

# 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 (ICT) 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.

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## English Language Arts (ELA)

Kindergarten students will participate in daily classroom activities that are aligned with the cognitive science behind how students acquire reading ability. The focus is to strengthen language comprehension, reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. A variety of texts and genres will be used and literacy skills will be integrated into science, social studies, and health instruction.

**READING:** The focus for reading instruction in kindergarten is to ensure that students are increasing their foundational skills that are a necessary component of an early literacy reading program. Students will gain exposure to a range of texts and tasks, while at the same time building background knowledge and vocabulary awareness.

**WRITING:** Kindergarten students use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to convey their message, all the while strengthening their foundational skills in writing. Students write in a variety of genres including narrative, informational, and opinion.

**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, interact socially, extend discussion, and discuss content.

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# 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.

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# Science

In kindergarten, students begin to develop an understanding of the natural and designed world through exploration and investigation of life and physical sciences. Students will investigate answers to their own questions about the world by analyzing models, participating in investigations, and gathering evidence that can support their ideas and observations. Students will engage in a variety of hands-on activities to deepen their understanding of the following scientific **core ideas**:

### Solids and liquids

- Making observations
- Exploring the uses of solids and liquids

### Weather

- Analyzing patterns of day and night
- Exploring the seasons

### Life Cycles

- Observing the egg to chicken life cycle

**The crosscutting concepts** of patterns, cause and effect, and system models are identified as organizing concepts for the core ideas listed above. The kindergarten performance expectations rely heavily on students' abilities to utilize grade-appropriate **science and engineering practices**, such as asking questions, using models, and

carrying out investigations. Students are expected to use these practices to demonstrate their understanding of the core ideas listed above.

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## **Social Studies**

In kindergarten, students will learn about “self and others.” This will include learning about similarities and differences between children, families and communities. Students also will learn 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.

Unit topics and learning outcomes for kindergarten students in social studies include:

### **Rules 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.
- 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.

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## **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.

There are five units of study.

- Respecting Myself & Others (Violence Prevention Strand, and core elements of Mental Health)
- My Immune System
- My Family, My Self
- Tobacco, Alcohol & Other Drugs
- Safety Rules

Students also will continue to be encouraged to demonstrate effective communication and identify the people or systems they should turn to for support during emotional or physically harmful situations.

Helping students learn to respect themselves and to respect others is an important component of health education at all grade levels.

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## **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.

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## **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 rhythm. 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, create movements to music, explore vocal range and timbre, and engage in dramatic play with music at the center.

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## **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 experience 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.

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