

Early Learning and Development Guidelines

# Third Grade

## Approximately 8 Years



*"I can really see how my son is putting skills that he learned at earlier ages all together in 3rd Grade. He knows who he is as a person and is able to set goals for himself. He is able to play team sports and negotiate problems with friends. He is reading chapter books, learning how the government works, and doing fractions. Wow! Growth and development at this age is so amazing."*

Maryanne Barnes, Executive Director, Birth to Three Developmental Center  
and proud mother of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader

## 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](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?

*“Your children believe they are who you make them believe they are . . . can be . . . and will be. As their parent, teacher, educational leader you must also BELIEVE in them. We serve as role models for all of the children we may encounter in our lives. There is no greater reward than hearing a past student or your child say: ‘. . . and I came to be because you believed in me.’”*

Lucy Prieto, District Administrator for Migrant & Bilingual Programs,  
Grandview School District



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

# 1. About me and my family and culture

## ↓ Children may . . .

### Family and culture

- Write a story about himself/herself in the context of the child’s family, culture and environment.

### Self management

- Know and use strategies to deal with different emotions, such as using self-control when angry.

## ↓ Ideas to try with children . . .

### Family and culture

- Include your child in family and cultural traditions and activities, and in community celebrations.
- Explore a variety of community events with your child, listen to music from many cultures, or look at an online virtual tour of a museum.

### Self concept

- Talk about what your child feels he or she does well and what he or she would like to do better. Talk about ways to develop new skills.

### Self management

- Help your child develop ways to cope with strong emotions (e.g., journaling, reading, talking or playing). Remind him or her of these strategies when strong emotions arise.
- Show support and provide guidance as your child works through a problem situation and explores possible solutions.
- Share with your child ways to practice healthy habits (such as building strong friendships).

## 2. Building relationships

### ↓ Children may ...

#### **Interactions with peers and others**

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- Work cooperatively with peers in small and large group activities. Understand there are differences in skill and ability among peers.
- Understand that there are different points of view among peers and others.
- Work independently and in a group.
- Have a better understanding of others' feelings.

#### **Social behavior**

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- Understand respectful ways to communicate with others and respect personal space.
- Help self and others make responsible decisions.
- Be willing to stand up for others.

#### **Problem solving, conflict resolution**

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- Understand and use basic steps for resolving conflict.

### ↓ Ideas to try with children ...

#### **Interactions with peers and others**

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- Give child opportunities to practice working alone on a task, with someone else or with a group.

#### **Social behavior**

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- Share examples of how friends can help each other make responsible decisions (e.g., encourage a friend not to cheat on homework).

#### **Problem solving, conflict resolution**

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- Talk about using respectful communication (e.g., use appropriate words and respect others' space).
- Role-play positive ways to resolve conflict.



*“The thing I enjoy most in working with kids is providing them with a challenge and helping them identify strategies for reaching that challenge. Then, of course, I love seeing them reach those challenges and feel so capable.”*

Dr. Greg Borgerding, Principal, Glacier Middle School,  
White River School District

# 3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around

## ↓ Children may ...

### Using the large muscles (gross motor skills) and small muscles (fine motor skills)

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- Show good form in basic movement (locomotor skills) and in skills with the hands (manipulative skills), even when participating in fast-moving games.
- Begin to learn game strategies, rules and etiquette.

## ↓ Ideas to try with children ...

### Using the large muscles (gross motor skills) and small muscles (fine motor skills)

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- Play a modified game of soccer with your child to practice walking, running, bending and kicking to punt the ball.
- Explain the rules of sport games, strategies of offense and defense, and etiquette while participating in games.
- Help your child develop and expand skills in physical activities.
- Role model good practices for using equipment (such as a bike or jump rope).

# 4. Growing up healthy

## ↓ Children may ...

### Nutrition and health

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- Brush teeth at least twice daily and floss once a day.
- Understand how health habits impact growth and development.
- Take responsibility for making healthy life choices.

### Safety

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- Know and use ways to stay safe from strangers.
- Know appropriate responses to harassment, bullying, intimidation and abuse.

## ↓ Ideas to try with children ...

### Nutrition and health

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- Share information about the importance of keeping active. For example, see the activities suggested for Let's Move, [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov).
- Take your child for regular dental, vision and health checkups, including immunizations.
- Encourage your child to choose water over soda.
- Allow your child to be the chef to create healthy snacks from fruits and vegetables (e.g., smoothies, fruit leathers and vegetable "art").
- Go food shopping together, and encourage your child to read food labels about calories and nutrients. Let your child select healthy choices for meals.

### Safety

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- Explain the importance of using a secure password to protect the privacy of information online.
- Discuss with your child the difference between good and bad touching, and how to say "no" and tell a trusted adult about bad touching.



*“Third grade is an important milestone in every child’s school career. Children transition from learning to read to reading to learn. They master basic math facts and concepts that they will soon use to solve complex mathematical problems. Peer relationships become increasingly more important and children desire more independence. So much of what we do in the early years of a child’s life is designed to ensure that students are readers, writers and mathematicians at third grade and have the confidence to take on the world.”*

Stacey Drake, Director of Early Learning,  
Yakima School District

## 5. Communicating (literacy)

### ↓ Children may . . .

#### **Speaking and listening (language development)**

- Use listening skills to interpret information heard.
- Want to have more in-depth or extended conversations and seek clarification when needed.

#### **Reading**

- Use nonfiction texts and reference resources to locate information.
- Increase vocabulary by reading and discovering the meanings of new words.
- Recognize the difference between fact and opinion.
- Follow multi-step written directions independently.
- Compare two books on the same topic.
- Read stories and poems aloud, without pausing to figure out what each word means.
- Distinguish literal and nonliteral meanings, such as of the phrases “something’s fishy” and “cold shoulder.”
- Understand how to read a variety of documents (such as directions, phone book, menu, etc.).

#### **Writing**

- Write longer stories. Organize writing around a central idea.
- Put ideas in a time and place. Develop characters through details and dialogue.
- Start to consider suggestions from others about own writing.
- Be more interested in spelling correctly and using dictionaries and other tools.

### ↓ Ideas to try with children . . .

#### **Speaking and listening (language development)**

- Start a family vocabulary box or jar. Have everyone write down new words, add them to the box and use the words in conversation. Talk about why you chose to use a particular word.
- Engage your child in conversations on a variety of topics. Ask for more information to clarify or extend your child’s point. Encourage your child to listen and ask similar questions.

#### **Reading**

- Encourage reading as a part of your child’s daily routine. Set aside quiet time, with no distractions.
- Ask your child about an author’s point of view and how it might be the same as or different from the child’s point of view.
- Encourage your child to tell you about the characteristics of characters in a story.
- Encourage use of new vocabulary.
- Help your child research something he/she is interested in.

#### **Writing**

- Encourage your child to write stories and add more details.
- Encourage your child write about events or activities he or she has enjoyed.

# 6. Learning about my world

## ↓ Children may ...

### Knowledge (cognition)

- Work at an activity until it is complete.
- Choose to conduct research to find out more about something of interest.

### Math

- Build skills to multiply and divide up to  $10 \times 10$  accurately.
- Solve word (story) problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- Begin to multiply numbers with more than one digit (e.g., multiplying  $9 \times 80$ ).
- Develop an understanding fractions (e.g.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , etc.).
- Determine the perimeter and area of rectangles.

## ↓ Ideas to try with children ...

### Knowledge (cognition)

- Play games involving memory with your child.
- Listen to your child's ideas and thoughts.
- Work on a project with your child. Plan it together. As you go, talk about how the project is going and what needs to be changed. Be sure to complete the project.

### Math

- Practice multiplication and division facts from 1 to 100 with your child.
- Provide opportunities for the child to work with fractional parts of household objects including:
  - Measuring amounts for cooking.
  - Comparing halves of two different items (e.g. half an apple and half a pizza) and asking which is more and why.
  - Comparing the size of different fractions of the same item (e.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an apple and a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an apple).
- Encourage your child to talk about why he or she solved a problem in a particular way and if there were any other ways it could have been done.
- Point out examples of perimeter in the house (e.g., frame of windows or pictures), and measure and calculate some together.
- Have child determine how long events are by giving starting and finishing times.

*“Young kids are fascinated by hands-on activities, the kind of direct experiences that make them observe, talk about what they see, and sort and organize. But what we have them do and think about must be real—that’s how they really connect to something they learn.”*

Diane Adams, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Michael T. Simmons Elementary, Tumwater School District



## ↓ Children may ...

### Science

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- Start to understand systems (e.g., solar system, digestive system). Identify individual parts and how they work together.
- Start to understand how ecosystems can change quickly (a storm) or slowly (a pond becoming a meadow).
- Understand how people are part of the environment and how he/she can help create a healthy environment.

### Social Studies

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- Show interest in learning about the different people living in his/her community and state.
- Look at issues and events from more than one perspective.

### Arts

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- Explain own artwork to others.
- Show an interest in developing musical skills.
- Create and perform movement, showing balance through concentration and muscle control.
- Show interest in developing skills in visual arts, dance, music and/or drama.

## ↓ Ideas to try with children ...

### Science

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- Help your child compare different plants and animals by their characteristics.
- Have fun with shadows, noting how they change with the time of day.
- Help your child measure and record changes in weather (e.g., inches of rain using a cup, depth of snow using a ruler, and temperature using a thermometer).
- Ask your child to observe the natural world, and to write down and/or draw what he/she observes.

### Social Studies

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- Talk with your child about the benefits of diversity for a community, including the increased range of viewpoints, ideas, customs and choices available.
- Pick a region with your child and find out about its language, food, customs, religion, stories, music and art.
- Look for information with your child about the history and contributions American Indians, people from Mexico, Canada or other countries made in your community in science, art, food, music, sports or other areas that interest your child.

### Arts

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- Provide opportunities to explore different art forms.
- Sing together in unison and in harmony.
- Dance with your child, trying different kinds of movement, tempos and styles.

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For more information, see the Information Resources section.

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# 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

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- 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:

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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>

