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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of kindergarten in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K–12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 1st grade.

KINDERGARTEN

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents, and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students.

Of course, high standards are not the only thing needed for our children's success. But standards provide an important first step — a clear roadmap for learning for teachers, parents, and students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed. Standards help parents and teachers know when students need extra assistance or when they need to be challenged even more. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

You should use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. You can do this by talking to his or her teacher regularly about how your child is doing — beyond parent-teacher conferences.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in kindergarten
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

Learning new language skills is a hallmark of kindergarten. Your child will learn about the alphabet and its role in reading. Your child will practice rhyming, matching words with beginning sounds, and blending sounds into words. Practice with these types of activities is a powerful step toward learning to read and spell correctly. The size of your child's vocabulary is another key factor in his or her ability to read and comprehend books and stories. Your child also will begin to experiment with writing and will be encouraged to use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing letters to share information, ideas, and feelings.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in Kindergarten

- Naming upper- and lower-case letters, matching those letters with their sounds, and printing them
- Comparing the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories, such as fairy tales and folktales
- Retelling familiar stories and talking about stories read to them using details from the text
- Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to describe an event, including his or her reaction to what happened
- Stating an opinion or preference about a topic or book in writing (e.g., "My favorite book is . . .")
- Taking part in classroom conversations and following rules for discussions (e.g., learning to listen to others and taking turns when speaking)
- Speaking clearly to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, including descriptions of familiar people, places, things, and events
- Asking and answering questions about key details in stories or other information read aloud
- Understanding and using question words (e.g., *who, what, where, when, why, how*) in discussions
- Learning to recognize, spell, and properly use those little grammatical words that hold the language together (e.g., *a, the, to, of, from, I, is, are*)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In kindergarten, these include:

- Using knowledge of letters and letter-sound correspondences to figure out how to spell words as they sound
- Reading and understanding a story designed for early readers

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

Mathematics

Young children arrive in kindergarten with widely varying knowledge in math. By the end of the year, your child must have some important foundations in place. One of the most important skills your child should develop is the ability to add and subtract small numbers and use addition and subtraction to solve word problems. This will rely on gaining some fundamentals early in the year, such as counting objects to tell how many there are. Addition and subtraction will continue to be a very strong focus in math through 2nd grade.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in Kindergarten


- Counting objects to tell how many there are
- Comparing two groups of objects to tell which group, if either, has more; comparing two written numbers to tell which is greater
- Acting out addition and subtraction word problems and drawing diagrams to represent them
- Adding with a sum of 10 or less; subtracting from a number 10 or less; and solving addition and subtraction word problems
- Adding and subtracting very small numbers quickly and accurately (e.g., $3 + 1$)
- Correctly naming shapes regardless of orientation or size (e.g., a square oriented as a "diamond" is still a square)

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In kindergarten, these include:

- Counting to tell the number of objects (this will not be written work; ask the teacher for his or her observations of your child's progress in this area)
- Solving addition and subtraction word problems

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



Talking to
Your Child's
Teacher

Help Your Child Learn at Home

Learning does not end in the classroom. Children need help and support at home to succeed in their studies. Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and carve out time *every day* when your child can concentrate on reading, writing, and math uninterrupted by friends, brothers or sisters, or other distractions.

You should also try and sit down with your child at least once a week for 15 to 30 minutes while he or she works on homework. This will keep you informed about what your child is working on, and it will help you be the first to know if your child needs help with specific topics. By taking these small steps, you will be helping your child become successful both in and outside the classroom.

Additionally, here are some activities you can do with your child to support learning at home:

English Language Arts & Literacy

- Read with your child every day, books like *Are You My Mother* by P.D. Eastman or *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss. Ask your child to explain his or her favorite parts of the story. Share your own ideas. To find more books for your child to read, visit www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf.
- Encourage your child to tell you about his or her day at school. Keep paper, markers, or crayons around the house for your child to write letters or words or draw a picture about his or her day. Have your child describe the picture to you.
- Play word games like *I Spy*, sing songs like *Itsy Bitsy Spider*, and make silly rhymes together.

Mathematics

Look for "word problems" in real life. Some kindergarten examples might include:

- Play "Write the next number." You write a number, and your child writes the next number.
- Ask your child questions that require counting as many as 20 things. For example, ask, "How many books do you have about wild animals?"
- Ask your child questions that require comparing numbers. "Who is wearing more bracelets, you or your sister?" (Your child might use matching or counting to find the answer.)

For more information, the full standards are available at www.corestandards.org.

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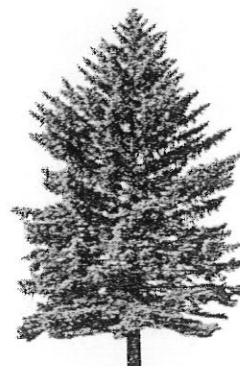
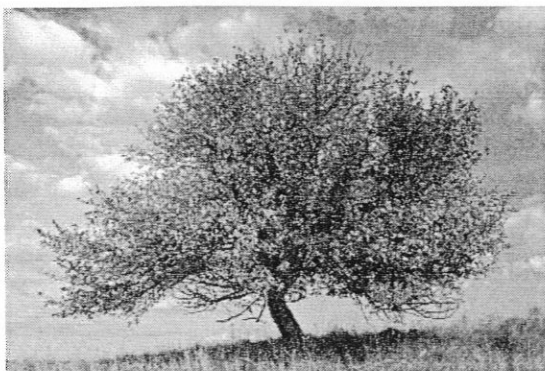
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Name _____

1.



2.



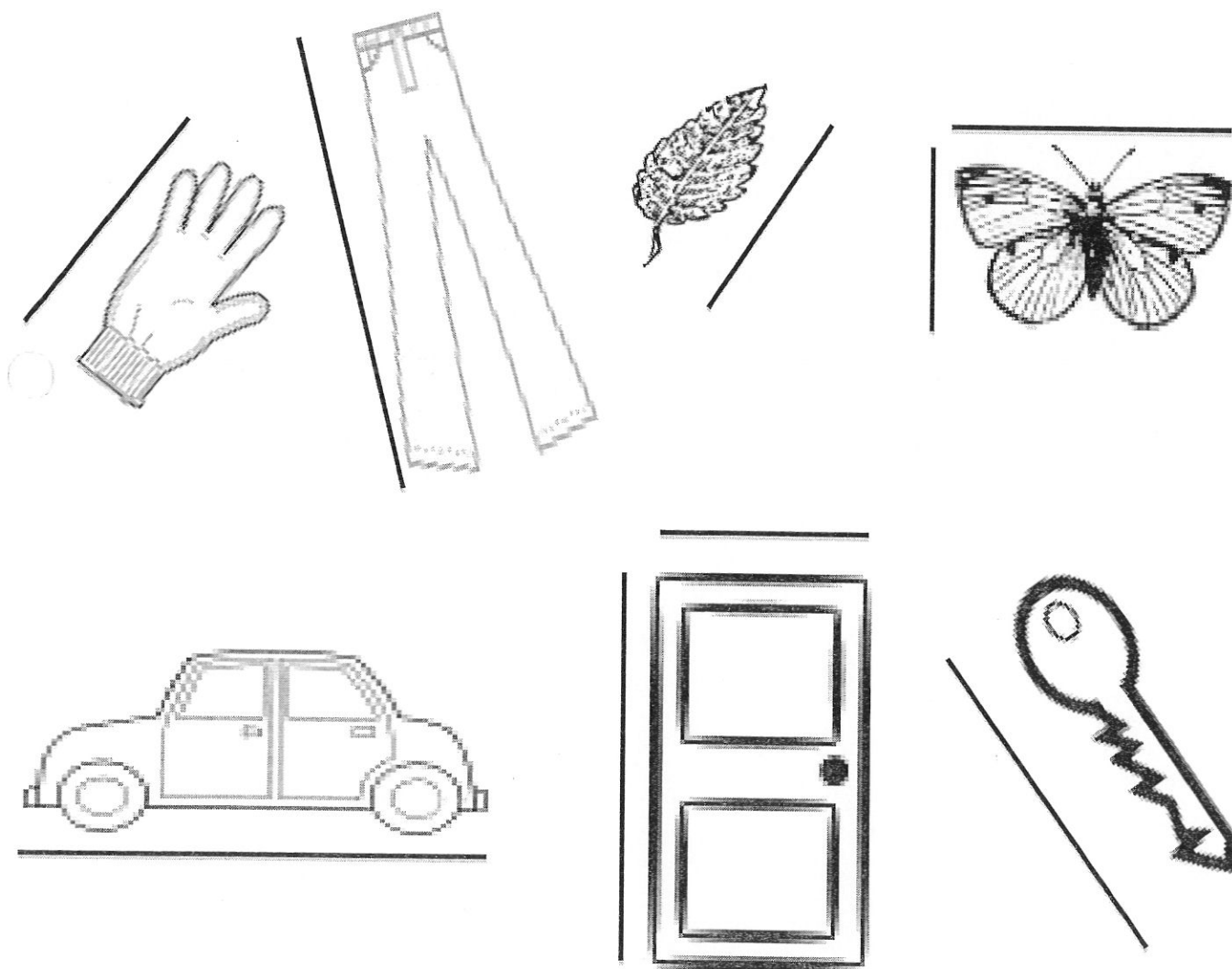
Directions: Listen carefully for the following things I would like you to circle.

1. Circle the things that we get from plants. (apple, corn, bouquet)
2. Look at the two pictures of trees on your worksheet. Think about the differences between these trees. Draw a *brown* circle around the tree that is a deciduous tree. Draw a *green* circle around the tree that is an evergreen tree.

Directions: Listen to your teacher's instructions.

Name _____ Date _____

Cut out the picture of the string at the bottom of the page. Compare the string with each object to see which is longer. Use the line next to each object to help you compare. Color objects shorter than the string green. Color objects longer than the string orange.



Draw something longer than, shorter than, and the same length as the picture of the string on the back of your paper. Color objects shorter than the string green. Color objects longer than the string orange.

Elementary Testing

Students in **Grades PK-5** will be taking the following tests throughout the year:

Grade(s)	Test	Content	Test Date(s)
Pre-K, K	DSC (Developing Skills Checklist)	Language/Cognition/Physical/Social-Emotional	Fall & Spring for Pre-K Fall for K
Pre-K	TELD-3	General language, expressive and receptive skills	Fall, Winter(for specified students), Spring
K-3	DIBELS	Reading	Fall, Winter, Spring
3-5	PARCC	English Language Arts & Mathematics	PHASE I (PBA): March 16-20, 2015 PHASE II (EOY): May 4-8, 2015
3, 5	ILEAP	Science & Social Studies	April 14-15, 2015
4	LEAP		
3,5	LAA1*	English Language Arts & Mathematics	Window: February 2-March 13, 2015
4		Science	
K-5	ELDA*	English Language	Window: February 2-March 13, 2015

**The following tests are only for students who have been deemed eligible to take those tests*

DSC

Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) evaluates the skills that children develop from Pre-Kindergarten through the end of Kindergarten. It reliably measures the skills and concepts that help to determine appropriate instruction for individual children as well as for groups. It covers language, visual, auditory, mathematical concepts and operations, memory, print and writing, social and emotional, and fine and gross motor skills

TELD-3

The TELD-3 is used to help identify children who are experiencing language delays or difficulties and may be candidates for early intervention. In addition to an overall Spoken Language score, the TELD-3 provides scores for Receptive Language and Expressive Language subtests to enable finer discrimination in evaluating results.

DIBELS TEST

DIBELS are individually administered tests in each of the key basic early literacy skills. This test is given in the fall, winter, and spring.

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the mastery of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills.

DIBELS is comprised of seven measures to function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.

DIBELS is designed for use in identifying children experiencing difficulty in mastering basic early literacy skills in order to provide support early and prevent the occurrence of later reading difficulties. Students may score Benchmark, Strategic, or Intensive.

- **Benchmark**-This is where the student needs to be which is at grade level.
- **Strategic**-This means that the student is at some risk and needs a little help.
- **Intensive**-This means that the student is at high risk of not meeting the end of the year goal

The goal is for every student to be at “**Benchmark.**” This means that the student is at grade level.

PARCC TEST

The **Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)** of the **PARCC TEST** is administered after approximately 75% of the school year is completed. The ELA/Literacy PBA at each grade level will focus on writing effectively when analyzing texts and will include three tasks: a literary analysis, a research simulation, and a narrative task. For each task, students will be asked to read one or more texts, answer several comprehension and vocabulary questions, and write an essay that requires them to draw evidence from the text(s). The Math portion of this assessment will require students to solve real-life problems and to provide reasoning/explanations to support their work.

The **End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)** of the **PARCC TEST** is administered after approximately 90% of the school year is completed. The ELA/Literacy EOY at each grade level will include 4-5 texts, both literary and informational, and the questions will focus on reading comprehension. On the Math portion, students will demonstrate their ability to understand and use Math skills including mathematical fluency.

LAA 1 TEST

Students with the most severe cognitive disabilities are eligible to take the LEAP Alternate Assessment Level 1, known as LAA 1. The assessment is based on Extended Standards which capture the core academic content of academic standards.

Students in 3rd through 6th grade are assessed in English language arts and math. Students in 4th grade are assessed in science.

ELDA TEST

This test assesses English language proficiency in the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as comprehension of English for students who are identified as limited English proficient.

Helpful Math Apps & Websites for your Children

This list highlights the best math apps and websites that are Common Core aligned.



IXL

IXL has a whopping 2,000 math-practice modules that meet nearly all the Common Core math standards. You'll find Pre-K games covering the fundamentals through high school lessons and learning activities on geometry, how to graph equations, or the Pythagorean theorem, for example.



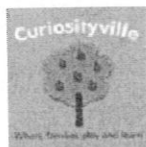
Numbers and Counting Adventures

The mathematical concepts covered are sound and embedded into the games. There are a variety of counting skills, including counting a number of objects, recognizing numerals, sequencing numbers, and matching a numeral to a pictorial representation.



Bugs and Numbers

The variety of skills covered here is unusual for math apps -- kids can practice their numbers, count money, tell time, and develop an understanding of fractions all in one place. Also, the amount of quality content for the price is remarkable.



Curiosityville

Curiosityville is a great example of age-appropriate Web content for little kids. The easy-to-use, straightforward design is aimed at the preschool to early elementary set, providing a safe online play space.



DreamBox Learning Math

DreamBox Learning Math is an interactive, adaptive, self-paced program that provides engaging activities for students to learn and practice skills and concepts in mathematics. This comprehensive mathematics program covers a wide range of subjects and skills at each grade level. One of the strengths of the program is that players can progress through the skills and activities of any grade level, regardless of their actual grade level. Read the full review.

Helpful Reading Apps & Websites for your Children



Storia

Kids are drawn into the text with read-alouds and learning activities. Follow your child's progress with Reading Reports and earn rewards for his classroom if his teacher participates in Scholastic's Reading Club. For iPad and Android. *Scholastic, free. Books \$1–\$9. Ages 2 and up.*



PlayTales

Looking to introduce your little one to a foreign language? PlayTales is the app for you! Each classic or just-released book is available in eight languages and offers interactive options as well as original illustrations. For iOS and Android. *Genera Kids, free. Books \$1–\$4. Ages 1 to 8.*



MeeGenius

Turn any time into storytime with 700+ titles from well-known and brand-new authors. Your child can hear the story read aloud (with follow-along highlighting for word recognition) or read it to herself. For iOS and Android. *MeeGenius, free. Books \$1–\$5. Ages 2 to 8.*



Lists for Writers

Great to turn to for inspiration for any part of the story you're telling — character names, places, myths and magic, specific words, and more. Plus, choose from different kinds of plots, conflict types, and issues. For iOS and Android. *Thinkamingo, \$2–\$3. Ages 8 and up.*



This is My Story (and I'm Sticking to It)

Kids can improve early writing skills by seeing and hearing vocab words as they fill them into their own original stories that use simple sentence structure. Great for early readers and writers. For iOS. *Gramercy Consultants, \$2. Ages 4 and up.*