

A photograph of a diverse group of young children sitting on the floor in a classroom. In the foreground, a young boy with dark skin and curly hair is smiling and looking towards the right. Next to him, a young girl with light skin and blonde hair is also smiling. Other children are visible in the background, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The setting appears to be a bright, modern classroom.

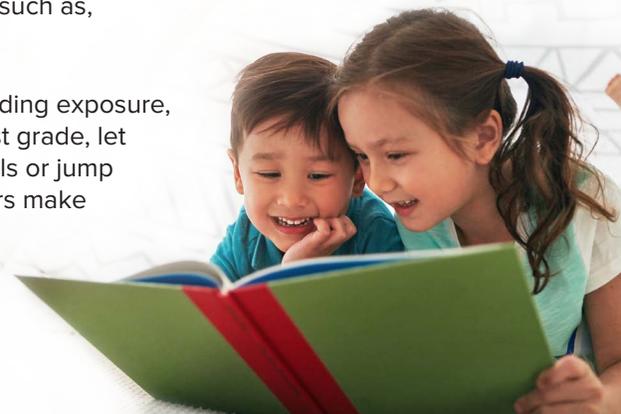
What your **FIRST GRADER** Should Know

Preparing for First Grade

First grade involves increased responsibilities and huge growth in terms of learning to read. Children who are well prepared for first grade enter school being able to follow two and three step directions. They are also ready and able to complete lengthy projects by focusing their attention on a task for 15 minutes or more. One way to prepare your rising first grader is to practice giving he or she verbal two and three step directions in the months leading up to first grade. Allow your child more time to craft independently and provide opportunities for him or her to sit down and practice paper/pencil work at a table or desk area for time periods of 15 minutes or more.

Most children enter first grade being able to name the letters and identify the sounds. Knowing the first 50 sight words, such as: “you,” “the,” and “a,” are also important. Often times, schools will use Dolch or Fry word lists in their curriculum and parents should practice these words with kids at home. Before school begins, read with your child often. Find or make easy to read books that include simple sentences. Have your child practice reading them to you. Make up rhymes and sing songs. Encourage your child to play with sounds and words by playing games such as, “What sound is in the beginning of the word ‘ball’ (or ‘horse,’ or ‘fan’)?”

Reading levels at this age vary a lot based on pre-school and kindergarten reading exposure, and that’s OK! If you’re not sure that your child’s reading skills are ready for first grade, let Sylvan help! Whether you want your child to catch up on his or her reading skills or jump ahead with activities that enrich and challenge, Sylvan’s 1st grade reading tutors make learning personal to your child.



What First Graders Should Learn at School

Reading: First grade is a BIG reading year and many children begin the year sounding out basic consonant-vowel-consonant three letter words such as “cat.” Spelling lists and weekly spelling tests are common in most first grade classrooms. These spelling lists might focus on teaching word families and basic word patterns. By the end of the year, first graders are reading more complicated sentences such as “He is baking a pink cake.” without needing to sound out known words. They are reading grade level text with accuracy, appropriate rate and expression. Most first graders are also learning to answer questions about key story ideas, retell the story and describe the characters.

PARENTING TIP *Check your child’s take home folder daily and make sure to read all newsletters. Let your child complete his or her own homework, but check over it before sending it in. Talk to him or her about what they are learning at school. Then, take the same academic concepts from school and practice them in a different way at home. Since all children learn differently, see how you can incorporate art, movement and senses into reading activities.*

Math: Most first grade classrooms teach a variety of addition and subtraction strategies for numbers 0-20 in addition to sequencing, place value, measurement, telling time, using graphs and knowing three dimensional shapes. Teachers will often present math lessons with the help of tools such as base ten blocks, unifix cubes, a calendar, dice, number lines, hundreds charts, clocks and counters for students to experience hands-on math.

PARENTING TIP *It is helpful for children to enter first grade with a firm grasp on identifying and understanding what the numbers 0-20 represent. Have your child count the number of steps it takes to get to the second floor. Make a number line out of chalk on your sidewalk and have them jump the addition or math problems. Talk with your child about numbers as often as you can. Clocks and stores with price labels for merchandise are great ways to naturally let math sneak into your daily life and make it fun!*

Writing: Many first grade students transition from writing simple words to creating 6 sentence paragraphs. These paragraphs include topic sentences with supporting details and a conclusion. The use of capital letters, phonetic spelling and punctuation is a must for writing. First grade teachers often provide writing prompts for students asking them to summarize events from their own lives, write about academic content or create fictional stories.

PARENTING TIP *Help build your child’s writing skills by providing opportunities for your first grader to write often at home. Have him or her write letters to relative, make lists for the grocery store and even write in a diary daily.*



Get Set Up for a Successful Year!

First graders are becoming more independent, but they still need active and involved parents throughout the year. What else can you do—in addition to the steps discussed above—to help your child have a successful first grade year?

- Teacher welcoming parents and student to school
- Take an active role in supporting your first grader.
- Attend “Meet the Teacher” nights and your school’s open house.
- Get to know your child’s curriculum.
- Join your school’s PTA. (Sylvan Learning is a supporter of the National PTA and is offering great benefits like 50 percent off of a Sylvan Insight Assessment for PTA members!)
- Read through newsletters.
- Volunteer in the classroom.
- Schedule parent teacher conferences.
- Learn as much as you can about first grade!

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