

Parent Expectations for Kindergartners

Literacy

Virtually all kindergarten students enter their first real classrooms wide-eyed and eager to learn. They absorb new information and master new processes with assurance. Children enter kindergarten with widely different preparation for achieving literacy standards. Some come to school already reading and writing. Others come to school with little knowledge of books, print, sounds, or even the alphabet.

Given good instruction, preferably all-day programs, virtually every 5 and 6 year old can end the year prepared to succeed in first grade. Children who had less experience with language building prior to kindergarten need extra time, attention and resources to bring them up to speed. They need strong literacy instruction during the summer after kindergarten and extra attention in first grade to meet the first grade standards.

What to expect:

- Children will learn how to handle books and navigate through them; hold books right side up with the text facing them, and turn the pages from front to back.
- "Reading" means figuring out the secrets of print. Print may still be a confusion of pictures, letters, numbers, and squiggles; their first attempts at writing mirror this.
- Children learn to follow the works of a book as their teacher reads it aloud; this leads them to understand that the meaning of the story is linked to the text.
- Vocabularies increase quickly.

By the End of Kindergarten:

- Children should **know the basics of the print-sound code**; words contain sounds, which correspond to the letters of the alphabet, and that letters combine to make words.
- They also begin to **demonstrate their knowledge of the print-sound code in their writing.**
- Students should be able to **repeat the words of familiar texts using illustrations to support them.**
- They should be able to **follow the text as they read**, pointing to the right words, turning pages at the appropriate time and practicing the performance of fluent reading.

What You Can Do to Develop Literacy Habits:

Kindergartners should be immersed in books and reading.

- **They should read several books every day.**
- **They should hear good books read aloud every day.** The books that should be read to them should be above their reading level so that they hear the rhythms and cadences of more sophisticated language; (for examples of the kinds of books kindergartners should read you may want to purchase:

Books to Build On: A Grade-by-Grade Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers;

By E.D. Hirsch, Jr.

- **Kindergartners should write every day.** They can create signs and labels, write and send notes, or incorporate writing into play activities; writing directions, or reminder notes.
- **Children can also play with language by producing or mimicking rhymes.** The work will look like a mixture of letters and pictures with no punctuation. It is ok if you can't read it, they are trying out many of their new literacy skills.
- **Drawing is a major, integral part of kindergarten writing.** Drawings are elaborate and can often stand alone to tell a story. Drawings will remain an integral part of student writing through the first grade.