

Welcome to First Grade!

First grade is a year full of firsts. It's the year students start writing stories, adding and subtracting, and even conducting small science experiments. Most importantly, it's the year students make tremendous strides in reading.

Your child will learn a great deal this year, but first grade is about more than academics. In first grade, students develop important social skills, and they become more responsible, self-sufficient, and independent.

In this guide you will find information that will help you help your child have a successful first grade year. Included in this guide are:

- ▶ Tips to help your child build his/her reading, writing, and math skills.
- ▶ Ways to help your child build important social skills, become more independent, and develop a sense of responsibility.
- ▶ Information on the physical, intellectual, and emotional growth of first graders.

Your involvement and support are key to your child's success!



Learning in the First Grade

Reading

First graders learn new words and strategies to help them figure out unknown words. They also begin to have a better understanding of what they read.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Practice reading wherever you go. Ask your child to point out words he/she recognizes, and to sound out unknown words that he/she sees on street signs, billboards, and in stores.
- ▶ While reading a story, ask your child questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?" "How do you think that character felt?"
- ▶ Regularly go to the library and have your child choose fiction and nonfiction books. Read to your child every day, and have your child read to you.

Writing

First graders' writing and spelling skills grow throughout the year, making it possible for them to write longer sentences. They also learn how to use capitalization and punctuation.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Together write a thank you note for a gift, a letter to a favorite relative, or a get well message to a sick friend. Talk about how to use the correct capitalization and punctuation.
- ▶ Have your child draw a picture of a family outing or birthday party and write a sentence or two about it.
- ▶ Take a break from paper. Have a whiteboard or chalkboard your child can use to practice writing.



Math

In first grade, children practice counting higher, learn how to skip count, and work on addition and subtraction.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Provide small objects such as cereal or blocks for your child to practice counting up to 120.
- ▶ Use drawings or small objects to practice adding and subtracting. For example, ask your first grader to draw three apples and six oranges. Then ask your child how many total pieces of fruit there are. You might also ask how many pieces of fruit would be left if you ate two of the apples.
- ▶ Practice drawing basic shapes, and talk about terms such as greater than, less than, and equal.

From cooking to telling time to making purchases, we are continually using math. Increase your child's interest in math by showing how important math and numbers are in our daily lives.

Support Your Child

First graders are learning many new skills, and they may become frustrated at times. If your child is feeling discouraged or frustrated, provide encouragement, keep a positive attitude, and be available to help.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, or if you are looking for more ways to help build your child's skills at home, talk to your child's teacher.



Growing Up: 1st Grade

Your child will develop skills and grow in a number of ways during this important year.

Physical

As the year goes on, look for your child to improve his/her fine motor skills (e.g., tying shoes) and gross motor skills (e.g., kicking a ball).

To help your child improve fine motor skills, put together puzzles and do art projects. To help develop gross motor skills, dance, shoot hoops, jump rope, and ride bikes.

Intellectual

Your child is becoming more and more curious about the world and how it works.

Be open to your child's questions, and encourage his/her curiosity by taking trips to museums, zoos, and nature centers.

Emotional

First graders are often interested in helping others, and they enjoy doing things with friends.

Consider your child's interests and look for group activities he/she might enjoy (e.g., swim club, gymnastics).

"There are two great things that you can give your children: one is roots, the other is wings."

Hodding Carter



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Parent Involvement Guide