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Great Expectations

Partnering for your
child's future



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

Great Schools Start with Great Expectations

Learning standards describe the foundation of what students should know and be able to do in each grade. These standards ensure that all children are prepared to move forward to the next grade and, later, to succeed in college, earn a living, and become productive members of their communities. Children need to develop a love of learning that will serve them well in a world where crucial information changes and grows rapidly.

To find work in the competitive global economy and function in a quickly changing world, our children will need to know more than ever before. This is true for graduates who plan to enroll in four-year colleges; it is equally true for students who want to start careers right out of high school.

The New York State standards we use are designed to provide our students with rigorous curricula to ensure that they develop the creativity, critical thinking skills, and ability to problem solve that they will need to meet the challenges of the modern world. But standards are a starting point, not a destination. By meeting and building on a solid foundation of knowledge, our students will get the most from their education.

Here you will find examples of what kindergarten students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year in language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. You also will find ways you can support learning as a family, including things you can do at home, in your neighborhood, and around our great City.

This guide provides only a small sample of the standards for kindergarten. What about the other standards? What will your child be learning in first grade and beyond? You can find answers to all these questions from your child's teacher or on our Web site at www.nyc.gov/schools/academics.

Good Study Habits

To help your child develop good study habits:

- ❑ Set up a comfortable location at home for doing homework.
- ❑ Help your child get organized.
- ❑ Set up a regular homework time.
- ❑ Make sure your child knows the teacher's homework policies.

For other ideas, visit www.nyc.gov/schools/academics.



Students with Disabilities

Unless otherwise stated on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), students with disabilities will participate in the general education curriculum, which can be adapted for different instructional levels and different settings (such as Collaborative Team Teaching classes or self-contained special education classes). Adaptations may include using instructional aids such as calculators and visual aids, providing additional time to learn new skills, and reducing the length of assignments to help students with disabilities meet the standards.

Ask Your Child's Teacher



Learning standards provide a great opportunity for you to talk with teachers about what your child is learning in school and how you can support this learning at home. Here are some questions you may want to ask.

To learn more about a standard:

- Can you show me examples of student work that meets this standard?
- May I look at some of my child's work related to this standard?
- When will my child work on this standard during the school year?
- What activities and materials are you using in school to help my child meet and exceed this standard? What classwork and homework do you expect to assign?
- What are some exercises I can do with my child to help him or her with this standard?
- Besides the standards covered in this guide, what else is my child expected to learn this year?

To learn how your child is doing in school:

- In what subjects is my child working at grade level? Are there any areas that need improvement?
- Is my child reading at grade level? Can you show me some books that my child can read?
- How much time each day does my child spend working on each subject area?
- How do you assess my child on these subjects during the year?

To learn how to support your child:

- Besides report cards, what are the best ways to keep up to date on how my child is doing?
- If your child is not on grade level: What support is the school able to offer my child? What can I do at home to help my child do better in school?
- If your child is on grade level or above: What extra enrichment and support do you suggest for my child? How can I help at home?

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Language Arts

By the end of the school year, all students should be able to:

- Engage in pre-reading and reading activities to make predictions, retell a story in sequence, and make connections between the events in a story and the events in their own lives.
- Track print by pointing to written words when texts are read aloud by self or others.
- Create a story with a beginning, middle, and end using pictures and some words.
- Know the difference between real stories (nonfiction text, such as “all about” books) and imaginary stories (fictional text, such as fairy tales).
- Identify and use spoken words that rhyme, recognize the same sounds in different words, and know that letters have individual sounds.
- Read automatically a small set of high-frequency sight words (for example, “a,” “the,” “my,” “is,” “are”).
- Write, using letters and drawings, to label and communicate for different purposes (such as to tell stories, communicate feelings, and provide information).
- Use the basic conventions of reading: left-to-right; top-to-bottom; know the difference between letters and words; know the difference between print and pictures.
- Talk for a variety of purposes: explain and discuss new information; ask questions; express ideas, thoughts, and feelings; and engage in imaginative dialogues and social interaction.
- Learn and use new words in context.



Learning at Home

The following strategies can be done in the families’ native languages as well as in English.

Read to your children every day.

Children also can hear and read books online in English, French, or Spanish at the New York Public Library’s site, “On-Lion” for Kids. Go to kids.nypl.org and click “TumbleBooks.”

Have a Letter of the Day. Each day, pick a different letter of the alphabet. Ask your child to find all the things in your home or neighborhood that start with that letter. Have your child trace the letter as you say the word.

Visit the Web site www.colorincolorado.org/guides/readingtips, which provides reading strategies for parents in 10 different languages.

Take your child to the local library. Any child who can write his or her own name will be issued a library card.

Mathematics



Learning at Home

Sort coins with your child. Make piles of quarters, nickels, dimes, and pennies. Count how many coins are in each.

Together, make a chart of things your child does each day, such as brush teeth, put away toys, read a book, or feed a pet. Show if it is light or dark outside when it's time to do each one.

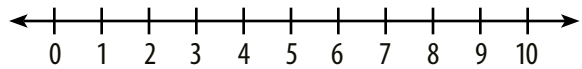
String beads or form blocks into different patterns of size or color.

Start a pattern, and then let your child decide what comes next.

Provide opportunities to do puzzles.

By the end of the school year, all students should be able to:

- Count out loud by ones from 1 to 20.
- Use the number line to count backward from 10 to 1.



- Use ordinal numbers to describe an item's place in a sequence from 1 to 10. For example, first, second, third, fourth—all the way to tenth.
- Compare two groups and determine which is more, which is less, or if they are the same.
- Sort groups of items by size—from smallest to largest and from largest to smallest.
- Recognize basic shapes in the environment such as the circular face of a clock, a rectangular door, and a square floor tile.
- Understand and use words such as "over," "under," "above," "below," "next to," and "between."
- Know words that relate to a time of day, such as "morning," "noon," and "evening." Know which activities often happen during each period, such as eating breakfast in the morning, eating lunch at noon, and so on.
- Recognize, describe, and create patterns of colors, sizes, and shapes. For example, what comes next in this pattern?



- Make informed predictions and estimations.

Science

Science in kindergarten explores the physical properties of materials and the changes in plants and animals through the seasons.

By the end of the school year, all students should be able to:

- Use their senses, such as sight and touch, to observe and describe different objects. For example, they should be able to tell that a basketball looks round, that the surface is covered with little rubber dots and feels rough, and that it makes a sound when it bounces on the ground.
- Observe a number of objects and decide whether they are alike or different.
- Use tools to describe and compare the physical properties of objects. For example, use a pan balance scale to see which of two objects weighs more, or use a thermometer to find out which of several glasses of water is warmer.
- Observe, describe, and recognize the properties of materials such as wood, plastic, or metal. For example, recognize the grains of wood or the shiny surface of polished metals.
- Sort objects according to their physical properties, such as color, shape, or texture.
- Observe and describe how plants change from season to season.
- Observe how plants and animals grow and change.
- Identify what plants and animals need to live, such as air, water, and light.
- Observe and compare the parts of a plant—such as roots, leaves, stems, and flowers—that enable different plants to live.
- Recognize that living things have offspring and that offspring closely resemble their parents.

Learning at Home

Check the weather together when your child wakes up each day. Talk about what clothes he or she might wear to school based on that day's forecast.

Ask your child to take photos or draw pictures of a tree or plant near your home as it changes from season to season. Display the pictures together and talk about the changes.

Help your child raise an easy-to-grow plant, like a begonia or coleus, in a pot in your home. Together, find out what the plant needs to be healthy.

Start a family leaf collection and talk about how the leaves are alike and different. The American Museum of Natural History offers an online guide to leaves, plus tips for adult helpers. Go to www.amnh.org/nationalcenter/online_field_journal/. Click on "Field Journals" and choose "Leaves."



Learning at Home

Talk about things that are happening in your child's school or neighborhood. What has your child noticed that is new and different?

Take your child to the local library and explore books about the history of your community.

Read your child folktales that reflect your family's heritage. The public libraries in New York City have books of folktales from many countries.

Make a family tree or create a photo album of your family and talk to your child about how families are different.



Social Studies

In kindergarten social studies, students explore the concepts of self and others, including family and community.

By the end of the school year, all students should be able to:

- Understand how families, schools, neighborhoods, and communities work.
- Know that families have needs and wants and that people help each other.
- Identify themselves as members of a community, city, state, and country.
- Recognize symbols of citizenship, such as the flag of the United States. Know that citizens have responsibilities to their country and community.
- Show respect for others and work well with others.
- Know that people make and change rules.
- Show that they are aware of current events, such as a presidential election.
- Look at or read different fiction and nonfiction books about children, families, schools, or neighborhoods.
- Identify with their family's cultural roots (such as Italian, African-American, or Puerto Rican).
- Listen to folktales and other texts to learn about the values and traditions of different cultures.

More Essential Knowledge and Skills

Our kindergarten students are learning much more than to read, write, do math, and understand key concepts in science and social studies.

- **Arts:** Students have daily opportunities for creative, hands-on learning in the visual arts, music, dance, and theater. As they stimulate their imaginations, they use their bodies and minds to learn, grow, and express ideas. For more details, visit www.nyc.gov/schools/artseducation.
- **Fitness and Health:** Students engage in a wide variety of opportunities to be physically active, learn how to make healthy decisions, develop a healthy lifestyle, and experience a wide variety of traditional and nontraditional fitness activities. For more details, visit www.nyc.gov/schools/academics/fitnessandhealth.
- **Library and Research:** Students begin to become familiar with libraries and research tools, including how to use the alphabetical order of books to find picture books that interest them, the difference between fiction and nonfiction, and how to find simple facts and answers to questions. For more details, visit www.nyc.gov/schools/academics/libraryservices.
- **Technology:** Kindergarten children begin to use computers, calculators, the Web, and other technology tools to access appropriate resources identified by their teacher. Teachers model safe Web usage as an introduction to cyber safety. Students begin to navigate different resources (such as educational software) to support their classroom learning and express creativity. For more details, visit www.nyc.gov/schools/studentssupport/instructionaltechnology.

Learn More

This guide provides only an overview of the many standards your child will be learning this year. You can view and download copies of these guides for grades K–8 as well as the complete standards for all subjects and all grades on our Web site at www.nyc.gov/schools/academics.

The Division of Teaching and Learning and the Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy (OFEA) offer additional information about your child's education and ideas on how you can support it, both at home and at your child's school. For more information, visit both the Teaching and Learning Web site, www.nyc.gov/schools/offices/teachlearn, and the OFEA Web site, www.nyc.gov/schools/offices/OFEA. You also can contact your school's parent coordinator or OFEA at (212) 374-2323 or ofea@schools.nyc.gov. Plus, you can call 311 for additional cultural and historical institutions in the City to visit with your children.



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