

Table of Contents

Our first grade program.....	2
Characteristics of a first grader.....	3
Literacy Abilities.....	4
Becoming good readers.....	5
High Frequency Words.....	6
Grosse Pointe Manuscript	
Upper case.....	7
Lower case.....	8
First grade writers.....	9
Family responsibilities for children.....	10
Help your child do the best.....	11
Life Skills.....	12

**Our first grade program
will encourage your child to :
become an avid reader
enjoy solving math problems
speak and write well
be creative
make decisions independently
develop physical coordination
have good study skills
get along well with others
be self-confident
enjoy learning
love school**

Characteristics of a First Grader

The best thing you can do for your children is to enjoy them. Laugh with them when they are active and happy. Give them time to learn. Expect mistakes and much forgetting. Don't let your ideals for them make you require too much of them. Being aware of several general characteristics common to first grade children will help you in understanding your children as they grow month by month.

Physical Development

- Growth proceeding more slowly, a lengthening out
- Large muscles better developed than small muscles
- Eleven to twelve hours of sleep are needed
- Eyes not yet mature, tendency toward farsightedness
- Permanent teeth beginning to appear
- Heart in period of rapid growth
- High activity level - can stay still only for short periods

Characteristic Behavior

- Eager to learn, exuberant, restless, overactive, easily fatigued
- Self-assertive, aggressive, wants to be first; less cooperative than at five, keenly competitive, boastful
- Whole body involved in whatever she/he does
- Learns best through active participation
- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced - regresses when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders
- Inept at activities using small muscles
- Relatively short periods of interest
- Has difficulty making decisions
- Group activities popular, boys' and girls' interests beginning to differ
- Much spontaneous dramatization

Special Needs

- Encouragement, ample praise, warmth, and great patience for adults
- Ample opportunity for activity of many kinds, especially for use of large muscles
- Wise supervision with minimum interference.
- Friends - by the end of the year, a best friend
- Concrete learning situations and active, direct participation.
- Some responsibilities, but without pressure and without being required to make complicated decisions or achieve rigidly set standards.
- Help in developing acceptable manners and habits.

Literacy Abilities Learned in First Grade

- *Understanding directional control of print**
- *Being able to draw upon background experience**
- *Using pictures in reading**
- *Using conventions of print**
- *Searching for meaning**
- *Taking risks**
- *Rereading for various purposes**
- *Self-correcting after awareness of errors**
- *Confirming attempts in an alternative way:**
 - Using word endings
 - Using letter clusters
- *Getting to new words by analogy with known words**
- *Building a vocabulary of high-frequency reading words**
- *Building a vocabulary of high-frequency writing words**

**Adapted from The Wright Group, 1995
(From Clay, 1991)**



Ten Ways To Help Your Children Become Good Readers

Most children will learn *how* to read. Whether they will become *good readers* depends in large part on your help and encouragement. As a parent, you can:

1. Help your children acquire a wide range of knowledge.

When you take your children on shopping trips, walks in the park, and visits to zoos and museums, you help give them important background knowledge they will need as they learn to read school textbooks.

2. Talk with your children about their experiences.

When you talk with your children about their experiences, you help them learn new words and understand what those new words mean. Talking with children also helps them to use this new knowledge to understand what they are reading.

3. Encourage your children to think about events.

Ask your children to describe events. This makes them reflect upon experiences and helps them learn to give good descriptions and tell complete stories. These activities help your children learn how stories are written and better understand what they are reading.

4. Read aloud to your children.

Reading aloud is probably the single most important activity you can do to encourage your children's success as readers. It is an especially important activity during the preschool years. The benefits of reading aloud are greatest when you encourage your children to identify letters and words and to talk about the story and the meaning of words.

5. Provide your children with writing materials.

Writing is an important way for children to learn about letters and words. Children are often eager to learn how to write, and you can encourage them by having paper and pencils or crayons in your home and helping them when they start drawing letters.

6. Encourage your children to watch TV programs that have educational value.

Watching television programs that teach about reading and language can have a positive effect on your children's learning. You can also help them learn from these programs by asking questions about the shows and relating what they are seeing to other situations and experiences.

7. Monitor how much TV your children watch.

Watching quality television programs up to about 10 hours a week can have a slightly positive effect on your children's achievement in school, including their reading achievement. As the number of hours of viewing per week increases, however, TV watching becomes a negative influence on your child's school work. Most children who watch television 20 or more hours a week don't do well in school.

8. Monitor your children's school performance.

Research shows that children tend to be more successful readers when their parents have an accurate view of their school work. By visiting your children's teachers, observing their classrooms, learning about the reading programs in their schools, and participating in home-school programs, you can get a good idea of how your children are doing in school and how you can help them become better students.

9. Encourage your children to read independently.

The amount of reading your children do outside of school influences how well they read in school. Most American children don't read very much during their free time. One of your top priorities as a parent should be to encourage your children to spend more time reading by having plenty of books in your home and visiting the library regularly.

10. Continue your personal involvement in your children's growth as readers.

Set a good example for your children by reading newspapers, magazines, and books. Suggest reading as a leisure time activity, and make sure your children have time for reading. You may want, for example, to establish a bedtime hour after which reading is the only activity permitted other than going to sleep.

These suggestions are from *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, the Report of the National Commission on Reading, published by the Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois.



First Grade High Frequency Words

Kindergarten		Grade 1			Grade 2			
the	with	do	are	away	walk	keep	use	draw
a	is	did	long	here	eat	try	pick	upon
of	out	not	very	well	been	black	fall	please
his	go	like	its	help	never	bring	read	shall
on	little	would	blue	brown	today	drink	fast	because
to	as	can	come	old	two	give	hurt	clean
I	her	what	no	saw	again	new	both	these
in	up	were	an	think	may	white	carry	thank
that	we	one	ride	make	seven	goes	why	laugh
they	down	me	red	yellow	fly	once	say	
and		could	from	by	or	soon	pull	
you		so	around	call	play	open	sit	
was		get	know	ran	stop	us	small	
she		this	got	going	eight	hold	own	
but		will	pretty	five	myself	ate	light	
he		when	good	their	before	made	cut	
it		see	want	after	who	has	which	
said		them	right	let	off	three	under	
for		my	take	sleep	cold	buy	found	
had		yes	jump	six	round	full	wash	
at		big	any		tell	run	far	
all		if	don't		work	find	grow	
there		came	put		must	our	sing	
be		over	where		ten	funny	wish	
am		into	green		write	those	show	
him		went	about		much	gave	live	
look		now	how		first	only	best	
some		ask	too		start	better	together	
have		your	every		does	warm	many	
then		just	four		always	done	hot	

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee

Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk

Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp

Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu

Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

First Grade Writers

First graders love to make marks on paper. They use both pictures and letters, mixing them freely to put their meanings on paper. At this time, children are working on the relationships between letters and sounds.

As children become writers, they invent spellings for words they want to use. Invented spelling is what we call children's misspellings before they learn all the rules adults use to spell. Children's errors give us a window on what they know. If a child spells dinosaur "dnshr" we see that he is using beginning sounds heavily and is relying on the consonant sounds instead of vowels. This is exactly what she/he should be doing at this developmental stage.

Invented spelling does **not** interfere with children's ability to spell correctly later. It is an appropriate developmental step just like the "mmm" and "ddd" sounds your child made as a beginning speaker. There are lots of advantages for the child who uses invented spelling, such as:

Invented spelling:

- encourages children to figure out the alphabet**
- makes children independent as writers; they don't have to ask how to spell words; it frees them from depending on others**
- encourages children to write longer, more colorful stories; they can write anything they can say; writing more = writing better**
- moves children beyond words they know how to read; they are not limited to writing only words they can read; it helps them learn to read**
- encourages children to take responsibility for their own learning; they are in control of what they write and how they write it; they make the writing system their own**
- provides extensive practice in phonics; children practice their sounds as they write - using letter to represent the sounds they hear in words**

Be assured that invented spelling is a developmental step. Children go on to learn to spell even better than they would if they had not been allowed to take these beginning steps. Most importantly, they become much better writers earlier because they are encouraged to use invented spellings. Children write more and learn to read more easily because of the confidence it gives them to master print.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN

Children really are capable of performing many of the tasks within the family which not only help them to begin to feel more confident and self-assured, but also allow them to feel that they are important to the family unit. Although some of the tasks presented below may need to be modified to fit individual needs and age differences, consider allowing your child(ren) opportunities to accept the responsibilities for many of the following:

Three Years Old

Choose clothing and dress him/her self	help load dishwasher
put away pajamas	stack newspapers/magazines
brush teeth and hair	help put away groceries
make bed (with help)	empty wastebaskets
tidy up bedroom/play area	help in the garden
dust bedroom furniture	help with yard work
clear lunch table	sort laundry by color
wash dishes (non-breakable ones)	fold towels, washcloths

Four - Six Years Old

wash face	put away own clean laundry
make bed and tidy room	clean tile near bath tub
clear breakfast table	clean own bath tub ring
wash or dry dishes	pull weeds in garden/flowerbeds
wash kitchen table and counters	help with yard work
clean t.v. screen	clean out dresser drawers and organize possessions
pick up toys (without help)	clip and organize coupons for shopping
feed pets	fold small items of clean laundry
scrub bathroom fixtures	clean bathroom sink
water plants	take out newspapers/magazines for storage or disposal
clear table	
set table for meals	
get ready for bed (without help)	

Seven - Nine Years Old

clear dinner table	dust floors and furniture
load dishwasher	wax furniture
wash and dry dishes	clean finger prints from doors
clean kitchen after meals	iron flat work
help prepare meals (mash potatoes, peel and clean vegetables, simple desserts, etc.)	clean glass on storm doors
clean pet cages and bowls	gather vegetables from garden
return garbage can(s) to proper storage place	clean out closets
weed the garden	care for own possessions (bike, radio, etc.)
water garden and flowers	take out garbage
rake lawn	
clean the inside of a car	
sweep sidewalks and porches	

HELPING YOUR CHILD DO HER OR HIS BEST

KNOW HOW YOUR CHILD IS DOING: Look closely at the completed work your child brings home. If it indicate problems, lets's talk about it. We will work together to help your first grader.

ASSIST YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK: Assignments are designed to take only a few minuets each evening. This is a time for you and your child to focus on a common goal. The assignments are extensions of activities or lessons we are working on in class. Beside establishing this learning time in your home, your first grader will come to realize that when given a task, she/he is expected to follow through with it. Your assistance with these homework assignments is greatly appreciated, by both your child and me.

DON'T COMPARE: Your child is a unique individual. It is not fair to compare any child to a brother, a sister, or a neighbor's child. Each youngster progresses at a rate that is right for her/him. Make it clear at all times that you love your child for what she or he is and not for what she or he can do. Give praise for accomplishments, but don't criticize your child for not doing as well as others. I want your child to do well. If you have a concern regarding your child's progress, feel free to talk with me about it. You can be sure I will do all I can to help.

MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD GETS ENOUGH REST: The child who stays up too late will probably have trouble staying awake in school. Set a reasonable bedtime and stick to it.

SEE THAT YOUR CHILD ATTENDS SCHOOL REGULARLY: When your child is absent from school, important lessons may be missed. Once a child gets behind the class, catching up can be difficult.

LIFE SKILLS

1. **Confidence:** believing you can do something.
"I am capable."
2. **Caring:** being considerate of others.
"I care about you!"
3. **Responsibility:** being dependable & trustworthy.
"I am reliable." "You can count on me."
4. **Perseverance:** finishing what you begin.
"I can stay with a job and complete it."
5. **Problem-solving:** finding out what you know and using it.
"I can solve problems!"
6. **Initiative:** taking the first step.
"I can get started." "I am beginning NOW."
7. **Communication:** expressing yourself and listening to others.
"I can learn from you, and you can learn from me."
8. **Patience:** taking time to do something.
I can wait . . ."
9. **Cooperation:** working together.
"I can work with others."
10. **Good judgment:** making wise decisions and using common sense.
"I can make wise choices."
11. **Effort:** working hard and being willing to do my personal best.
"I am a hard worker."
12. **Participation:** to take part in life; be willing to do things.
"I am a participator!"