A Parent's Guide to Kindergarten
Building on a Solid Foundation of Knowledge

Talk with Your Child's Teacher

Academic targets provide a great opportunity for you to talk with teachers about what your child is learning in school and how you can support that learning at home.

Be sure to ask:

About learning targets
- Can I see an example of a grade-level academic target?
- May I look at some of my child’s work related to this target?
- What kinds of activities and lessons are used in school to help my child meet or exceed this target?
- What can I do at home to help my child reach the target?

About your child’s progress
- In what subjects is my child working at grade level?
- What areas of learning need improvement?
- Is my child reading at grade level? Can you suggest some books that my child can read?
- Is my child’s math performance at grade level? How can I support this at home?
- What do assessments say about my child as a learner?

About ways you can support learning
- Besides report cards, what are other ways I can keep up-to-date on how my child is doing?
- If my child is not at grade level, what support is available at school?
- If my child is at grade level, what enrichment is being offered at school?
- How can I help to improve learning at home?

MPS works hard to make every school a great school. We have compiled examples of skills that students should know and goals or tasks they should be able to accomplish by the end of each grade. These learning targets, which are standards-based, provide a common understanding of the foundational skills and knowledge needed for all students to be prepared to move forward to the next grade and on to continued learning and academic success.

Positive teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships support emotional and social development and are essential to successful learning. You can help. When schools work together with families and the community to support learning, children will succeed in school and in the future.

Useful Links

Fine Arts
http://finearts.mpls.k12.mn.us
Health and Physical Education
http://healthphyed.mpls.k12.mn.us
Information Technology
http://its.mpls.k12.mn.us
Literacy
http://ela.mpls.k12.mn.us/elementary
Mathematics
http://math.mpls.k12.mn.us
Multilingual Learners
http://multilingual.mpls.k12.mn.us
Science
http://science.mpls.k12.mn.us
Social Studies
http://socialstudies.mpls.k12.mn.us
Talent Development and Advanced Learner Education
http://giftedandtalented.mpls.k12.mn.us
World Languages
http://worldlanguages.mpls.k12.mn.us

More Information
For more information, contact your child’s school or call the MPS Teaching and Learning Department at 612.668.5300.

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By the end of the school year, we expect that a kindergarten student can:  

**LITERACY**
- Understand spoken words, syllables and sounds
- Say the sounds of each consonant in words
- Spell simple words by connecting sounds to letters
- Read many high-frequency words
- Tell the difference between similar words by identifying the different sounds
- Read and understand grade-level text
- Participate in conversations about topics and books in small and large groups
- Describe familiar people, places and events with details

**MATHMATICS**
- Count forward and backward from any number up to 31
- Compare and order whole numbers up to 20
- Solve addition and subtraction problems with numbers up to 10
- Recognize and sort 2-D and 3-D shapes
- Describe and create repeating patterns
- Describe the attributes of objects
- Sort objects by their attributes

**SCIENCE**
- Tell the earth gets heat and light
- Point out and name the outside parts of a plant
- Identify the characteristics of living versus non-living things (i.e. ability to grow, reproduce; need for air, food and water)
- Tell where the seasons change

**SOCIAL STUDIES**
- Explain the rules of his or her classroom, school or community and tell why we have those rules
- Describe what happens when he or she breaks a rule
- Name units of time
- Tell the difference between past, present and future
- Tell the difference between a want and a need

**ARTS EDUCATION**
- Arts Education is about creating, performing and responding
- Supports and enriches academic learning and understanding

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**
- Physical Education is developing the skills, knowledge and confidence to make good decisions for personal fitness
- Kindergarten students learn to:
  - Experience the joy of play
  - Share equipment, cooperate and show respect for others
  - Develop body control and use personal space safely
  - Play simple games by the rules

**INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY**
- Instructional Media and Technology is helping students learn to:
  - Select appropriate books, check them out and care for them
  - Examine how pictures, charts and graphs help tell a story or relate facts
  - Find and communicate information in different ways
  - Use appropriate computer applications for certain tasks

Kindergartners experience a broad range of instruction that supports and enriches academic learning and understanding.

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME**

**LITERACY**
- Have fun with words
  - Tell and read riddles and jokes together
  - Play games with rhyming words
  - Check out resources at the family center website: [www.eduplace.com/parents/resources/hac](http://www.eduplace.com/parents/resources/hac)
- Read with and to your child every day
  - Check out booklists of stories to read in several languages. On the Hennepin County Library website: [www.hclib.org](http://www.hclib.org)
  - Share your love of reading
- Listen to your child read
  - Encourage retelling of stories
  - Ask questions about the story to build understanding
  - *What was this story about?*
- Encourage your child to write
  - Ask your child to put letters and pictures together to create simple stories (oral or written)
  - Show your child how to write for practical purposes
  - Practice social and formal conversations

**MATHEMATICS**
- Talk about numbers
  - Count things (stairs, plates on the table, items in a collection)
  - Sing counting songs
  - Read and write numbers on a calendar
- Look for patterns and sort
  - Sort coins
  - Sort groups of items from smallest to largest, largest to smallest
  - Use cereal shapes to create patterns
- Choose a tree near your home and observe changes through the seasons
  - Have your child draw a picture and add a few words to describe the seasonal changes
- Help your child choose an easy-to-grow plant
  - Learn what it needs to stay healthy
  - Record the plant’s growth with pictures, charts or drawings
- Collect and sort leaves (by shape, color, size)
  - Talk about how they are alike and different
  - Go to [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org) and search for “exploration and leaves”
- Go outside after a rainfall and look for worms on the sidewalk
  - Compare the lengths of the worms
- Talk to your child about rules and create rules for the home
  - Identify and discuss patriotic symbols such as the flag of the United States of America
- Look for opportunities to discuss, explore and experience different cultures
- Expose your child to various forms of maps; ask him or her to draw maps and ‘lead the way’

**SCIENCE**
- Draw pictures to describe where things are in their classroom or community
- Explain why people use maps and globes
- Identify symbols and songs of our community, state and nation
- Identify important people in our country’s history and tell why they are important

**SOCIAL STUDIES**
- Make patterns with body motions (such as: clap, clap, tap your head, clap, clap, tap your head)
- Sort laundry by color
- Recognize shapes and measure
  - Look for everyday shapes and name them, such as the shape of a cereal box, face of a watch, buttons or tires
  - Make shapes out of straws or string
  - Ask your child about the length of different everyday objects ("Which shoe lace is longer?", "Which sock is the shortest?", "How do you know?")

**ARTS EDUCATION**
- Arts Education is about creating, performing and responding
  - Discuss feelings
  - Demonstrate proper techniques for hand-washing and brushing teeth
  - Recognize nutritional categories from MyPlate

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**
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*Not all sites offer world language immersion*