Several colored pencils (red, purple, black, yellow, pink, orange, blue, green) are arranged around the top and right edges of the notebook page.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

2025-2026

DeSoto Trail
Elementary School



Register Now
leonschools.net/register



Companion Video
tinyurl.com/dtesk2025

DeSoto Trail Elementary

Michele C. Keltner

Principal



Megan J. Keen

Assistant Principal

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Kindergarten! Just as seedlings need sun, fertile soil, and water to blossom, children need a positive, caring, and creative atmosphere in which to learn and grow.

All children need to feel accepted as they are. This allows your child to reach his or her highest potential. We encourage positive self-esteem and confidence by building on each child's strengths and interests. We help children to see how what they learn in school relates to everyday experiences. When children are understood and appreciated, they thrive.

We invite parents to become involved in school life. We believe in the importance of maintaining close communication between families and school staff. There are many things you can do to prepare your child for school. It is important to reinforce at home what your child learns at school. Here are a few ideas:

- **Talk to your child.** The more a child can say, the easier it is for him or her to learn to read.
- **Listen to your child.** Encourage your child to tell you about the things he or she sees and does.
- **Read to your child.** Reading aloud becomes fun for the child and they soon want to read on their own.
- **Make your house a reading home.** If your child sees you reading books, magazines, or newspapers, he or she will know that reading is an important value in your family.
- **Take your child places.** Going to parks, on walks, to museums, or to stores all help to give your child new interests. Make these outings valuable to your child by pointing out interesting sights and discussing them. This builds their vocabulary. Ask your child questions and LISTEN to the answers.
- **Provide opportunities** for your child to play with other children.

At DeSoto Trail Elementary, our goal is for every child to have a successful learning experience. Commitment to excellence is accomplished when families and schools work together purposefully, with mutual respect and trust, in the pursuit of educational excellence for their children.

We are happy to have you with us and look forward to meeting you personally when school begins. We are confident that it will be a rewarding and successful experience for you and your child.

Sincerely,

Michele C. Keltner
Principal

5200 Tredington Park Drive • Tallahassee, Florida 32309 • Phone (850) 488-4511 • Fax (850) 487-1623

"The Leon County School District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of sex (including transgender status, gender nonconforming, and gender identity), marital status, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, color, pregnancy, disability, military status, or genetic information."



WELCOME TO DESOTO TRAIL ELEMENTARY

Michele C. Keltner, Principal
Megan J. Keen, Assistant Principal

5200 Tredington Park Drive

Tallahassee, FL 32309

Office Phone: 850-488-4511

Attendance: dtesattendance@leonschools.net

School Office Staff:

Secretary – LeJina Payne

Registrar – Jennifer Bates

Financial Accountant – Sarah Koenitzer

Office Aide – Tia Griffiss

**First Day of School is
Monday,
August 11, 2025**

Registration Process:

1. Visit www.leonschools.net/register
2. Register for a Parent Account
3. Add your child to your account
4. Email required documents to our registrar: jennifer.bates@leonschools.net

Documentation Needed to Enroll Your Child:

- Birth Certificate issued by Office of Vital Statistics
- School Entry Health Examination from physician's office
- Certification of Immunizations (Form 680) from physician's office or County Health Department
- Two (2) proofs of residence such as:
 - a) Primary: most recent rental/lease agreement, mortgage statement, homestead exemption, or property tax bill, **and**
 - b) Secondary: most recent utility bill, homeowner's insurance bill, government mail
- Court documents pertaining to custody, if applicable

School Hours

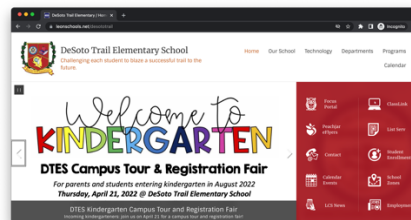
8:25 AM to 2:50 PM



Supervision Hours

7:45 AM to 3:20 PM

Essential Websites



www.leonschools.net/desototrail – School Website

www.facebook.com/desototrailschool – Facebook Page

<https://volunteers.leonschools.net> – Volunteer Application

www.leonschools.net – School District Website

DESOTO TRAIL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – GENERAL INFORMATION

2025-2026 SCHOOL HOURS 8:25 AM – 2:50 PM

MEET-THE-TEACHER DAY

- **Kindergarten:** Wednesday, August 6 (scheduled by last name; watch for an email with details)
- **Grades 1-5:** Thursday, August 7 from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM for grades 1-5.
- Classroom rolls will be posted in the covered area.
- Students with incomplete registration packets will **not** be placed on a classroom roll.
- Contact the School Office for any enrollment questions.

ATTENDANCE

- **Florida law requires parents to notify the school when a child is absent.** The law allows excused absences for illness or medical care, death in the family, religious holidays, and special circumstances preapproved by school administration.
 - **Educational Absences:** Must be pre-approved one week in advance with a written request explaining the educational benefit.
- **Report absences/tardies** via dtesattendance@leonschools.net. Send a detailed note for **each day** the child is absent. Doctors notes can be uploaded directly into the Focus Portal. Students must be fever free for 48 hours before returning.
- **Unexcused absenteeism** (including late arrivals or early departures) sufficient enough to jeopardize academic progress at the elementary level is defined as a student being absent (or tardy) without an acceptable reason five (5) times in a calendar month or ten (10) times in a 90-calendar day period. Leaving early from a field trip or school event is unexcused.
- The **tardy bell** rings at 8:30 AM. Students must be inside the classroom at 8:30 AM to be marked present. **Tardy students must be signed in by a guardian on the kiosk in the front office.**

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

- **Transportation changes must be sent as a handwritten note to the teacher if different than set method of departure.** The transportation change form can be downloaded from our website. Please do not submit changes via email; teachers cannot check email throughout the day.
- **Emergency (same-day) transportation changes require a phone call to the front office by 2:20PM.**

BUSES

- Route schedules are available at www.leonschools.net/buses.
- Classrooms will have a copy of bus route schedules on Orientation Day.
- The first week of school, students will be marked with a colored wristband that matches the color assigned to the bus they ride. Volunteers will walk students to the bus loading area at dismissal time.

CAFETERIA

- **Student lunch** is provided free of charge for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Menus are accessible at www.leonschools.net/DiningServices.
- DeSoto Trail has a nut-free kitchen/menu, but we are not a nut-free school.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- A supply list is posted on our website. Please bring items in a bag or box labeled with your student's name to **Meet the Teacher Day** in August. Per our campus safety procedures, parents may not walk students to class on the first day of school.
- **Kindergarten Extra Outfit:** Keep a plastic bag in your child's backpack, labeled with their name, with underwear, shirt, pants, and socks. Soiled clothes will be returned in the bag. Remember to send back clean clothes.

CLINIC

- The school clinic is staffed with a trained school health care assistant.
- Only medically-necessary medications will be administered at school. Most can be given at home.
- Medications, prescription or non-prescription, **are not** to be transported through the student. An adult must drop off meds and fill out the **Administration of Medication Permission** form.
- It is vital that we know of any medical problems, such as food allergies, chronic conditions, etc.
- **Keep current phone numbers for ALL guardians/emergency contacts updated in the Focus Portal.**

SPECIAL AREAS

- Students attend **special area** classes (PE, Art, Music, Guidance, etc.) daily on a rotating schedule.
- Parents will receive a **monthly calendar** that shows which special area falls on each school day.

FIELD TRIPS

- Chaperones must have an approved **Volunteer Application** form on file: volunteers.leonschools.net
- If a field trip allows for chaperones, a **DTES Field Trip Chaperone Form** will be sent home along with the student field trip permission slip.
- Approved chaperones may meet their class at the field trip **destination**.
- For the safety of ALL students, parents are required to chaperone **without other siblings**.
- All students must have an **Application for Activity Participation** on file. Families without health insurance may purchase school insurance for their student. Information is available on our website.
- All students will receive a free t-shirt as part of our Trailblazer Fitness Adventure in February. Students should wear their TFA t-shirt on field trip days.

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

- **Label all belongings (jackets, coats, sweaters, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc.)**
- **Lost and Found:** Items will be set out in the middle covered area for a season before being donated. Encourage your child to check the Lost and Found regularly. Parents may check Lost and Found after school.
- **Sign in** at the school office when you arrive on campus. You will need your license/ID to sign in.
- **Lunch Visitors:** Parents may eat with students at our picnic tables. Notify the teacher in advance.

Car Rider, Walker, and Biker Procedures

Everyone wants a **safe** and **smooth** morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Please adhere to the procedures below. They are based on our experience of what works most efficiently.

- Student **supervision** is provided from **7:45am** to **3:20pm**.
- Assistance unloading/loading the car is provided 8:00-8:25am and 2:50-3:15pm.
- No cell phone use in the car pick-up/drop-off lane.
- Parents cannot park and walk students to class or drop-off in the parking lot.



Thank you for doing your part to keep drop-off/pick-up **safe** and **efficient**!

Drop-off/Pick-up Procedure (see diagram):

- North gate (Tredington Park Drive near Kerry Forest Pkwy): **parking lot exit only**.
- South gate (Tredington Park Drive near Velda Dairy Road): **entry** and **exit** for car drop-off/pick-up loop.
- Follow traffic flow into the parking lot (two lanes); then, merge into the car loop lane.
- Children must exit/enter the vehicle's **passenger** side, at metal railings only.
- Always pull as far forward as possible in the car lane. Do not leave a gap.

For Afternoon Pick-up (see diagram):

- No entry to car loop lane before 2:15pm.
- Display hang-tag with **student grade level(s) and name(s) clearly-written** in **black permanent marker** so our staff can read them and call your child(ren) quickly.
- **No left turn** from Velda Dairy Road onto Tredington Park Drive during dismissal.
- If you arrive **after 3:15pm**, pick up your student inside the front office.

Pre-K and Extended Day Programs:

- Drop-off and pick-up in the back parking lot (**Velda Dairy entrance**).
- Do not park on the grass.
- A school aide monitors the back gate from 7:45am-8:25am; display your Pre-K parking pass for entry into the back parking lot.

Walkers/Bikers:

- **Morning:** parents may escort students to the black pedestrian gate on Tredington Park Drive. Students proceed alone to campus.
- **Afternoon:** students return to the pedestrian gate for pick-up.
- During **inclement weather**, walkers and bikers stay on campus. Car pickup is preferred, but parents may walk along the chain-link fence to the edge of the **covered** car loop to meet their child.

THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

At DeSoto Trail, the kindergarten program is designed to develop each child's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas: physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. Teachers help children "learn how to learn" and establish a foundation for lifelong learning. Students are viewed as individuals and the instruction is responsive to individual differences in ability and interests.

Florida uses the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards. The standards for English Language Arts lay the foundation for reading success. They focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Our district-adopted reading curriculum is built on the standards. Daily instruction includes oral language, letter names, concepts about print, writing, phonics, high-frequency words, vocabulary, and comprehension skills and strategies. Teachers incorporate daily opportunities to read aloud a wide range of texts, using both narrative and expository material. Reading aloud (shared reading) is critical to promoting children's success with literacy. Listening to stories develops valuable concepts of print and other pre-reading skills and increases vocabulary development. During small group guided reading time, children will meet with their teacher to work on skills such as letter sounds, sight words, and comprehension. Our goal is to ensure that every child will develop a love for reading so that it will become a part of their daily life.

Our math series is also built on the B.E.S.T. standards. The program incorporates hands-on experiences with math manipulatives, cooperative learning, technology, direct instruction, and independent practice.

Center activities are selected to reinforce and enrich specific skills being covered in the curriculum. Children explore and discover through hands-on experiences related to art, literacy, math, and science activities. In addition to school supplies, we ask parents to purchase a Kindergarten Bundle which includes our Star Folder (for behavior charts, communication to and from school, and graded papers), Star Poster (to use when the student is "Star of the Week"), and our Primary Journal. Payment envelopes will be available in the classroom at Meet the Teacher Day.

Computer and technology skills are integrated into the curriculum, and every student is assigned a Chromebook to use to access math and reading skills practice programs and the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST). FAST is Florida's standardized assessment, which is administered three times per year to students in VPK through grade 10 and is designed to show student progress throughout the year. Kindergarten students take FAST Reading and Math assessments through the STAR platform developed by Renaissance Learning.

The kindergarten team welcomes volunteers! We encourage parents to share their time and ideas.



HELPFUL SKILLS CHECKLIST

How many can your child do?

- ☐ I can follow directions.
- ☐ I respect adults.
- ☐ I respect other people's property.
- ☐ I can go to the restroom without help.
- ☐ I can take responsibility for my own actions. (If I spill something, I can clean it up.)
- ☐ I can listen and sit quietly while others are talking.
- ☐ I can share things, take turns, and play by the rules.
- ☐ I can say my first and last name.
- ☐ I can write my first name.
- ☐ I can recognize my own printed name.
- ☐ I know how to use zippers, shoelaces, and buttons, and can take my outer garments on and off.
- ☐ I know how to use a handkerchief or tissue and can ask for one.
- ☐ I know what to do (and what not to do) with crayons, paste, and scissors.
- ☐ I can name basic colors.
- ☐ I can name and count numbers 1 to 10.
- ☐ I can identify missing parts of a picture.
- ☐ I can identify pictures of common objects.
- ☐ I can recognize most letters of the alphabet.
- ☐ I know my birthday, address, and phone number.



READING TIPS FOR PARENTS OF KINDERGARTNERS

Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.



- **Talk to your child.** Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.
- **Say silly tongue twisters.** Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help children become sensitive to the sounds in words.
- **Read it and experience it.** Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.
- **Use your child's name.** Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name: *John, jump*. And they both begin with the same letter, J."
- **Play with puppets.** Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is *Mark*. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *park* rhyme with *Mark*? Does *ball* rhyme with *Mark*?"
- **Trace and say letters.** Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.
- **Write it down.** Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage your child to use the letters and sounds he or she is learning about in school.
- **Play sound games.** Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is...m — o — p?" Hold each sound longer than normal.
- **Read it again and again.** Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.
- **Talk about letters and sounds.** Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters makes. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm."

DESOTO TRAIL EXTENDED DAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (K-CLUB)

Program Director: Mrs. Jeriesha Carter-Johnson
jeriesha.carter-johnson@leonschools.net

Questions? Contact Us!

Assistant Manager: Ms. Shemyia Stephens
shemyia.stephens@leonschools.net

Phone: 850.488.3316

What is K-Club?

K-Club is our after-school care program for kindergarten. K-Club has an area separate from the rest of the after-school program called the **K-Club Mansion**. K-Club consists of **30 students**.

Sample K-Club Daily Schedule

2:50-3:00 Attendance

3:00-3:15 Bathroom Time

3:15-3:45 Snack and Movie

***snack is provided daily, however if your child has specific preferences you may want to send an extra or alternative snack.**

3:45-5:30 Daily Activity (Ex: Craft, Experiments, Cooking Activities, Outside Play, Centers)

***daily activities may vary in length depending on the day.**

5:30-6:00 Dismissal (Car Pickup M-TH)

Disclaimer: Please keep in mind the daily schedule is subject to change.



How and when do I register?

We only have **30 spots!** **K-Club registration opens April 17th** and is first come, first served. We do not collect the registration fee until July when the school year opens. Our registration form can be found on our website. Click or scan the link below and find our K-Club registration form and our Welcome to K-Club PowerPoint under 'forms and flyers'.



Visit our Website



leonschools.net/dtesedep

Check our Instagram to see what goes on in EDEP!



@dtesedep