



THE FLORIDA BENCHMARKS FOR EXCELLENT STUDENT THINKING (B.E.S.T.) STANDARDS

Parent Guide for Kindergarten English Language Arts

PREPARING FLORIDA CHILDREN FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

The B.E.S.T. Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) are literacy standards for Florida students that will shape their education and make Florida the most literate state in the nation. The B.E.S.T. Standards will pave the way for Florida students to receive a world-class education and prepare them for a successful future.

Education leaders across the state of Florida improved the academic content standards, creating new expectations for what students need to know and be able to do. These benchmarks are goals that students are expected to achieve by the end of the school year. The B.E.S.T. Standards are designed to ensure that ALL students reach their greatest potential.

THESE STANDARDS EMPHASIZE:

- Explicit and systematic phonics instruction
- Critical thinking skills
- A deep respect for literature from historic time periods
- Knowledge building through content-rich texts

Preparing your child for success begins in Kindergarten and continues as your child moves up through each grade. This guide will support parents and families with children in Kindergarten by helping you:

LEARN

about the B.E.S.T. Standards and why they matter for your child.

TALK

with your child's teachers about what he/she will be learning in the classroom.

LOCATE

activities and resources to support your child's learning in practical ways at home.

UNDERSTAND

important educational (academic) words that you will see in your child's grade-level standards.

LEARN ABOUT THE KINDERGARTEN STANDARDS

YOUR CHILD WILL EXPLORE THE WORLD THROUGH TEXT BY:

- Identifying front cover, back cover and title page of a book.
- Moving top to bottom and left to right on the printed page when reading; then returning to the beginning of the next line.
- Identifying all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.
- Identifying the beginning, middle and last sound in words.
- Demonstrating knowledge of the most frequent sound for each consonant and the five major vowels.
- Reading Kindergarten high frequency words with automaticity.
- Writing many letters correctly.
- Identifying and produce rhyming words.

IN READING AND WRITING, YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Describe the characters, setting and events in a story.
- Explain the roles of the author and illustrator of a story.
- Use titles, headings and illustrations to predict and confirm the topic of texts.
- Identify the topic of and multiple details in a text.
- Identify and explain words in a text.
- Retell a text out loud.
- Use drawings, spoken words and/or writing to express an opinion, provide facts about a topic or tell a story.



LOCATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

- ✓ Use trips to the grocery store, dinnertime chats and driving in the car as a time to introduce new words and talk about the world around us with your child.
- ✓ Build language skills and help your child learn new words by telling a story and then have them tell you one back.
- ✓ Sing rhyming songs, read rhyming books and say tongue twisters with your child to help them learn new sounds in words.
- ✓ Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make by turning it into a game (e.g., "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound 'sssss.'")
- ✓ Keep books out in the open and readily available to read in the kitchen, car and other locations where your child spends time.
- ✓ Read aloud to your child for 20 minutes each day. Talk about what you are reading to help your child understand what they are reading.
- ✓ Select books your child is most interested in reading. Talk with your child's teacher or a local librarian to find the best books for your child. Be frequent visitors to your local public library for books, events, and reading programs.
- ✓ Have your child engage in writing using drawing and inventive spelling. They can write a grocery list or a letter to a family member. Have your child sound out the words and write the letters they hear.
- ✓ Have your child use reading apps on your phone or tablet to practice reading at home or on-the-go.
- ✓ Create a plan to keep reading during school breaks and over the summer to help prevent your child from falling behind.

KINDERGARTEN SUGGESTED BOOK LIST



At the Seaside by Robert Louis Stevenson
Curious George by H.A. Rey
Red is Best by Kathy Stinson
The Very First Americans by Cara Ashrose
The Clock - a Mother Goose Poem by Unknown
Hop on Pop by Dr. Seuss
Rumble in the Jungle by Giles Andreae
Two Ways to Count to Ten: A Liberian Folktale by Ruby Dee
A Mother for Choco by Keiko Kasza
I am Jackie Robinson by Brad Meltzer
Swimmy by Leo Lionni
Wandering Whale Sharks by Susumu Shingu
Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Bill Martin Jr.
Mission to Space by John Herrington
The Bald Eagle by Norman Pearl
We Have a Little Garden by Beatrix Potter
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault
Now We Are Six by A.A. Milne
The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss and Crockett Johnson
Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
Corduroy by Don Freeman
On a Farm by Alexa Andrews
The Sky Painter: Louis Guertes, Bird Artist by Margarita Engle

SUPPLEMENTAL READING OPTIONS

A Child's Garden of Verses
by Robert Louis Stevenson
A First Book of the Sea
by Nicola Davies
Little House in the Big Woods
by Laura Ingalls Wilder
The Lion and the Mouse
by Aesop
The Emperor's New Clothes
by Hans Christian Andersen
The Very Hungry Caterpillar
by Eric Carle
Love You Forever
by Robert Munsch
The Tale of Peter Rabbit
by Beatrix Potter
Stellaluna
by Janel/Cannon
The Ugly Duckling
by Hans Christian Andersen
Goodnight Moon
by Margaret Wise Brown
The Kissing Hand
by Audrey Penn



TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Remember, you are your child's first teacher. Think about a conference as a "team meeting" in which you will discover the special contributions each of you can bring to your kindergartner's success. Here are some questions you could ask to prompt discussions:

Which letter names and sounds is my child working on? Which have they mastered? How can I support them at home?

In the area of literacy, what are my child's strengths? How are those strengths supported during instruction? Where is my child struggling and how can I help?

Can my child show you that they understand what they are reading and learning about through drawing, talking and writing? If not, what challenges are they facing?

What phonics skills should my child have mastered at this point? Has my child mastered them? Can I see an example of a phonics task that my child is working through?

What behaviors should I see when my child is reading/being read to? Can I see an example of the type of texts my child is reading? How can I support them at home?

What topics in connection to science and social studies are my child learning about through reading?

EDUCATIONAL (ACADEMIC) WORDS TO KNOW

AUTOMATICITY

When reading, it is the ability to read words quickly and accurately.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (PRIOR KNOWLEDGE)

Information that is important to understanding a situation or problem; what you already know from experience.

DECODING

Translating a word from print to speech by using knowledge of letter-sound relationships; also, the act of reading a new word by sounding it out.

EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION

Teacher/parent-led interactive instruction that is direct and includes a clear explanation of the targeted skill.

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS

A small group of words (300-500) that regularly appear in print. Often, they are referred to as "sight words" as students should be able to recognize these words at a glance.

INVENTIVE SPELLING

Inventive spelling refers to the practice of children using incorrect and unusual spellings for words. It is also sometimes called "invented spelling." Typically, inventive spelling is used by students who are just learning to put sounds together to make words.

PHONICS

Teaches students how to connect sounds of letters or groups of letters in order to read words.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The foundation for learning to read. Refers to the ability to work with words orally (the spoken sound) and does not involve print.

READING LEVEL

Independent reading level is the highest level at which a reader has adequate background knowledge for the topic and can read text very quickly and with very few errors.

SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION

A carefully thought out and planned sequence of instruction.

TEXT FEATURES

The parts of a story or article that are not the main body of the text; includes the title, headings and illustrations.

