

Common Kindergarten Milestones

Reading, writing, talking, singing, and playing together help your child grow and learn. While you're home together, watch for some of these key milestones in growing kindergarten readers. On the back, you'll find ideas for supporting them in these literacy developments at home.

Language

Learning Letters

- ▶ Recognize all upper- and lowercase letters.
- ▶ Know the difference between letters and words.
- ▶ Identify words that rhyme (*cat* rhymes with *bat*).
- ▶ Say words that start with a sound (*cat* starts with *c*).

Talking It Out

- ▶ Regularly use words that are important in daily life (colors, numbers, street names).
- ▶ Listen to others and take turns speaking.
- ▶ Clearly express thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- ▶ Use question words (*what, who, when, how*).

Reading

Connecting to Texts

- ▶ Listen and participate in read-alouds.
- ▶ Know what authors and illustrators do.
- ▶ Talk about books; ask and answer questions.
- ▶ Make connections between books and real life.
- ▶ Predict what will happen in a story.
- ▶ Compare characters in different stories.
- ▶ Retell stories in order with details.
- ▶ Act out stories; pretend to be favorite characters.

Learning the Basics

- ▶ Eyes follow print left to right, top to bottom.
- ▶ Recognize many high-frequency words (*I, the, as, is*).
- ▶ Read basic words and some sentences.
- ▶ Understand spaces and periods (basic punctuation).

Writing

Beginning to Spell

- ▶ Read and write their names (first and last) and the first names of some family members and friends.
- ▶ Write upper- and lowercase letters correctly.
- ▶ Spell some words correctly, mainly words that they can sound out (*a, mat, wig, mom*).

Putting Thoughts on Paper

- ▶ Use illustrations and creative spelling to tell stories.
- ▶ Write an opinion of a topic or book.
- ▶ Make an effort to reread their own writing.



How Literacy Grows at Home

Children also become stronger readers the more time they spend reading. That includes choosing their own books and rereading favorites over and over again. Seeing you read encourages them, too, as does having books and magazines available to explore.

Making the Most of Read-Aloud Time

While your child is at home, reading aloud together every day is an important part of building and maintaining literacy skills. Read-alouds should be fun, even silly! When it's time to read aloud, try...

- ▶ choosing books together.
- ▶ reading with expression; ham it up!
- ▶ using different voices for different characters.

It won't be perfect, and if you make a mistake, correct it. This shows your child that going back to get it right is part of being a good reader!

Your Child as an Independent Reader

Independent reading for young children can take many forms, from sitting and looking at pictures, to telling their own version of the story, to reading some words aloud, if they can.

Kindergartners need to spend about 30 minutes a day reading on their own. Encourage your child to split the time up and try different approaches with different types of books—including “reading” a favorite to you!



Making Connections

As important as reading time is, so is having children share what they have read! Making time to talk with your children about their reading will deepen their understanding and joy in the material.

These conversations can happen anytime—while you cook, fold the laundry, or share a meal. Invite your child to describe a favorite part or ask a question about an important word or concept.

Literacy Builders

PART 2 Talk with your child about what might happen *after* his or her favorite story ends. Say it can be anything—whatever he or she imagines. Have your child draw a picture of the idea, or several pictures, to make a whole new book.

FUNNY FACE MASKS Have your child draw pictures of his or her two favorite story characters' faces on separate paper plates or sheets of paper. Poke holes for the eyes to make character “masks.” Ask your child what he or she thinks those two characters might have to say to each other. Then hold the masks up to your faces and have a conversation!

Encourage your child to use his or her reading as a springboard into other enjoyable literacy-building activities like these that your child can share with family and friends.

RETELL THE STORY...WITH ART! Create an empty book using a notebook or stapled paper. Have your child retell his or her favorite story in pictures. Your child can add as many words as he or she is able, or dictate them to you to add to the pages.

CONNECT AND CONSIDER Your child may be able to connect via social media (with supervision) to friends from school who have read the same book. They can compare their impressions: what they liked best, what was surprising, or themes like friendship, feelings, and more!

