

Guide to Student Learning in Kindergarten



*The student learning guide provides valuable information on what students learn in kindergarten.
Use this information to support and reinforce learning at home.*

At primary schools, all students will acquire foundational literacy and math skills in child-centered learning environments. The primary school program engages students in a variety of literacy experiences and interactions that introduce and reinforce essential literacy skills and strategies.

Classroom instruction is shaped by the guiding principle that all students must acquire the foundational reading and writing skills necessary to be strategic readers, thinkers, and writers. Language, reading, and writing skills are explicitly taught during English Language Arts instruction. Social studies and science instruction are used to apply and reinforce literacy skills as students use oral language, reading, and writing skills to learn essential understanding.

Information and communication technology instruction is embedded into all content areas. The district provides each student with a device to introduce students to the use of technology tools for communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

English Language Arts (ELA)

Kindergarten students will participate in daily classroom activities to strengthen their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills through a balanced literacy approach focused on modeled, shared, guided, and independent reading and writing experiences. A variety of text and genres will be used including fiction, informational text, and poetry. In addition, literacy skills will be integrated into science, social studies and health instruction. Students will have ample opportunities to read, write, listen and speak in order to further understand the grade-level content.

READING: The focus for reading instruction in kindergarten will be to ensure that students gain adequate exposure to a range of texts and tasks while at the same time increasing their knowledge of the alphabetic principle, concepts of print, and foundational skills that are a necessary component of an effective, comprehensive reading program.

WRITING: Students will use the writing process to write for different purposes and audiences in a variety of genres including narrative, informational, and opinion. Kindergarten students will use a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to convey their message.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING: Students will understand that being competent in speaking and listening will allow them to take advantage of new opportunities for communication. Students will listen and speak to understand, to interact socially, to extend discussion, and to discuss content.

Mathematics

In kindergarten, students begin to develop their understanding of counting and numbers. Instructional time is focused on two critical areas that will enable students to:

Represent and compare whole numbers, initially with sets of objects:

- Students use numbers, including written numerals, to represent quantities and to solve quantitative problems such as:
 - counting objects in a set;
 - counting out a given number of objects;
 - comparing sets or numerals;
 - modeling simple joining and separating situations with sets of objects, or eventually with equations such as $5 + 2 = 7$ and $7 - 2 = 5$.
- Students choose, combine, and apply effective strategies for answering quantitative questions, including quickly recognizing the number of objects in a small set, counting and producing sets of given sizes, counting the number of objects when combining sets, or counting the number of objects that remain in a set after some are taken away.
- Students develop fluency in combinations to 5.

Describe shapes and space:

- Students describe their physical world using geometric ideas (e.g., shape, orientation, spatial relations) and vocabulary.
- Students identify, name, and describe basic two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, triangles, circles, rectangles, and hexagons, presented in a variety of ways (e.g., with different sizes and orientations), as well as three-dimensional shapes such as cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres.
- Students construct more complex shapes through the use of basic shapes and spatial reasoning to model objects in their environment.

Science

In kindergarten, students begin to develop an understanding of the natural and designed world through exploration and investigation in life and physical sciences. Students will investigate answers to their own questions about the world by analyzing models, planning investigations, and gathering evidence that can support their explanations. By the end of kindergarten, students will be able to:

- Apply science and engineering practices to ask questions about the world around them, and develop methods for answering those questions.
- Use observations to ask questions and describe patterns of what plants and animals, including humans, need to survive.
- Describe the needs of living things, and ways that various living things meet those needs.
- Investigate and gather information about the life cycles of various plants and animals.
- Identify plants and animals commonly found in different habitats.
- Communicate how plants and animals change the environment to meet their needs.
- Use and develop models to represent the relationship between the needs of plants and animals and the places they live.
- Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on other living things and their habitats.
- Develop methods and strategies for measuring and describing the natural world.
- Explain the effect of sunlight on Earth's surfaces.
- Investigate methods for reducing the warming effect of sunlight on an area.
- Use and share observations of local weather conditions to describe patterns over time.
- Explain the purpose of weather forecasting to prepare for, and respond to, severe weather.
- Compare and contrast properties of solids and liquids.
- Classify objects according to measured and observed properties.
- Predict whether objects will sink or float in water.
- Investigate methods for maximizing the amount of weight a floating object can hold before sinking
- Construct explanations of the effectiveness of designed solutions to problems using evidence from observations and their habits.
- Develop methods and strategies for measuring and describing the natural world.

Social Studies

In kindergarten, students will learn about “self and others.” This will include learning about similarities and differences between children, families, communities, and about holidays, symbols and traditions that unite us as Americans. In addition, students will learn about respect for others, and rights and responsibilities of individuals. Units of study and learning outcomes for kindergarten students in social studies include:

Rules, Regulations and Responsibilities

- demonstrate awareness of good health and safety practices.
- demonstrate ability to interact with peers and adults following the rules of the classroom.
- describe the results of following rules and the consequences of not following rules.
- compare similarities and differences between home and school rules.

Myself and Others

- identify characteristics of themselves that are similar to their classmates and characteristics that are different.
- learn about and respect individual differences (diversity).
- correctly use words related to chronology and time when recounting events and experiences.

Economics

- distinguish between a need and a want.
- identify examples of goods and services.
- define scarcity and identify examples of scarcity.
- explain why recycling and conservation are good choices.

Geography

- identify the differences and similarities between a globe and a map.
- locate familiar places or buildings in the community on a map.
- state their address, including house number, street and city.
- correctly use words and phrases to indicate location and direction.

Symbols of our Nation

- compare ways diverse cultural groups within the community and nation celebrate distinct holidays.
- identify American symbols.
- learn the Pledge of Allegiance.

Health

In kindergarten, health education is a shared responsibility between the classroom teacher and the School Nurse-Teacher. The goal of the elementary health curriculum is to promote the understanding of health and wellness, and to prepare students with the skills needed to set goals and make informed decisions about their health.

Physical Education

In kindergarten, students will participate in a variety of movement experiences to develop fundamental movement patterns. Students at this level vary in maturity across all movement skills; however, they should demonstrate continuous improvement in movement under very simple conditions. While developing fundamental skill patterns, students begin to learn key movement concepts that help them perform in a variety of educational games, dances, and gymnastics. They learn how their bodies react to vigorous physical activity. Students learn to use safe practices, cooperate with and respect others, and follow classroom rules.

Music

In kindergarten music, students sing, play instruments, and move to music. They learn to keep the beat, explore contrasts (such as loud and soft, high and low), and sing songs with patterns that introduce them to the scientific and mathematical foundations of music. Kindergarten students learn to sing and play instruments, alone and with others, performing songs that introduce them to the artistic and cultural aspects of music. They make connections between the music experienced in class, their learning in other classes, and explore the role that music plays in their family and life. Your child will be able to echo simple rhythmic patterns played by the teacher, gain a beginning recognition of musical notation, and use invented symbols to represent a beat. Students will move to the beat, make creative movements to music, and engage in dramatic play with music at the center.

Art

In kindergarten art, students will develop sensory skills as they draw, paint, model with 3D media, and learn to safely use art media and tools. Kindergarten students will learn to identify colors and shapes, explore contrasts, and are introduced to the basic elements of art through art-making experiences. Students develop fine motor skills as they fold, cut, and tear paper, grip tools, and apply media in focused and purposeful ways. Kindergarten students learn how to “see” art works and begin to learn the names of art materials, using them to talk about art. Students will explore the role that art plays in their lives. Students will spend most of their time making art, creating and expressing themselves as artists.

