



Our 5 to 6 Year Old Class

Our 5 to 6 year old class, or The Flamingos, is a unique class. We'd like to take this opportunity to inform families about the classroom's foundation, the curriculum and reasons why families choose to enroll their children, as well as the various paths after graduation.

Our 5 to 6 Year Old Key Developmental Goals are based on a Kindergarten Curriculum. Therefore, we place children who are 5 by 9/1 of the given school year into the class, before considering any other children.

While our 5 to 6 year old class is driven by a Kindergarten Curriculum, we do not call it Kindergarten. We also do not refer to it as a "Kinder Bridge" or "Pre-K 4" or Pre-K 5". We simply refer to it as our "5 to 6 year old class" and children graduate and move on to elementary school. This is due to the fact that there are three vastly different scenarios that cause families to decide to enroll their children:

1. The child turns 5 by 9/1 (usually in the spring or summer, so they are considered "young" for their grade) and the child's family would like the child to have an extra year in a smaller school and smaller classroom setting. This is usually so the child will have another year of growth, and usually in one or more of three areas of development: cognitive, social-emotional, and/or physical. Families in this scenario are usually fairly set that their child will graduate from our 5 to 6 year old class and attend Kindergarten in elementary school, whether it is public or private. Occasionally, these children started preschool later, perhaps at age 3 or 4, and the family would like more time in an early childhood school setting. But, sometimes, families decide this while the mother is still pregnant, based on a due date, or when the child is still a baby, based on the child's birth date. However, we recommend waiting until your child is at least 4 years old, and discussing your child's developmental milestones with their teachers, in order to make a final decision to enter Kindergarten at age 6, regardless of his or her birthdate. Lastly, if your family is in this scenario going into the class, it is important to understand that this is not "holding a child back". Our 5 to 6 year old class is based on a Kindergarten curriculum, designed to challenge the children from the outset of the school year.
2. The child turns 5 by 9/1 and the child's family would like for their child to attend their 5 to 6 year old school year in a smaller school and smaller classroom setting, graduate and progress into a first grade classroom in elementary school the following year. Until the pandemic, this scenario was the minority in our 5 to 6 year old class. However, from 2020 to 2022, the majority of children in our 5 to 6 year old classes progressed on to first grade and have continued to do very well. All of these children have parents who are fully invested in their education and work with their child to bring their learning full circle, from school to home and back again.
3. The child turns 5 by 9/1 (like scenario 1, the child usually has a birthday that some may call "late", in the spring or summer) and the child's family is undecided as to whether the child will attend Kindergarten or first grade the following year and would like an extra



year to determine what is best. Our teachers and administration will provide objective and subjective assessments and feedback at Family Teacher Conferences and throughout the year, as approached, so families can make the most informed decision. Many families who fall into this scenario are leaning toward scenario 1 from the start and are likely to have their child enter Kindergarten, even if he or she is developmentally prepared and on par to enter first grade.

Some years, after the bulk of enrollment is complete, we have a few select places in the 5 to 6 year old class remaining. If this is the case, we will take parent requests into consideration and then subsequently evaluate children who miss the 9/1 cutoff but are developmentally on par, since the pace of the 5 to 6 year old class is faster, from the outset of the school year. This helps to ensure that, if we are able to consider a child who is not 5 by 9/1, the 5 to 6 year old class will best serve them while they are in the class and beyond. However, some years, there are not any places left to consider children who do not meet the 9/1 cutoff.

Given all of this information, our 5 to 6 year old class serves a variety of different children and families, with different goals for their subsequent steps in education. Even so, the 5 to 6 Year Key Developmental Goals were intentionally created to ensure that we best serve 5 to 6 year old children, regardless of their next step in school. So, given that the curriculum is for 5 to 6 year old children and the varying plans upon enrolling a child who is 5 into the class, these reasons are why we refer to this classroom as our 5 to 6 year old class and prepare the children for entering elementary school, versus a particular grade.

As far as the success of children in the various pathways, if a family feels strongly about their decision, whether that is for their child to enter Kindergarten at age 6 or first grade at age 6, and they are intentional about the time they spend with their child to prepare them for their next steps, the child is always successful. When a family wavers and the child feels that uncertainty, this can cause a lack of confidence in a child and the road can be more difficult for that child as a result.

It is important to gather the most information regarding your child's development as possible and make a decision as close in time to when it will be carried out. Then, go forward confidently with your child and work with them to build the home-school connection in order to augment their development in all areas and ensure success in each year of school and beyond.

As always, at Lupine Lane, we are here to support each child and their family and provide information based on our experience in order to help inform each family's decision making process. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our 5 to 6 year old class further, please contact Lauren Boyle at lboyle@lupinelane.com.