

Equity and Access for Families



CONSTRUCT (SKILL) GUIDANCE

This guidance provides a snapshot of the formative assessment process used in your child's classroom. Your child's teacher uses the assessment to understand your child's progress towards developmental goals. There are multiple "constructs" or "skills" that cover areas of growth that will help your child create a foundation for success. The activities within each section can be used to support your child's developmental progress. When you do these activities with your child, you can share your child's progress with the teacher. You can also create your own activities to go along with the activities and skills discussed in this guidance.



BOOK ORIENTATION

As your child becomes a reader, they must learn how to handle and use books. Book orientation is about holding the book in the appropriate position, turning the pages in order, and interacting with books in a meaningful way. Assessing these skills allows the teacher to understand what you can do together to help your child be a successful reader.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 3rd Grade



Practice naming the parts of a book with your child each time you read (*spine, cover, author, illustrator, back, etc.*). Watch how your child picks up and holds the book and continue to work with your child if still figuring out how to hold and label a book.

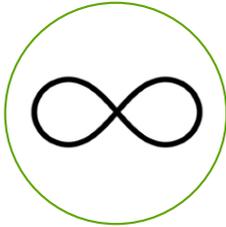


CROSSING MIDLINE

The midline is the invisible line running from our head to our toes, dividing the body into left and right halves. Crossing the body's midline is the ability to reach across the middle of the body with arms and legs. These skills are important because they can predict future reading, math and science achievement.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Trace large figure 8s (*sideways 8*) on paper, in the air, or on the wall. You can also trace toy cars around the figure 8. OR dance the Macarena - another fun activity that demonstrates this same skill.

2nd - 3rd Grade



You can sit back to back with your child and pass any object (*ex: ball*) around to each other. You could do it 5 times in each direction as a warm up for other large muscle activities, such as throwing and catching the object from a distance.



EMOTION EXPRESSION

Emotion expression involves your child's ability to recognize her emotions and make these feelings known to others. These skills are important because children who are able to express their emotions in positive ways, often have better relationships with children in their classroom, are more engaged with peers, and have stronger social skills.

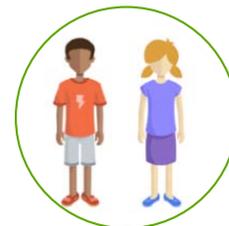
WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Observe your child when playing with friends or with classmates. Watch how the children play together, and encourage your child to interact with the other children. After playtime is over, talk with your child about how it went, discussing any emotions that arose during that time.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Talk with your child about their friendships. Ask your child to describe situations that have been challenging, in which they have felt sad, angry, frustrated, excited, appreciative, and other emotions.



EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Emotional literacy is the ability to understand one's emotions, listen to others, and empathize with others' emotions. It also is about how your child makes sense of emotions in social settings as well. These skills are important because being emotionally literate has been linked to academic success, such as language, literacy, and mathematics.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Play emotions charades where you either use pictures of your child expressing different emotions (*happy, sad, excited, angry, etc.*) or you write the emotions on slips of paper. Practice expressing each emotion and labeling that emotion. Talk to your child about what to do when they are feeling a certain emotion.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Review the day with your child, talking about highlights and challenges, with special attention to how each situation made them feel. Ask your child to explain why those emotions came up for them. Share your day with them in the same way.



EMOTION REGULATION

Emotion regulation is about how your child handles her emotions, especially in difficult situations. An example would be when your child participates in activities where not every child wins or scores the highest. These skills are important because children who successfully manage emotions are more likely to be successful in school, as it can impact focus and attention, planning and finishing tasks, and having positive relationships with peers.

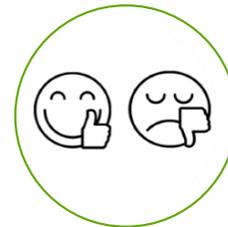
WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Practice deep breathing when your child gets upset or angry. Model first for the child by mentally counting to 8 while inhaling and then counting to 8 again while exhaling. When your child has calmed down, discuss what happened and let them know that breathing is a technique they can use to calm down when they get upset or angry.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Have your child reflect on a challenging time when they didn't know how to handle their emotions. Discuss what happened and have them journal their feelings and thoughts on how to address emotions.



FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Following directions is about how well your child responds to directions. Your child’s teacher will look at how your child reacts to someone asking them to do something and how your child understands what was said to them. These skills are important because listening carefully to others decreases the risk of missing details and children are better able to ask and answer questions to lead to deeper comprehension.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Play Simon Says with your child, and provide them with directions that involve them doing up to two things at once (*Simon says touch your elbow and your nose*).

2nd - 3rd Grades



Ask your child to help cook dinner or cleanup the house. Give them three-step directions (*First wash the lettuce, then dry it, then peel the leaves*) that are meaningful and that ultimately help them learn how to help around the house independently.



GRIP AND MANIPULATION

Grip and manipulation describes how your child picks up and holds on to and uses objects, like a pencil or pair of scissors. These skills are important because these fine motor skills have been linked to academic success in the areas of reading, math and science.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Ask your child to help set the table for a meal, placing the dinner utensils where they belong. Let them pour the drinks for the table. Have them wash the table with a sponge or towel when the meal is complete.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Ask your child to help you cut coupons from the newspaper or mail. They can also cut out sentence strips and comics that they like to create a newspaper collage.



GROSS MOTOR

Gross motor is about how your child walks, runs, gallops, and skips with balance. This is important because gross motor (*large muscle*) skills have been linked to brain development and academic success.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Use tape or sidewalk/floor lines to do balancing activities with your child. Challenge them by asking them to balance across a line with one foot or on tippy toes.

2nd - 3rd Grades



When walking from one place to another outdoors, have a skipping race with your child. Challenge them to stay on beat by singing a song while they skip with you.

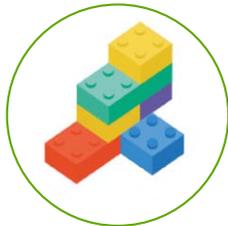


HAND DOMINANCE

Hand dominance describes your child's motor skill development and their moving patterns. The teacher will look at which hand your child uses the most to complete tasks. This is important for object control skills, as well as reading and mathematic skill development.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Put small items on the floor or on a table for your child to pick up. Make it interesting by setting a timer to see how quickly they can pick everything up. Pay attention to which hand they are using to pick up things and continue to work with them if they are using both hands to pick up things.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Ask your child to help open jars, bottles, or something you believe they can open. Pay attention to which hand they are using to open it and continue to work with them if they happen to use their non-dominant hand.



LETTER NAMING

Letter naming is about how well your child knows and understands the alphabet. The teacher will look to see if the child can identify uppercase and lowercase letters. This is important because understanding the letters of the alphabet helps children with reading across all subjects.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



During a walk with your child, ask them what letters they see outside. This can be either the shapes of letters (*like a tree looks like the letter I*) or the first letter of each object you see (*like a tree starts with the letter T*).

2nd - 3rd Grades



Write acrostic (*Each line begins with the letter of the first word*) poems with your child. Use their name for the first poem, using the letters of their name to write the first word in each line. Challenge them later on by creating acrostic poems for longer words.



MATHEMATICAL PATTERNS

Mathematical patterns are about your child's ability to recognize a repeating sequence. Patterns may occur with a single feature (*1-2-1-2-1-2*) or more than one feature.

Understanding patterns helps children learn to make predictions and contributes to development in other areas of math, including counting skills and problem solving, as well as development in the areas of science and music.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Point out repeating patterns in your child's life, such as the red and blue strips on a t-shirt or the big and little beads in a necklace. Help your child create patterns by arranging crayons or colored blocks and asking them to match it. Make up a clapping pattern, such as *clap-clap-pause-clap-clap-pause-clap-clap-pause*. Ask your child to clap the same pattern, continuing the pattern where you left off, or to make a new clapping pattern.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Using a collection of like objects, such as pennies or Cheerios, create sets that increase by a certain number (*2s, 3s, 5s, 10s*). Ask your child to tell you what comes next and why. Have them create sets for you, and see if you can tell them what comes next.



OBJECT COUNTING

Object counting is about how well your child knows their numbers in the correct order. The teacher will look at how your child counts various objects. This is important for not only mathematic skills, but also reading skills and understanding vocabulary words.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Select 4-6 cards from a deck of playing cards to practice counting with your child. Lay them out in a straight line and ask your child to count them out loud. Now arrange them in a circle and ask your child to count them again. Ask to count the objects on the card (*5 hearts or 6 spades*) as practice as well.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Give your child some coins or small objects and ask him how many there are. Add a few coins and ask your child how many there are now.



PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance is about how well your child handles tasks that are difficult or tasks that have more than one step. The teacher will look at how your child persists through a task when it gets hard to complete. This is important because it tells us about your child's attention span, which is linked to how well they will do in school.

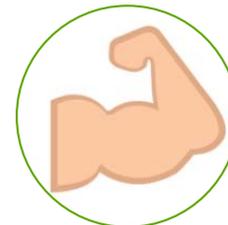
WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Encourage your child to try something new and challenging for them, like learning a new board game or puzzle, reading a book above their grade level, or swimming at the community recreation center. Be sure to assist them only after they have tried multiple times to complete a task. Let them know that it's okay to make mistakes and the important thing to do is to keep trying.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Talk to your child about the times when you've persevered through a challenging moment in your life. Encourage your child to try something new and challenging for them, like filling out a crossword puzzle, reading a book above their grade level, or completing a difficult physical task/exercise. Be sure to assist them only after they have tried multiple times to complete a task. Let them know that it's okay to make mistakes and the important thing to do is to keep trying.



PRINT AWARENESS

Print awareness describes how well your child understands that books have words and pictures. The teacher will look at how your child interacts with what's inside of a book. This is important because these skills can predict how well your child does in the reading and writing.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



When reading with your child, have them point to each word in the book. Pay attention to how they recognize words and letters in the book, as well as the order in which they read each word in the book.

2nd - 3rd Grades



When reading with your child, pay attention to how they recognize words, and letters in the book, as well as the order in which they read each word in the book.



PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem solving describes how your child uses past experiences, multiple steps, and reason to solve a problem. This is important because having these skills is linked to how your child thinks and understands information, which impacts how well they do in school.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

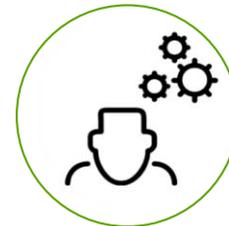
Kindergarten - 1st Grade



- Teach your child the four steps* to solving a problem:
1. What is my problem?
 2. Think, think, think of some solutions.
 3. What would happen if...? Would it be safe? Would it be fair? How would everyone feel?
 4. Give it a try!

**When a problem occurs, be sure to remind your child of these steps and practice the steps with them.*

2nd - 3rd Grades



Together with your child, think about ways that they will solve problems by themselves at home and in school. Think about the kinds of problems they have, what each person needs in order for the problem to be solved, and what each person needs so the problem doesn't happen again. Teach them to identify those steps each time they are faced with solving a problem.



READING COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension is about how your child understands and can explain what happened in a story. The teacher looks at what strategies your child uses to make sense of what is being read to him or what she is reading. This is important because it shows how flexible your child is in using different approaches to understand something.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



When reading books with your child, use questions like:

- Ask your child to look at the pictures and tell you what she thinks will happen.
- What do you think will happen next?
- What happened in the story? How do you know?

These questions can be asked during the book reading or after the book has been finished.

2nd - 3rd Grades



When listening to your child reading a book, ask questions like:

- What do you think this means? How do you know?
- What confuses you about what you read?
- What do you know for sure about the characters in the story? How do you know?

These questions can be asked during the book reading or after the book has been finished.



VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is about how your child understands and can explain the meaning of the words they learn in school. The teacher will look at how your child uses strategies to make sense of new words and words that have multiple meanings. This is important because these skills are linked to reading comprehension and academic success.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Review the vocabulary words that are assigned to your child each week or during each unit of study. Ask for words that are similar to those vocabulary words (*like icy, cold, chilly*) and make connections to the words by having them draw pictures or act out what the words mean.

2nd - 3rd Grades



Play story-telling games with words that sound alike (*like see-sea; one-won*), multiple meaning words (*duck, fine*), and comparing words (*as big as a house; as small as an ant*). Challenge them to come up with words and sayings on their own by making sure to take turns while doing the storytelling.



WRITING

Writing describes how your child understands that writing has meaning and a purpose. The teacher will look at how your child writes for different audiences and purposes, as well as how well they revise their writing after getting feedback. This is important because your child’s writing skills can predict how well your child will do in all subjects in school.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

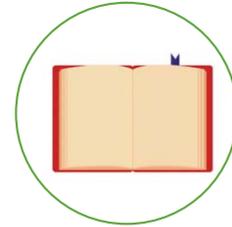
Kindergarten - 1st Grade



Practice writing with your child by asking them questions that they need to respond to in writing, or giving them a journal or diary to begin writing freely in. Read their writing and provide positive feedback on what their strengths are.

- What do you do at recess?
- What do you like best about your classroom or school?
- Write about the best day ever. What would you do?
- What is your favorite thing about yourself?

2nd - 3rd Grades



Practice writing with your child by having them create your shopping list, an invitation to a family dinner or a response to some interesting questions such as “What should our family do this weekend?”



This document was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department, and you should not assume endorsement by the U.S. Federal Government.