a. The room parent will collect contact information for all of the parents in their child's class and setup a means to contact them. This usually includes mass texting, email, and a class page on a service like Shutterfly.
  - b. The room parent is your first point of contact for information about what is happening in your child's specific classroom. They will send out regular reminders to help you stay on top of everything.
  - c. The room parent will also send out schoolwide information through the room parent coordinator who works with all of the room parents to coordinate communication.
  - d. If you are interested in serving as a room parent let your teacher know on day one!
  
4. *Social Media:* There are a number of different ways to connect with the school and other parents on social media.
  - a. You can like our [Parents of Bixby Elementary Facebook Page](#)
  - b. You can follow us on Twitter [@BixbyBeavers](#)
  
5. *School Messenger:* Most information from the district and the principal will come through email. While you will provide your email address and phone number in ParentVue or on your initial application the district uses School Messenger to manage your notification preferences

- a. Hopefully you will be receiving all of the relevant information from the school generally and about your child specifically but we recommend [logging in](#) and making sure your preferences are set to your liking.

# School Activities and Events

\*COVID Note\* For now plan on much of this being virtual until further notice.

1. Back To School Night: This is your chance to hear from your child's kindergarten teacher—in ENGLISH—about their daily schedule, the teacher's plans for the year, their values, etc. Parents are asked not to bring their children to this evening so that the teachers are free to speak in English. At this time, childcare is *not* provided at the school for the children. We know this is a need for many parents, and we are trying to find a solution. But be advised: the kindergarten teachers will do their whole presentation in Spanish if even one child is in the classroom!
2. PTA Meetings: These occur every second Tuesday of the month. Pizza and childcare are provided. Meetings typically run from 6:30-8:30PM, and are in the cafeteria.
3. Coffee Talk: "Coffee Talk" was designed to provide a less formal way for parents to have contact with the principal and the PTA board, and to accommodate parents who are not able to attend the PTA meetings regularly. The times of coffee-talks are determined annually, and are varied.
4. Lunch With Your Student: Parents are invited to have lunch with their kindergartner on the second Friday of each month. Many parents bring a take out lunch (Subway, Pizza, etc.) but students may still access cafeteria lunch options as well. There is space to sit on the outside benches but you can also bring lawn chairs and picnic blankets to sit on as well.
5. Harvest Festival & Trunk or Treat: "Harvest Festival" typically occurs on the Friday night before Halloween, so for the 2020/2021 academic year, we anticipate it will occur on Friday, October 30, 2020. It takes place at the school, and includes a few food trucks, some type of entertainment (last year was a magic show), and a trunk-or-treat. Children typically wear their costumes.
  - a. For those of you not familiar with this concept, a trunk-or-treat was developed in response to fears of children going door-to-door and/or for families who do not celebrate Halloween with traditional trick-or-treating as a safer, more contained way to still give their children the experience of collecting candy. Adults volunteer to decorate the open "trunk" of their car in some theme (sometimes with games or activities), and have candy to pass out as children walk by.
  - b. This event takes place on the main playground so we encourage you to bring chairs for sitting and eating.
6. Fit-A-Thon: The Fit-A-Thon is a (misleadingly named) fundraiser. It is the school's largest fundraiser where the students raise money essentially by using a personalized website (that the school provides each student) to ask their friends and families for donations. Back in our day, this fundraiser was called a jog-a-thon, and friends and family pledged a

certain amount of money per lap run or walked on a track. This is basically a spin-off of that idea.

- a. On the day of the fit-a-thon, all the students get time outdoors to move through various “stations” of fun outdoor activities/exercise. In the past we’ve had stations that include yoga, soccer, dance, etc. Parents typically volunteer to run these stations for the students; each station has children at it for approximately 5-10 minutes.
  - b. In addition to being the school’s largest fundraiser, students can also earn prizes for raising different amounts of money. For example, during the 2019/2020 academic year, students earned a “free” dress day (out of uniform) if they raised \$20, a “fit-a-thon” shirt if they raised \$40, donuts with the principal before school if they raised \$75, and attendance at a pizza party if they raised more than \$125.
7. Friendship Feast: This is an in-class activity that is done in each TK/K classroom the Friday before Thanksgiving break. Sometimes the teachers need a few parent volunteers to help with serving the food (but children do not bring food to share; the teacher provides the food). If you want to volunteer in the classroom for that, please check out the information on ((VIPS)) so you can be cleared in time!
8. Holiday Performance: The kindergarten students typically do a Holiday Performance where they sing songs in Spanish on the Friday before winter break. Yes, it’s as adorable as it sounds. We estimate that it will occur on December 18, 2020 for the 2020/2021 academic year.
- a. This event occurs in the auditorium. It is unbelievably crowded. If you want a seat (there are not nearly enough) come early (30 minutes? 60 minutes?) to stand in line so you can be one of the first in there!
9. Mother’s Day Performance: During this event, students perform songs they have learned in honor of Mother’s Day. This event is usually the Friday before Mother’s Day so that would be May 7, 2021.
10. Open House: For the 2019/2020 academic year, open house is scheduled for May 20, 2020. For the 2020/2021 academic year, open house is scheduled for May 18, 2021. This is where parents and their children spend time in their classrooms getting to appreciate all of their wonderful work!
11. Field Trip: The K/TK students will go on one off-campus field trip during the school year. The last couple of years it has been a trip to Centennial Farms at the OC fairgrounds. All students (early and late start) must be at the school at 7:45am to get on the busses and leave at 8am. Students will return to school between 1:30-2pm. Parent volunteers are needed as chaperones for this event but you must be [VIPS](#).

# In the Classroom

1. VIPS: The Volunteer in Public Schools is the district program for managing volunteers. If you want to volunteer in your child's classroom or go on school field trips you need to have completed the VIPS process.
  - a. In order to get VIPS certified you will need to complete a VIPS application. You can also get an application at Bixby. You will need to have a current TB test (dated within 60 days of the application).
    - i. The District provides free TB testing several times throughout the year. Here is some additional information on the free testing dates.
    - ii. You can also get a TB test at Long Beach Public Health
    - iii. Return your completed application, a copy of a photo ID (the paperwork says you can use a variety of options, including DL and Passport, etc. however please note that the Bixby office will tell you that the ID must have your address on it so you should use your DL if you can and save yourself the hassle of arguing with them about your passport like some of us (me) did), and a copy of the TB results to the Bixby office.
  - b. VIPS processing will take approximately 2 weeks, it can be even longer at the beginning of the school year when the volume of applications is larger.
  - c. Your VIPS certification is good for 4 years.
2. PTA:
3. Room Parent:
4. The Giving Tree: Many of the teachers at Bixby utilize a giving "tree" on their classroom doors to ask for needed supplies. The tree is made of construction paper and on the "branches" teachers will put post-it notes "leaves" with supplies written on them. If you see these leaves simply take one and bring the needed supply (e.g. glue sticks, crayons, clorox wipes, etc.) back to the classroom when you can.
5. Art in the Hallway: If you want to get a little glimpse of what your child is up to just take a stroll down the kinder building hallway. Teachers will display the artwork children have been working on. The artwork changes regularly so make sure to peek when you can at drop-off or pick-up.
6. Homework Folders: Kindergarteners get weekly homework. A couple of weeks into the school year your teacher will send home a homework folder for your child.
  - a. The homework folder will come home every Monday and should be returned to school every Friday.
  - b. The homework folder will include all of the specific homework that your child is asked to complete each night in addition to reading. The homework for each night usually consists of one or two workbook pages covering writing, shapes, math, drawing, etc.

- i. The homework itself will be in Spanish but the instructions on the cover page will be in English so you can help your student complete their work if you are an English only speaker.
    - ii. We also recommend google translate on your smartphone, it will be your new friend as you navigate language learning.
  - c. In addition to homework the homework folder is also used to send home fliers and additional information for parents.
    - i. Fliers for school events will be sent home so you know what is happening in the classroom and on campus.
    - ii. In addition to school related events you will also get fliers that are advertisements for non-school sponsored activities. These may include youth sports, dance, or theater leagues that you can sign your child up for. While it is nice to know about some of the options for youth activities in Long Beach it can be frustrating as a new Bixby parent to distinguish between what is happening at school and what is an outside organization. At the moment there is no formal way to distinguish but we are hoping that in the future this will be made more obvious to decrease the potential confusion.
- 7. Star of the Week: Over the course of the school year each student will have a chance to be the star of the week in their classroom. This varies a little from one classroom to another but each student will be asked to complete a sheet that describes themselves and has a place for them to include a family photo.
- 8. Castrocito: Each Kindergarten classroom has a mascot, a stuffed beaver, named Castrocito. Your child will have the opportunity to take Castorcito home with them a couple of times during the school year. When he comes home he will spend the night "hanging out" with you and your family. Your child will have the chance to write about what they did together in Castrocito's journal.

# ChildCare

1. *Kid's Club*: [This onsite childcare option](#) is available to students in kindergarten to 5th grad.
  - a. The Bixby Kids' Club is open from 6:30 am – 6:30 pm and operates on a traditional school year calendar.
    - i. Holiday and summer options are available but they will be held at a different school site location.
    - ii. It is a fee based program that costs \_\_\_\_\_ an hour and your child must be enrolled for a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week (average over the month).
    - iii. By the 15th of each month you must complete a calendar for the following month that provides the drop-off and pick-up times for each day your child will be attending kids club.
  - b. Kids club can be reached at: (562) 498-5718
  
2. *YMCA*: The [Los Altos YMCA](#) (1720 Bellflower Blvd. Long Beach, CA 90815) provides before and after school care. The program curriculum includes homework assistance, reading, arts and crafts projects, art appreciation, outdoor play, and specialty activities based on the theme of that particular month. All after school programs include a nutritious snack provided by the Y.
  - a. YMCA care is provided from 6:30a - 6:30p with transportation to and from Bixby provided.
  - b. Before and after school programs are in alignment with the traditional LBUSD school schedule.
    - i. The Y will accommodate minimum days and field trips, etc., but it is a good idea to call them the day before and make sure they are aware of the scheduling change if your child is affected.
    - ii. Vacation Fun Days and Day Camp options are available for an additional fee on days school is not in session.
  - c. The registration deadline for the YMCA is in mid August and yes that means you are going to have to signup before you know what class your child is in or whether they are early or late. While this is frustrating the Y has generally been accommodating and you can simply update them when you know the specifics before school starts.
    - i. The registration fee is \$60 before the mid August deadline
    - ii. Registration goes up to \$100 after the deadline
  - d. The Y is a fee based program. The costs for 19-20 are listed below.
    - i.

	Sept - May Member / Non Member	June Member / Non Member
Kinder AM & PM	\$555/ \$585	\$430/ \$460
Kinder AM	\$255 / \$285	\$170/ \$200

Kinder PM	\$480 / \$525	\$330 / \$385
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- ii. If you are worried about the costs of childcare, the Y promises to never turn anyone away due to an inability to pay. If you call they can talk to you about the [financial assistance](#) resources available.
  - e. For more information on the Academic Enrichment program contact Janine Maldonado at 562.596.3394 or [janine.maldonado@lbymca.org](mailto:janine.maldonado@lbymca.org).
- 3. WRAP: [The WRAP program](#) is designated as a balanced mixture of academic enrichment and assistance and physically and emotionally healthy activities that are fundamental components of youth development.
  - a. Through these programs, thousands of local students and their families have access to convenient, no-cost, high-quality expanded learning programs on their school campuses every day.
  - b. For more information contact site director Ana Saldana at (562) 912-0844 or [bixby@lbcaa.org](mailto:bixby@lbcaa.org)