

Early Learning and Development Guidelines

First Grade

Approximately 6 Years



“To name only one thing I love most about my job as a 1st grade teacher would be impossible. Every day my students put me in awe. I hear little voices saying, ‘Miss Merryman, I’m a reader! I read a book to my mom!’ Or, ‘Miss Merryman, we forgot to read our learning target.’ My kids are never shy to tell me when I have forgotten something. There is no other job in the world that allows you to learn from children, and I think that’s amazing!”

Ashley Merryman, 1st Grade Teacher, Harriet Thompson Elementary, Grandview School District

WHAT YOU'LL FIND HERE

First there are some questions for families to reflect on. They offer a springboard for families, caregivers, child care professionals and teachers to talk together about fostering each child's growth and learning.

Next under each area of development, the Guidelines are in two columns. "Children may . . ." provides examples of things that children this age are learning to be, do and know. "Ideas to try with children . . ." offers examples of things families, caregivers, child care professionals, teachers and other caring adults can do to help children learn and develop in healthy ways. Different families may encourage learning and development in different ways.

The Washington State K-12 Learning Standards for all subjects, including the recently adopted Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, continue to be the core for instruction that children receive in their classrooms. The Guidelines were created to be in harmony with these state learning standards, but do not try to repeat their content. For more information on the Washington State Learning Standards, see http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/EALR_GLE.aspx

These Guidelines are a resource. They are not an exhaustive guide to child development, and are not intended to be an assessment tool, a curriculum or a tool to collect data on children.

What families already know about their children

Five questions to reflect on

1. What has your child done that surprised you with a new ability, skill or understanding?
2. How does your child go about trying something new?
3. What does your child really enjoy doing?
4. How does your child respond to new situations or challenges?
5. Who among your family and friends does your child enjoy spending time with? What are some of the things that person does with or teaches your child?

“What I have learned as both an early childhood educator and a parent of elementary-age children is that there isn’t a box large enough to fit all of the diverse ways that children learn. While textbooks and teachers can provide a basic overview of a ‘typical’ child, the realm of normalcy and acceptability is vast. Relish the differences before raising too much concern about how a child ‘should’ be.”

Sylvia LeRahl, Director of Education and Disabilities,
Denise Louie Education Center, Seattle



Note: Child continues the growth and learning from the prior age.

1. About me and my family and culture

↓ Children may ...

Family and culture

- Tell friends or adults about a family or cultural tradition.
- Bond with family and friends who share their time and talents with the child.

Self management

- Calm down own strong emotions and avoid acting on impulse.
- Understand how the body and face show different emotions.
- Describe ways to cope with and manage stress. For example, if a friend doesn’t want to play any more (stress), invite someone else to play with you (cope).

Learning to learn

- Focus attention on a task/topic and ignore distractions.
- Start to be able to stay focused on tasks assigned by others.
- Listen with attention.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Family and culture

- Include your child in family and cultural traditions, rituals, routines and activities.
- Involve your child in preparing meals, household chores, gardening, shopping and other daily tasks.
- Build community with other families through activities such as coffees, celebrations, field trips, etc.

Self management

- Teach your child calming techniques: such as counting to 10, taking a walk or singing a favorite song. Remind your child of these skills when he or she is upset.

Learning to learn

- Together with your child, explore Web sites or books with pictures of animals, foods or things that interest the child. Talk about what you see.
- Turn off television and video games while doing homework or chores to help the child stay focused.
- Have your child practice retelling/repeating instructions.

2. Building relationships

↓ Children may ...

Interactions with peers and others

- Think about how his/her behavior impacts other people.
- Has increased awareness of interpersonal behavior and communication.
- Expand skills to connect and interact with peers and others.
- Play more cooperatively with others.

Problem solving, conflict resolution

- Able to say what someone else's actions were and how they affected the child or others.
- Think about the best approach to a problem before reacting.
- Work together with peers and brainstorm to come up with solutions to their own problems.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Interactions with peers and others

- Attend community activities where the child has an opportunity to interact with others.

Problem solving, conflict resolution

- Help your child develop his/her problem solving skills. Practice ways to resolve conflicts. Talk with your child about how it worked.

3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around

↓ Children may ...

Using the large muscles (gross motor skills)

- Refine skills for moving from one place to another (locomotor skills).
- Develop skills for moving in place (non-locomotor skills), such as bending and twisting.
- Gain strength, endurance and flexibility.
- Notice and correct own mistakes in activities that require attention to form, such as yoga, karate, sports or gymnastics.

Using the small muscles (fine motor skills)

- Improve skills for moving the hands and fingers (manipulative skills) to do a task such as write a note, tie shoes, etc.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Using the large muscles (gross motor skills)

- Give your child the opportunity to play outdoors safely and be physically active every day.
- Play games with your child that involve running, such as tag, or bending, twisting and stretching, such as using your bodies to form letters of the alphabet.
- Let your child roll, toss and bounce a ball, and use various body parts (hand, head, knee, etc.) to strike a balloon.
- Encourage your child to try new physical activities (e.g., school or community sports). Help him/her develop new skills.
- Encourage limited television time and engaging in physical activity during commercials.

Using the small muscles (fine motor skills)

- Involve your child in doing things that require controlled use of the hands and fingers, such as measuring ingredients for baking, or cutting out snowflakes or pieces of paper to make a collage.

4. Growing up healthy

↓ Children may ...

Nutrition and health

- Begin to understand how own decisions can impact health and wellness now and in the future.
- Show interest in learning about body systems and a variety of health topics.

Safety

- Understand that some game rules are for safety.
- Recognize risky situations and explain how to avoid them.
- Recognize what an unwanted touch is.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Nutrition and health

- Make sure your child gets adequate sleep.
- Take your child for regular dental, vision and health checkups, including immunizations.
- Take your child grocery shopping, and show healthy food choices (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, lean proteins).
- Talk with your child about how healthy food choices can help you stay healthy.
- Teach your child appropriate food portion size. Ask about nutrition information at your local health department or see www.choosemyplate.gov.
- Encourage your child to identify signs of a cold or flu (e.g., chills, running nose and coughing), and whom to tell.

Safety

- Talk about risky situations and how to avoid them (e.g., “If you find a needle, don’t touch it. Tell a trusted adult.”).
- Explain the importance of following game and safety rules. Talk about safety for the activities your child enjoys, such as keeping a safe space when using a jump rope.
- Talk about not giving out personal information, such as over the phone or Internet.
- Tell your child that an unwanted touch is when someone touches parts of the body that are normally covered by a bathing suit or asking your child to touch their body parts normally covered by a bathing suit. Repeat discussion about how to say “no” and to tell a trusted adult.
- Explain steps in case of an emergency (e.g., duck and cover are rules for an earthquake). Help your child learn and recite his/her full name, address and phone number.

First graders may understand that some game rules are for safety.



5. Communicating (literacy)

↓ Children may ...

Speaking and listening (language development)

- Develop listening and observation skills.
- Follow directions, retell stories, and explain visual information.
- Start a conversation about a topic of interest. Respond to the comments of others, ask and answer questions. Notice whether others understand.
- Describe characters, settings and major events in a story, using details.
- Describe people, places, things and events using complete sentences.
- Use new words.

Reading

- Understand that written letters make sounds that create words.
- Match letters and sounds (phonics), using clues from pictures and sounding out words to figure out unfamiliar words. Begin to self-correct.
- Expand reading vocabulary.
- Learn and share information from reading.
- Choose and read a variety of books.
- Identify text features: title, author, table of contents, glossary.
- Identify and explain story elements—character, setting, events.
- Read and follow simple written directions with guidance.

Writing

- Develop an idea or piece of information beyond one sentence, adding some description or explanation.
- Spell many simple words accurately.
- Start using simple correct letter formation, spacing and punctuation.
- Write about ideas and feelings, using complete sentences.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Speaking and listening (language development)

- Read a story together then ask your child what happened first, next, and last.
- Find opportunities to talk with and listen to your child about a variety of topics, such as:
 - Favorite books, television shows and movies. Ask if the child were writing the story/show/movie, how he or she would make it different.
 - Places the child sees. Ask what the child likes or doesn't like about them.
- Encourage your child in group conversations to take turns speaking, listening and responding to others.

Reading

- Encourage your child to read books to you, both fiction and nonfiction. Help sound out difficult words.
- Read aloud to your child, choosing books that are above his/her own reading level.
- Talk about words that your child may not understand and ways to find out their meaning.
- Ask your child to think of different ways to describe the same action.
- Ask questions that require finding information from what is being read. Model how to find answers in the book.

Writing

- Pick a “word of the day.” Have your child write the word and look for other things beginning with the same letter.
- Ask your child to write his/her complete name and address.
- If your child has access to a computer, encourage him/her to use it for writing stories.
- Encourage your child to write stories. Ask your child talk through a story idea before writing. Ask your child to read the story out loud. Then ask questions about it.
- Encourage noticing details/characteristics (“How many things can you tell me about your favorite toy?”).
- Write notes to your child and encourage him/her to write back.

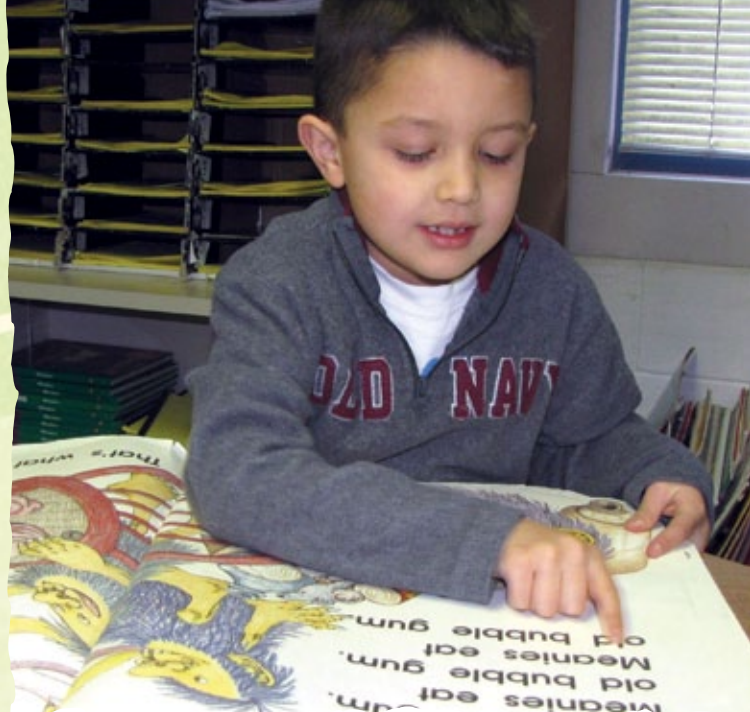


“As a teacher, I’ve embraced a whole-child approach to learning, with that learning embedded in social studies, arts, and sciences. These Guidelines will help me share strategies with teachers, parents, and providers. The work is done! I don’t have to reinvent the wheel!”

Kristi Thurston, Director Student Support Services, Cheney

“My son had a positive experience entering school. The teachers and administrators at his elementary school do a wonderful job to ensure that all children and families feel welcome, including a home visit from the kindergarten teacher. My son was fortunate to have had two years of preschool, which prepared him to be successful in kindergarten and contributed to his positive performance as a 1st grader. When a solid foundation is established early on and the transition into school is handled with care, children are set up for success in life.”

Mamie Barboza, Parent of first grader at
Adams Elementary, Yakima School District



6. Learning about my world

↓ Children may ...

Knowledge (cognition)

- Enjoy learning through discovery.
- Ask many questions.

Math

- Count, read and write to 120.
- Solve addition and subtraction word problems, between 1 and 20. (“Five apples were on the table. I ate some apples. Then there were three apples. How many apples did I eat?”)
- Add and subtract numbers up to 20.
- Know and talk about different ways to solve math problems, and when you might use each one.
- Understand place value in two-digit numbers.
- Measure lengths of objects by using a shorter object.
- Make composite shapes by joining shapes together.
- Divide circles and rectangles into halves or fourths to develop understanding of part/whole.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Knowledge (cognition)

- Take your child on “field trips” and talk about what you saw and learned.

Math

- Practice with your child counting to 120 from any number. Ask your child the number before or after a given number.
- Have your child write and read numbers to 120 and compare any two of these numbers to say which is greater or less than the other.
- Help your child learn addition and subtraction facts up to 10.
- Look for “word problems” in real life. Some 1st grade examples might include:
 - If you open a new carton of a dozen eggs, and you use four eggs to cook dinner, close the carton and ask your child how many eggs are left.
 - While putting away toys into bins, count the number of toys in two bins and ask your child how many more are in one bin compared to the other.
 - Using a pencil or a piece of spaghetti, have child measure length of bed, refrigerator, television, etc.
 - Whenever you eat pizza, talk about how to cut it so everyone gets an equal amount.
- Play number games with your child where you might say:
 - “I’m thinking of a number that is 20 more than 34. What is the number?”
 - “I am thinking of a number that makes 11 when added to 8. What is the number?”

↓ Children may ...

Science

- Develop skills with sorting, describing, comparing and recording observations.
- Find patterns in his/her observations and start to think about what they mean.
- Identify which animals belong in which habitats, and match characteristics of animals with their physical environment.
- Begin making independent choices to create a healthy environment and community, such as disposing of waste properly, recycling and/or thinking of ways to reuse items.

Social Studies

- Understand how families in the community are the same and different.
- Talk about families and the ways families live and work together in a neighborhood.
- Begin to use globes and maps.

Arts

- Create and respond to arts.
- Become aware of skills needed to dance around the room.
- Choose to join in creative dramatics, storytelling or puppetry.
- Create spontaneous drama, music and dance, with other children or alone.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Science

- Explore a question with your child by making observations or trying things out.
- Explore with your child in an area near home or school, and describe the different plants and animals that live there. Help your child identify plants and animals.
- Encourage your child to sketch or make a representation of life cycles (birds, plants, moths, etc.).
- Plan time to observe the night sky together.

Social Studies

- Talk together about different kinds of families you know—big, small, extended, single, etc.
- Talk about how families around the world celebrate holidays.
- Talk about where the child's family lives and where ancestors came from.
- Explore a globe or map together.
- Talk about how the climate and physical features of an area determine the type of home in which people live.
- Talk about different kinds of recreation people enjoy.

Arts

- Provide options for your child to explore by using a variety of materials (e.g., chalk, crayons, finger paints, pencils, paints, pens, markers, etc.) and to draw lines (in the air, on paper, on clay, etc.).
- Expose your child to various musical styles.
- Dance with your child, using various body parts, rhythms and speeds.
- Encourage your child to share his/her ideas and feelings after viewing/experiencing a dance.

For more information, see the Information Resources section.

DIFFERENCES IN DEVELOPMENT

Every child grows and develops at his or her own rate. However, there may be some signs in your child's development that you'll want to check with a doctor, nurse, health department or your child's teacher.

If you believe your child may be highly capable, talk with your school district about the resources that may be available.

If you have concerns about your child's learning or development, you may wish to request a special education evaluation. Support services may be available through your local school district. Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800 322-2588 to get connected to your local school district.

Steps for Requesting a Special Education Evaluation

- Talk with your child's teacher first. The teacher or another staff member may be able to help you through the request process.
- A request for an evaluation to determine if your child qualifies to receive support services **must be made in writing**. It is a good idea to direct your request both to a district staff member at the building level (school psychologist or special education teacher) and to your district's special education director at the administrative level. Keep a copy of your written request for your files.
- The school district will determine if an evaluation is needed, based on information you provide, existing classroom assessments, and observations by teachers or related service providers (speech therapist or occupational therapist). There is no cost for the evaluation.
- The evaluation will be conducted by qualified professionals such as a school psychologist, speech therapist or special education teacher. The evaluation should include all area(s) of suspected disability. You will be asked to share information about your child's development, health and medical history.
- Following the evaluation, a meeting will be scheduled with you to discuss the evaluation results and determine if your child is eligible for free special education services.

For more information:

Visit the special education webpage of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction website at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/default.aspx>. This website contains information for families on a wide range of special education topics.

For information on local services for families, see <http://www.parenthelp123.org>. Parent Help 123 also offers information on child development and school readiness: <http://www.parenthelp123.org/families/child-development>.

For information on children with special health care needs, see the state Department of Health's web page: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/mch/cshcnhome2.htm>

