

While not representing ALL the concepts and skills we teach, these are the performance indicators we are committing to teach for MASTERY at each level. These skills build on those previously mastered and lay the foundation for learning in later schooling and throughout life. We expect that every student will demonstrate mastery of these skills. We will gather sufficient evidence to provide proof of their learning, and communicate their performance with students and families.



Parents'/Guardians' Guide to Kindergarten

This guide provides an overview of what your student will learn by the end of kindergarten. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in each of the different subject areas, which will build a strong foundation for success as your child progresses through school. The student outcomes outlined in this document reflect the Illinois Learning Standards as they are published at this time, which includes incorporating the Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. As the Illinois Learning Standards undergo revision to reflect the development of new standards in additional subjects, our curriculum will also be revised to support additions or changes to the Illinois Learning Standards. If your child is meeting these end-of-the-year expectations, he or she should be well prepared for the next level of schooling.

Why Are Academic Standards Important?

Academic standards are important because they help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents/guardians, and teachers; build a child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed.

How Can I Help My Child?

Use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. Talk regularly with his or her teacher about how your child is doing.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. Work with your child's teacher to identify opportunities for additional learning or ways you can support your child in their schooling.

This Guide Includes:

- An overview of some of the key concepts and skills your child will learn 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 progress.

Preface and support material adapted from "Parents' Guide to Student Success" published by the National Parent-Teacher Association

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English/Language Arts: Learning new language skills is central to our kindergarten classrooms. Your child will learn about the alphabet and its role in reading and writing. He or she will practice rhyming, matching letters with sounds, matching beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words, and blending sounds into words. Your child will also spend time building vocabulary in order to increase his or her ability to read and understand books and stories. Your child will also begin to experiment with writing and be encouraged to use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to share information, ideas, and feelings.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

Reading

- Naming upper- and lower-case letters; matching those letters with sounds
- Expanding concepts about print: recognize that pictures and symbols have meaning and that print carries a message; follow words from left to right; differentiate among letter, word, sentence; identify front and back covers and title pages in books
- Understanding spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes)
- Reading kindergarten high frequency words
- Recognizing common types of texts (e.g. storybooks, poems, information books)
- Retelling familiar stories and talking about stories read to them using details from the text
- Asking and answering questions about key details in stories or other information read aloud
- Comparing the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories, such as fairy tales and folktales
- Understanding and using question words (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how) in discussions
- *Reading* emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding

Writing

- Printing upper- and lower-case letters
- Using a combination of drawings, dictation and writing to communicate an idea or describe an event, including his or her reaction to what happened
- Sorting and categorizing information and recording observations

Speaking and Listening

- 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

Language Usage

- Adapting language and speaking/listening behaviors to different situations
- Capitalizing beginning of sentences and "I"
- Recognizing and naming end marks: period, question mark, exclamation point,
- Spelling simple words phonetically

Mathematics: By the end of the year, your child will have some important math foundations in place, including identifying numbers, sorting and classifying objects, counting objects to tell how many there are and comparing whole numbers. One of the most important skills your child should develop is the ability to fluently add and subtract small numbers and use addition and subtraction to solve word problems.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

Focus Areas: representing and comparing whole numbers, describing shapes and space

- Counting to tell how many objects there are (1 – 20)
- Counting by ones and tens (1-100)
- Comparing two groups of objects to tell which (if any) has more; comparing two written numbers to tell which is greater
- Understanding addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from
- Adding and subtracting small numbers quickly and accurately (1-10)
- Using a variety of models to represent addition and subtraction; solving addition and subtraction word problems
- Describing and comparing measurable attributes (size, length, capacity and weight); classifying objects
- Classifying objects and counting the number of objects in categories
- Constructing and explaining simple graphs, charts, and tables
- Identifying and describing shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders,

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spheres) regardless of orientation or size

Science: Science instruction in our kindergarten classrooms builds on your child's natural curiosity and focuses on observation, questioning, and data collection. Students begin to think and act like scientists.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Using the five senses and basic science tools (like magnifying glass, measuring tools) to collect, describe, compare and record information
- Observing and describing seasonal and weather changes and the effects of forces in nature
- Comparing land, water, air and resources
- Observing, categorizing, and describing living things: characteristics, basic needs, life cycle
- Identifying, describing and comparing properties of objects and the effects of different forces on objects

Social Sciences: Your child will learn about the world and their place in it, including their roles and responsibilities, and begin to develop citizenship skills. They will study broad topics like Community and Family, World Communities and Geography.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Recognizing and explaining the reason for rules, voting, and jobs
- Differentiating between needs and wants; and understanding that trade or money are exchanged for goods and services
- Understanding yesterday, today, and tomorrow as measures of time
- Identifying a variety of maps and tell how they are used
- Identifying similarities and differences in people's characteristics, habits and living patterns

Physical Development/Health: The goal of physical development and health programming is physical fitness for all students. Kindergarten students are introduced to topics of fitness, wellness, teamwork, and cooperation in building a foundation of skills that will enable them to lead healthy and physically active lifestyles.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Responding to cues to demonstrate basic movement skills (locomotor, non-locomotor and manipulative/fine motor) and spatial awareness (behind, ahead of, next to, over, under, on, through, beside) safely, both individually and within a group
- Recognizing practices that promote healthy living, promote safety and prevent illness.
- Discussing good health habits (sleep, nutrition, hygiene, relationships).
- Identifying basic body parts

Fine Arts: Your child will explore the four art forms (dance, drama, music, and visual art) as a means of promoting creativity and self-expression. Students will build knowledge of the arts, arts skills, and an appreciation of the arts a means of communicating ideas and feelings related to the time in which they are created.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Exploring feelings, stories, and expressive ideas in the four art forms
- Exploring the use of elements and principles in each art form as unique forms of communication
- Observing and responding to the arts (dance, drama, music, visual art) in a respectful manner.

Social/Emotional Learning: Your child will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to recognize and manage his or her emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, develop positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Recognizing different feelings.
- Controlling impulsive behavior and practicing self-control.
- Identifying the feelings and perspectives of others.
- Describing similarities and differences among others.
- Demonstrating ability to work and play with others

Technology: Students will apply the use of technology to solve problems, create projects, collaborate, and extend their learning in all subjects.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Using a variety of digital tools and resources to complete a variety of tasks and investigations with teacher guidance
- Using simulations and graphic organizers with teacher guidance
- Identifying the physical components of a computer

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Helping your Child Learn at Home

- Try to carve out a quiet place to study, and carve out time every day when your child can concentrate on his or her studies without distractions from friends or family.
- Sit down with your child at least once a week for 15 – 30 minutes while he or she does homework. This will keep you informed about what your child is working on and help you be the first to know if he or she needs help with a specific topic.
- Read with your child every day.
- Encourage your child to talk about his or her day at school. Keep a supply of paper, pencils, markers or crayons around the house so your child can practice writing letters, words, numbers or drawing pictures about the day. Have your child describe his or her work to you.
- Make up silly songs or play word games.
- Look for “word problems” in real life.
- Ask your child to count as many as 20 things.
- Ask questions that require comparing numbers (“Who has more cookies, you or your brother?”)
- Play games using ‘position’ words like “over”, “under”, “next to”, “beside”, “in front of”, “behind”.
- Encourage the use of ‘time’ words like “yesterday”, “today”, “tomorrow”, “first”, “next”, “last”, “finally”.

Tips for Talking with Your Child’s Teacher

- Keep the conversation focused on a few critical areas, like:
 - counting to tell the number of objects
 - solving addition and subtraction word problems,
 - using knowledge of letters and sounds to figure out how to read or spell words
 - 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 meeting the expectations?
 - Is my child on track?
 - How can I support my child in this area?
 - Are there resources outside the classroom to help his or her learning in a particular area?

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