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What Should Be Learned In Kindergarten?

February 1994

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Most American children attend kindergarten, and many participate in all-day kindergarten programs. While recent reform efforts have focused on extending the kindergarten day, research suggests that how kindergartners spend their time may be more critical than the amount of time children spend in class. In other words, longer kindergarten days in unsuitable activities yield no educational advantages over the traditional half-day kindergarten program.

[Source](#)

U.S. Department of
Education, Office of
Educational Research
And Improvement

What Are Appropriate Teaching And Curriculum Approaches For Kindergartners?

Early childhood and kindergarten specialists have long emphasized the central role of play in young children's learning. In the course of day-to-day experience with young children, it is easy for teachers to see that spontaneous play is a natural way of learning; observations of children's play reveal that play provides a wide range and real depth of learning in all domains of development: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual.

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However, it is just as natural for young children to learn through spontaneous investigation (close observation, experimentation, and inquiry) as through spontaneous play. Many observers have noted that young children are natural scientists and anthropologists. They devote substantial portions of their seemingly endless energy to learning all aspects of the culture they are born into: they learn its language, stories, music, and literature; they investigate with all their senses and emerging skills what people mean, when things are appropriate and when they are not, where things come from, what they are for, how they are made, and how adults and peers respond to them. They try to make sense of common objects by prying into them, taking them apart, and manipulating them in a variety of ways. Appropriate curriculum and teaching methods include activities and encouragement for kindergartners in these quests and feature the importance of individual children's feelings and emotions in group settings.

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The Kindergarten Curriculum

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The developmental characteristics of children of kindergarten age call for a curriculum that involves a variety and balance of activities that can be provided in the context of project work (Katz and Chard, 1989). For example, kindergarten children can undertake projects in which they investigate a real event or object. In the course of such projects, the children will strengthen emerging literacy and numeracy skills and their speaking and listening skills and acquire new words as they share their findings with others.

[Education and Kids](#)

A Good Curriculum Provides Activities That Include:

- Integrated topic studies, rather than whole-group instruction in isolated skills;
- Opportunities for children to learn by observing and experimenting with real objects;
- A balance of child- and teacher-initiated activities;

Related Articles

[Readiness For Kindergarten](#)

- Opportunities for spontaneous play and teacher-facilitated activities;
- Group projects in which cooperation can occur naturally;
- A range of activities requiring the use of large and small muscles;
- Exposure to good literature and music of the children's own cultures and of other cultures represented in the class;
- Authentic assessment of each child's developmental progress;
- Opportunities for children with diverse backgrounds and developmental levels to participate in whole-group activities; and
- Time for individuals or small groups of children to meet with the teacher for specific help in acquiring basic reading, writing, mathematical, and other skills as needed.

A major challenge for schools concerned with the best use of children's time in kindergarten is the provision of meaningful teaching and learning activities. The wide range of physical, social, and intellectual characteristics represented in a group of contemporary beginning kindergartners makes an informal, flexible approach to the kindergarten curriculum necessary.

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Where Can Parents Find Out More About Kindergarten Practices?

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education

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College of Education
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Urbana, IL 61801-4897
(217) 333-1386

National Association for the Education of Young Children

1834 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20009-2460
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11501 Georgia Avenue, Suite 315
Wheaton, MD 20902
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Written by Lilian G. Katz, Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

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Readiness For Kindergarten

Written by Joanne R. Nurss
ERIC/EECE DIGEST, 1987

Credits

Readiness is a term used to describe preparation for what comes next: readiness for kindergarten involves both the child and the instructional situation. Any consideration of the preparation a child needs to be successful in kindergarten must take into account the kindergarten program and the teacher's expectations of the child.

Source

U.S. Department of
Education

Social and Behavioral Expectations

Kindergarten teachers expect that the children will be able to function within a cooperative learning environment in which the child works both independently and as a member of small and large groups. Children are expected to be able to attend to and finish a task, listen to a story in a group, follow two or three oral directions, take turns and share, and care for their belongings. They are also expected to follow rules, respect the property of others, and work within the time and space constraints of the school program. It is important that children learn to distinguish between work and play, knowing when and where each is appropriate within the definition of each (Bradley, 1984; LeCompte, 1980).

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Sensory-Motor Expectations

Teachers expect children to develop certain physical skills before they enter kindergarten. Children are expected to have mastered many large muscle skills such as walking, running, and climbing, and fine motor skills requiring eye-hand coordination, such as use of a pencil, crayons, or scissors. Fine motor skills are used when the child begins to write its name and to make attempts at written expression. It is assumed that children have acquired both visual and auditory discrimination of objects and sounds. Such discrimination skills will be used to learn the names and sounds of letters and the names and quantities of numerals. Children are expected to have developed the concepts of same and different, so that they can sort objects into groups whose members are alike in some way. Usually the kindergarten teacher expects the children to recognize and name colors, shapes, sizes, and their own names (even though these concepts are often part of the curriculum early in the school year).

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Cognitive and Language Expectations

Most five-year-olds can express themselves fluently with a variety of words and can understand an even larger variety of words used in conversations and stories. If children have been exposed to books and heard stories read and told, they have begun to develop an interest in what print says and how it is used to express ideas; a concept of story and story structure; and an understanding of the relationship between oral and written language.

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Related Articles **Chronological Age**

[Helping Your Child Get Ready for School](#)

[Helping Your Child Succeed in School](#)

Many school systems and states have raised the entrance age for kindergarten in hopes that the older age of the class will increase the likelihood of the children's success. However, research does not support this action. Most studies show that chronological age alone is not a factor in success in kindergarten (Meisels, 1987; Wood, 1984).

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Kindergarten Curriculum

Many children now have a prior group experience in nursery school, prekindergarten, or day care. In the past, when kindergarten was the child's initial school experience, its focus was on the child's social adjustment to school. Kindergarten was usually a half-day program whose curriculum and activities were separate from the rest of the school, and whose purpose was to prepare the child for first grade. Now kindergarten is an integral part of the elementary school's curriculum and the focus has shifted from social to cognitive or academic (Nurss and Hodges, 1982). Many states fund full-day kindergarten programs on the assumption that five-year-olds can benefit from a longer school experience. Kindertartens vary in the degree to which their cognitive skills are strengthened through a developmentally oriented program with language-based, concrete activities. In many kindertartens, language, cognitive, sensory-motor, and social-emotional skills are addressed through play. Small group instruction, learning centers, and whole group language activities are used as systematic, planned opportunities for the children to develop in all areas.

In some cases, however, the kindergarten uses structured, whole group, paper-and-pencil activities oriented to academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics. The curriculum in these kindertartens often constitutes a downward extension of the primary grade curriculum and may call for the use of workbooks which are part of a primary level textbook series. Many early childhood professionals have spoken out on the inappropriateness of such a curriculum and have urged widespread adoption of a developmentally appropriate kindergarten curriculum (Bredekamp, 1986).

The question of readiness for kindergarten depends in part on which type of program the child enters. Different approaches to reading and writing, for example, make different demands on a young child. A child may be ready for one type of instructional program, but not another.

A further issue is that of the expectations of the teachers and school system for what the child will accomplish by the end of kindergarten. As expectations become more academic and assessments more formal (for example, standardized tests that compare children to a national sample of kindergarten children) pressure increases to retain children who do not meet expectations or to place them in a transition class between kindergarten and first grade. The assumption is that children who have not achieved a minimum level of cognitive and academic skills prior to first grade will benefit from another year of kindergarten. While that may be true for some, it is not true for many others (Shepard, 1987). Developmentally appropriate programs assume that children vary upon entrance; that all children progress during the program at their own rates and in their own manner; and that children will continue to vary at the end of the program.

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Conclusion

Readiness for kindergarten depends on a child's development of social, perceptual, motor, and language skills expected by the teacher. It also depends on the curriculum's degree of structure, the behavior required by the instructional program, and expectations of what is to be achieved by the end of the program.

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What Should Parents Know About Full-Day Kindergarten?

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Source

Office of Educational
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Increases in the number of single-parent and dual-employment households and the fact that most children spend a large part of the day away from home signal significant changes in American family life compared to a generation ago. These changes in American society and in education over the last 20 years have contributed to the popularity of all-day, every-day kindergarten programs in many communities. Studies show that parents favor a full-day program that reduces the number of transitions kindergartners experience in a typical day. Research also suggests that many children benefit academically and socially during the primary years from participation in full-day, compared to half-day, kindergarten programs. This brochure discusses the trend in full-day kindergarten and provides an overview of full-day versus half-day programs.

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Why Is There a Trend Toward Full-Day Kindergarten?

Families who find it difficult to schedule kindergarten and a child care program during the day are especially attracted to a full-day program. Full-day kindergarten is also popular with schools because it eliminates the need to provide buses and crossing guards at midday. In many areas, both public and private preschool programs offer full-day kindergarten. Still, some educators, policymakers, and parents prefer half-day, every-day kindergarten. They argue that a half-day program is less expensive and provides an adequate educational and social experience for young children while orienting them to school, especially if they have attended preschool. Many districts thus offer both half-day and full-day kindergarten programs when possible, but the trend is clearly in the direction of full-day kindergarten.

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What Does the Research Show?

Research studies confirm that attendance in full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits for students, at least in the primary grades. Early studies seemed to offer little reliable evidence one way or the other because they used small samples or unique populations, failed to use rigorous standards, or concentrated almost exclusively on academic outcomes (as opposed to children's attitudes toward school, for example).

Some researchers have found a broad range of effects, including a positive relationship between participation in full-day kindergarten and later school performance. After comparing similar half-day and full-day programs in a statewide longitudinal study, Cryan and others (1992) found that full-day kindergartners exhibited more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers, and reflectiveness than half-day kindergartners. They were also more likely to approach the teacher, and they expressed less withdrawal, anger, shyness, and blaming behavior than half-day kindergartners. In general, children in full-day programs exhibited more positive behaviors than did pupils in half-day or alternate-day programs. Similar results have been found in other studies as well.

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Related Articles **What Makes a Full-Day Program Effective?**

[What Should Be Learned In Kindergarten?](#)

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Full-day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics indepth, reduces the ratio of transition time to class time, provides for greater continuity of day-to-day activities, and provides an environment that favors a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach.

Many experts feel that seat work, worksheets, and early instruction in reading or other academic subjects are largely inappropriate in kindergarten. By contrast, developmentally appropriate, child-centered all-day kindergarten programs:

- Integrate new learning with past experiences through project work and through mixed-ability and mixed-age grouping in an unhurried setting.
- Involve children in firsthand experience and informal interaction with objects, other children, and adults.
- Emphasize language development and appropriate preliteracy experiences.
- Work with parents to share information about their children, build an understanding of parent and teacher roles, emphasize reading to children in school and at home, and set the stage for later parent-teacher partnerships.
- Offer a balance of small group, large group, and individual activities.
- Assess students' progress through close teacher observation and systematic collection and examination of students' work, often using portfolios.
- Develop children's social skills, including conflict resolution strategies.

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Conclusion

Observers of trends in kindergarten scheduling argue that changing the length of the kindergarten day is not as important as making sure that all kindergartners are provided with developmentally and individually appropriate learning environments, regardless of whether these programs are full day or half day.

Recent research supports the effectiveness of full-day kindergarten programs that are developmentally appropriate, indicating that they have academic and behavioral benefits for young children. In full-day programs, less hectic instruction geared to student needs and appropriate assessment of student progress contributes to the effectiveness of the program. While these can also be characteristics of high-quality half-day programs, many children seem to benefit academically and behaviorally from all-day kindergarten. Of course, the length of the school day is only one dimension of the kindergarten experience. Other important issues include the nature of the kindergarten curriculum and the quality of teaching.

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Where Can I Get More Information?

The following organizations offer information on the topic of kindergarten, as well as other information about early childhood education:

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and Early Childhood Education**

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This brochure is based on the [1995 ERIC Digest](#), Full-Day Kindergarten Programs, written by Dianne Rothenberg, Associate Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

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Full-Day or Half-Day Kindergarten?

Author: Dianne Rothenberg

Credits

The majority of five-year-olds in the United States today are more accustomed to being away from home much of the day, more aware of the world around them, and more likely to spend much of the day with peers than were children of previous generations (Herman 1984). These factors, plus the demonstrated ability of children to cope with a longer day away from home, have created a demand in many communities for full-day kindergarten programs.

Source

ERIC Clearinghouse on
Elementary and Early
Childhood Education,
Urbana, Ill.

This Digest examines how changing family patterns have affected the full-day/half-day kindergarten issue, discusses why schools are currently considering alternative scheduling, and describes the advantages and disadvantages of each type of program.

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Changes In Family Patterns

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Among the changes that make full-day kindergarten attractive to many families are the following:

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- An increase in the number of working parents. The number of mothers of children under six who work outside the home increased 34 percent from 1970 to 1980 (Evans and Marken 1983). In 1984, 48 percent of children under six had mothers in the labor force (The National Commission on Working Women 1985)
- An increase in the number of children with preschool or day care experience. Since the mid-1970s most children have had some kind of preschool experience in Head Start, day care, private preschools, or in early childhood programs in the public schools. These experiences have provided children's first encounters with daily organized instructional and social activities before kindergarten (Herman 1984)
- An increase in the influence of television and family mobility. These two factors have produced 5-year-olds who seem more knowledgeable about their world and are apparently more ready for a full-day school experience than the children of previous generations
- Renewed interest in academic preparation for later school success. Even when both do not work outside the home, parents are interested in the contribution of early childhood programs (including full-day kindergarten) to later school success.

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Schools and Full-Day Kindergarten

School systems are interested in alternative scheduling partly for the reasons listed above and partly for reasons related to finances and school space availability. Among the reasons considered:

- State school funding formulas. Some states provide more state aid for all-day students, although seldom enough to completely pay the extra costs of full-day kindergarten programs. Other states allow only half-day state aid. Funding formulas would have to change in order for these schools to benefit financially from all-day kindergarten
- Busing and other transportation costs. Eliminating the need for noon bus trips and crossing guards saves the school system money
- Availability of classroom space and teachers. As school enrollment declines, many districts have the extra classroom space and enough qualified teachers to offer full-day kindergarten

In addition, school districts are interested in responding to parents' requests for full-day kindergarten. In New York City, for example, parents offered this option were overwhelmingly in favor of the plan, initially creating waiting lists of thousands of children ("Woes Plague New York's All-Day Kindergartens" 1983).

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Advantages of Full-Day Programs

Herman (1984) believes full-day programs provide a relaxed, unhurried school day with more time for a variety of experiences, for screening and assessment opportunities, and for quality interaction between adults and students.

While the long-term effects of full-day kindergarten are inconclusive, Stinard's review of 10 research studies indicates that students taking part in full-day programs demonstrate strong academic advantages as much as a year later (1982). Stinard found that full-day students performed as well or better than half-day students in every study with no significant adverse effects.

A recent longitudinal study of full-day kindergarten in the Evansville-Vanderberg, Ohio, School District indicates that fourth graders maintained the academic advantage gained during full-day kindergarten (Humphrey 1983).

School districts that have planned a developmentally appropriate, non-academic curriculum with well-paced activities have reported few problems with full-day scheduling (Evans 1984; Stinard 1982).

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Disadvantages of Full-Day Programs

Critics point out that full-day programs are expensive because they require additional teaching staff and aides to maintain an acceptable child-adult ratio. These costs may or may not be offset by transportation savings and, in some cases, additional state aid.

Other requirements of full-day kindergarten, including the use of more classroom space, may be difficult to satisfy in districts where kindergarten or primary grade enrollment is increasing and school buildings have been sold.

In addition to citing added expense and space requirements as problems, opponents argue that full-day programs may become too academic, concentrating on basic skills before children are ready. In addition, they are concerned that one half-day of an all-day program may become merely child care.

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Advantages of Half-Day Programs

Many educators still prefer half-day, everyday kindergarten. They argue that a half-day program can provide high quality educational and social experience for young children while orienting them adequately to school.

Specifically, half-day programs are viewed as providing continuity and systematic experience with less probability of stress than full-day programs. Proponents of the half-day approach believe that, given the 5-year-old's attention span, level of interest, and home ties, a half day offers ample time in school and allows more time for the young child to play and interact with adults and other children in less-structured home or child care settings (Finkelstein 1983).

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Disadvantages of Half-Day Programs

Disadvantages of half-day programs include disrupting children midday to move them from one program to another and inconveniencing parents who must arrange transportation if busing is not provided by the school. Even if provided, schools may find the extra trip expensive. In addition, the half-day kindergartner may have little opportunity to benefit from activities such as assemblies or field trips.

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Conclusion

The length of the school day is only one dimension of the kindergarten experience. Other important issues include the nature of the kindergarten curriculum and the quality of teaching. In general, research suggests that, as long as the curriculum is developmentally appropriate and intellectually stimulating, either full- or half-day scheduling can provide an adequate introduction to school.

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This Digest was prepared for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, 1984.

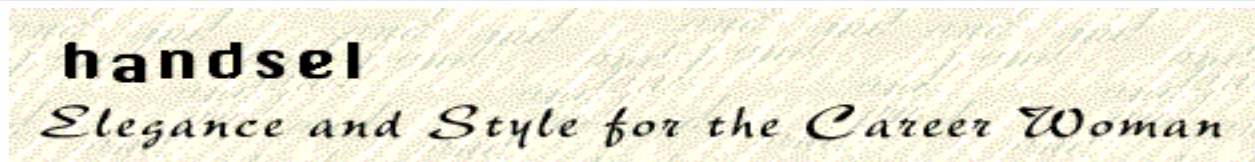
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Escalating Kindergarten Curriculum

Authors: Lorrie A. Shepard and Mary Lee Smith

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The practice of kindergarten retention is increasing dramatically. In some districts, as many as 60% of kindergartners are judged to be unready for first grade. These children are provided with alternative programming: developmental kindergarten (followed by regular kindergarten), transition or pre-first grade, or the repeating of kindergarten.

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An extra year before first grade is intended to protect unready children from entering too soon into a demanding academic environment where, it is thought, they will almost surely experience failure. The extra year is meant to be a time when immature children can grow and develop learning readiness skills, and children with deficient prereading skills can strengthen them. When parents are asked to agree to retention or transition placement, they are often told that with an extra year to grow, their children will move to the top of their classes and become leaders.

Contents

Advocates of kindergarten retention are undoubtedly well-intentioned. They see retention as a way for the school to respond to children's enormous differences in background, developmental stages, and aptitude. They view retention as a means of preventing failure before it occurs.

[What Research Says About Retention](#)

What Research Says About Retention

[Social Stigma of Retention](#)

The research on kindergarten retention which we conducted from 1984-88 led to three major findings:

[The Escalating Kindergarten Curriculum](#)

1. Kindergarten retention does nothing to boost subsequent academic achievement;
2. Regardless of what the extra year may be called, there is a social stigma for children who attend an extra year;
3. Retention actually fosters inappropriate academic demands in first grade.

[Alternatives To Retention](#)

We have located 14 controlled studies that document effects of kindergarten retention. Six were included in Gredler's (1984) major review of research on transition rooms, and eight were newly identified empirical studies. The dominant finding is one of no difference between retained and promoted children. Gredler concluded that at-risk children promoted to first grade performed as well or better than children who spent an extra year in transition rooms. In another study, retained children were matched with promoted children. At the end of first grade, children in the two groups did not differ on standardized math scores or on teacher ratings of reading and math achievement, learner self-concept, social maturity, and attention span (Shepard and Smith, 1985).

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Though many retention advocates cite findings that seem to be positive, these studies are often flawed. A major flaw is the absence of a control group. A control group is a critical element in the process of determining differences between children who have been promoted and children who have been retained or placed in transition classes. Studies with control groups consistently show that readiness gains do not persist into the next grade.

Children end up at approximately the same percentile rank compared to their new grade peers as they would have had they stayed with their age peers. Furthermore, young and at-risk students who are promoted perform as well in first grade as do retained students.

Tests that are used to determine readiness are not sufficiently accurate to justify extra-year placements. For

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[What Should Be Learned In Kindergarten?](#)

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example, Kaufman and Kaufman (1972) have provided the only reliability data on the widely used Gesell School Readiness Test. They found a standard error of measurement equivalent to six months; in other words, a child who is measured to be at a developmental level of 4 1/2 years, and thus unready for school, could easily be at a development level of 5 years, and fully ready. As many as 30-50% of children will be falsely identified as unready (Shepard & Smith, 1986). Kindergarten teachers are generally unaware of these end results. They know only that retained children do better than they did in their first year of kindergarten. In the short run, teachers see progress: longer attention spans, better compliance with classroom rules, and success with paper and pencil tasks that were a struggle the year before. But these relatively few academic benefits do not usually persist into later grades.

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Social Stigma of Retention

Retained children understand that because of something that is wrong with them, they cannot go on with their classmates. Retained children know that they are not making normal progress. They also know the implicit meaning of placement in ability groups such as "the bluebird reading group."

Kindergarten retention is traumatic and disruptive for children. This conclusion is supported by our extensive interviews with parents of retained children. Most parents report significant negative emotional effects associated with retention. Parents' qualitative assessments of their retained children also support our arguments about the social stigma of retention. Kindergarten retention also has a negative consequence over the long run. Children who are too old for their grade are much more likely than their classmates to drop out of school.

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The Escalating Kindergarten Curriculum

The fad to flunk kindergartners is the product of inappropriate curriculum. For the last 20 years, there has been a persistent escalation of academic demand on kindergartners and first-graders. In one survey, 85% of elementary principals indicated that academic achievement in kindergarten has medium or high priority in their schools (Educational Research Service, 1986). Many middle-class parents who visit their child's school convey the message that their only criterion for judging a teacher's effectiveness is the teacher's success in advancing their child's reading accomplishments. What was formerly expected for the next grade has been shoved downward into the lower grade. More academics borrowed from the next grade is not necessarily better learning. A dozen national organizations have issued position statements decrying the negative effects of a narrow focus on literacy and mathematical proficiency in the earliest grades (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988).

Many kindergarten teachers acknowledge that extra-year programs would be unnecessary if children went on to a flexible, child-centered first grade. But educators do not express an awareness that retention may actually contribute to the escalation of curriculum. Teachers naturally adjust what they teach to the level of their students. If many children are older and read, then teachers will not teach as if the room were full of five-year-olds. The subtle adjustment of curricular expectations to the capabilities of an older, faster-moving group is demonstrated in the research literature on school entrance ages (Shepard & Smith, 1988). The victims of inappropriate curriculum are the children judged inadequate by its standards: children who can't stay in the lines and sit still long enough.

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Alternatives To Retention

One alternative can be found in schools where teachers and principals are committed to adapting curriculum and instructional practices to a wide range of individual differences. In such schools, a child who is not yet proficient is not failed. The kindergarten teacher begins at the child's level and moves him along to the extent possible. The first-grade teacher picks up where the kindergarten teacher left off. In between-grade arrangements, children move freely across grade boundaries in such activities as cross-age tutoring or student visits to the next grade for three hours a week. The average standardized achievement test scores for third graders in these schools are no different from those of students in high-retaining schools.

Schools with appropriate curriculum and collegial understandings among teachers and principals make retention unnecessary. Once the larger context of curriculum escalation is understood, teachers and principals may have greater incentive to resist the pressures and accountability culture that render more and more children "unready."

Reprinted with permission from the Summer, 1988 issue of AMERICAN EDUCATOR, the quarterly journal of the American Federation of Teachers. Adapted by Jeanette Allison Hartman.

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What Your Child Should be Learning In School

Draft Standards From The State of California Academic Standards Commission

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Introduction

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Standards are as important in education as they are in all other facets of our lives. When academic standards are adopted in California, in conjunction with assessments, they will have the power to transform schooling. By themselves, academic standards are not a cure-all, but setting them is the crucial first step.

For these reasons, the Commission for the Establishment of Academic Content and Performance Standards was created. Its responsibility is to develop, for the first time in California, world-class academic content and performance standards for all students, in all grades, K-12. The draft content standards contained in this document represent the first fruits of its difficult and important work to date. These reading & writing and mathematics standards attempt to define excellence; they challenge all of us to recognize--and nurture--the intellectual potential that all students possess.

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Building an "ideal" set of standards in reading & writing and mathematics has meant analyzing and drawing upon the best components from solid standards that have been tested in the field. No single standard model would do. The draft standards in this publication are borne of standards models from California, including the Education Round Table Standards for High School Graduates and Challenge District Standards; state standards from Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, Texas, Virginia, and Washington; local standards from Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina and Chicago; other standards models such as Core Knowledge, the International Baccalaureate Program, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and New Standards; and international models from Hungary, Japan, and Singapore. As the Commission moves forward, it will continue to benchmark its documents against these and still other state and international models to ensure that California's model is the best of the best.

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The following standards represent the draft of the blueprint for what California students should be learning and includes everything from phoemic awareness in Kindergarten to conducting multi-step information searches using local and wide-area networks to probability and statistics in the 12th grade. The depth and breadth of this standard will be of interest to parents nationwide, not just in California.

The public review process in happening during the Summer of 1997 and the standards are expected to be final in the fall. If you have comments on these standards for the authors you may contact them at: comments.asc@ocde.ca.gov

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Math: Kindergarten

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Mathematics is a language we use every day, often without knowing it. It builds and draws on conceptual understanding and skills, and helps us make decisions and solve problems. In this draft document we have tried to connect the notion of problem solving to conceptual understanding and skill development by embedding it within the content strands at every grade. Given here are only some of the ways you will see this exemplified. Students are asked to:

- ask relevant questions about problem situations
- decide between relevant and extraneous information
- choose appropriate operations tools and approaches to problem situations
- decide whether an exact or approximate answer is called for
- apply specific techniques in new situations
- explain, check, justify, prove, and judge the reasonableness of results
- create new approaches and connect knowledge and understanding in new ways

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Number Sense

1. Students understand and relate a sense of numbers and quantity in useful ways.

1.1 recognize, count, group, name, and order numbers (through 30), objects, and simple events

1.2 compare sets containing 20 objects using one-to-one correspondence and describe the results

1.3 represent a number (0 to 10) through the use of physical models, word names, and symbols (e.g., count the number of items of a set and select the corresponding numeral)

1.4 divide sets of up to 12 objects into two, three, and four equal-sized groups and describe results

1.5 identify common coins (penny, nickel, dime, quarter) and the value of each

2. Students understand and describe simple addition and subtraction situations.

2.1 use up to 10 objects to add and subtract whole numbers and to model situations involving addition and subtraction

2.2 determine the number of objects remaining when one object is added or subtracted from a set of objects

Task/Assignment

Which set has more objects, fewer objects, or do they have the same number of objects? Explain how you know.

Use oral language and physical materials to show how to use numbers in order to solve problems. For example, a student could say, "I have two red buttons and three yellow buttons, and that makes five." Or, "I have four blocks so I need one more to have five."

Symbols and Algebra

1. Students ask and answer questions involving quantity derived from pictures or situations.

1.1 identify whether things would be added or subtracted when prompted by a picture or situation

1.2 recognize and interpret + and - symbols

Measurement and Geometry

1. Students demonstrate an understanding of quantity and measurement by comparing size.

1.1 identify the instruments used to measure length (ruler), weight (scale), time (clock, calendar), and temperature (thermometer)

1.2 make direct comparisons or use nonstandard units to measure length/height (shorter, longer, taller), weight (lighter, heavier), temperature (colder, hotter)

1.3 compare the volumes of two given containers by using concrete materials (e.g., jelly beans, sand, water, and rice)

2. Students describe and tell time using major units on clocks and calendars.

2.1 measure and tell time using analog and digital clocks to the nearest half hour and demonstrate understanding of morning, afternoon, and night

2.2 measure, describe, and tell time using calendars (e.g., days of the week, months of the year, seasons)

3. Students identify common geometric objects in their environment and describe their features.

3.1 identify and describe geometric objects (circle, triangle, square, rectangle, cube, sphere, cone) in the environment (e.g., clock faces, balls, doorways) and describe their position (e.g., next to, top/bottom)

3.2 classify, compare, sequence, and sort plane and solid objects by common attributes (e.g., color, position, shape, size, roundness, number of corners)

Functions

1. Students sort objects and identify, create, describe, and extend simple patterns.

1.1 sort objects by attribute (e.g., color, shape, size) and identify the attribute (e.g., all these balls are green, those are red)

1.2 find the element of a set that does not belong and explain why it does not belong

1.3 identify and describe patterns of symbols, shapes, and objects (e.g., patterns on a calendar; counting by five's and tens; 2 circles-square-, 2 circles-square-...)

1.4 extend and create simple patterns of symbols, shapes, and objects

Statistics, Data Analysis, and Probability

1. Students collect and record information about their environment.

1.1 notice and talk about quantities in the environment (e.g., How many students are wearing red? brown? blue?)

1.2 collect information and record the results using objects, pictures, or picture graphs

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Word Analysis & Systematic Vocabulary Development

Draft Standards From The State of California Academic Standards Commission

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Students understand the basic components of written materials and are able to hear and manipulate the discrete sounds in words.

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KINDERGARTEN:

Concepts About Print:

- 1.1. identify the front cover, back cover and title page of a book
- 1.2. follow words from left to right and top to bottom of a printed page
- 1.3. explain that printed materials provide information
- 1.4. recognize that sentences in print are made up of separate words
- 1.5. distinguish letters from words
- 1.6 . recognize and name all upper and lower-case letters

Phonemic Awareness:

- 1.7. distinguish and use initial consonants and the final sound in single-syllable words
- 1.8. distinguish long and short vowel sounds in orally stated single-syllable words
- 1.9. blend vowel-consonant sounds orally to make words or syllables
- 1.10. identify and produce rhyming words in response to spoken words
- 1.11. distinguish orally stated one-syllable words into shared beginning, middle or ending sounds (e.g., pit/pat; bit/bat)
- 1.12. track auditorily each word in a sentence, each syllable in a word and each sound in real and nonsense words

Decoding and Word Recognition:

- 1.13. demonstrate understanding that every spoken word consists of a sequence

of basic speech sounds and a sequence of letters represents a sequence of sounds

1.14. match all consonant and short vowel sounds to appropriate letters

1.15. read simple one-syllable and high frequency (sight) words

1.16. understand that as letters of words change, so do the sounds and the meanings of the words (alphabetic principle)

Students understand the organization and contents of books, and use phonics, syllabication, and word relationships to decode and pronounce new words.

| GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Concepts About Print:</p> <p>1.1. match oral words to printed words</p> <p>1.2. identify the title and author of a book</p> <p>1.3. identify letters, words and sentences</p> <p>1.4. use knowledge of basic capitalization and punctuation when reading</p> <p>Phonemic Awareness:</p> <p>1.5. count the number of syllables in a word and sounds in syllables</p> <p>1.6. blend letter-sounds into one to three syllable words (/c/a/t= cat)</p> <p>1.7. segment words into letter sounds in one to three syllable words (e.g. cat/=c/a/t)</p> <p>1.8. create and state a series of rhyming words</p> <p>Use Decoding and Word Recognition to Determine Meanings of Words:</p> <p>1.9. demonstrate the sounds made by letters and letter combinations when reading meaningful and nonsense words</p> | <p>Decoding and Word Analysis:</p> <p>1.1. identify and use knowledge of spelling patterns such as diphthongs, and special vowel spellings when reading</p> <p>1.2. apply knowledge of syllabication rules when reading (e.g., compound words, prefix/root word)</p> <p>1.3. decode two-syllable nonsense words and regular multisyllable words</p> <p>1.4. recognize common abbreviations (e.g., Jan., Sun., Rt., St.)</p> <p>1.5. identify and correctly use regular plurals (e.g., s, es, ies) and irregular plurals (e.g., fly/flies, wife/wives)</p> <p>Use Decoding and Word Recognition to Determine Meanings of Words:</p> <p>1.6. use knowledge of common antonyms and synonyms to determine meaning of words</p> | <p>Decoding and Word Analysis:</p> <p>1.1. distinguish syllable breaks phonemically</p> <p>1.2. know and use complex word families when reading (e.g., ight)</p> <p>1.3. use knowledge of suffixes and prefixes when reading (e.g., dis, non, in, ness, tion, able)</p> <p>Use Decoding and Word Recognition to Determine Meanings of Words:</p> <p>1.4. use knowledge of homonyms, antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine meaning of words</p> | <p>Use Decoding and Word Recognition to Determine Meanings of Words:</p> <p>1.1. apply knowledge of word origins, derivations, synonyms, antonyms, and idioms to determine meaning of words and phrases</p> <p>1.2. use knowledge of root words to determine denotations and connotations of unknown or unfamiliar words within a passage</p> <p>1.3. use knowledge of prefixes (e.g., un, re, pre, bi, mis, dis) and suffixes (e.g., er, est, ful, ly, ness, less, ous, y) to determine meanings of words</p> <p>1.4. use knowledge of common diacritical markings in the dictionary</p> |



Reading Comprehension

Draft Standards From The State of California Academic Standards Commission

[Credits](#)

Students identify the basic facts and ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed drawing on such strategies as generating questions and comparing information to prior knowledge.

Source

State of California
Academic Standards
Commission

| KINDERGARTEN |
|---|
| 2.1. use pictures and context to make predictions about story content |
| 2.2. connect information and events in texts to life experiences |
| 2.3. retell familiar stories |
| 2.4. clarify meaning by asking and answering questions about essential elements of text |

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Students identify the basic facts and ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed, drawing on such strategies as generating essential questions and comparing information from several sources.

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| GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 |
|---|--|---|--|
| Comprehension & Analysis: | Structural Features of Informational Materials: | Structural Features of Informational Materials: | Structural Features of Informational Materials: |
| 2.1. respond to who, what, where, when, and how questions | 2.1. identify and use sequential or logical order of elements to gain meaning from expository text | 2.1. use titles, table of contents, chapter headings, glossaries, and indexes to locate information in text | 2.1. identify and use text and graphic features such as topic sentences, key words, diagrams, illustrations, charts, and maps to predict and categorize information and to gain meaning from informational materials |
| 2.2. follow simple written instructions | Comprehension & Analysis: | Comprehension & Analysis: | Comprehension & Analysis: |
| 2.3. use context clues to identify word and sentence meanings | 2.2. ask clarifying questions concerning essential textual elements of stories (why, what-if, how) | 2.2. ask and answer how, why, and what-if questions and support answers by connecting background knowledge with literal and inferential information found in text | 2.2. use different reading strategies to comprehend text, such as skimming and scanning and finding information to support particular ideas |
| 2.4. confirm predictions about what will happen next in text by "reading part that tells" | 2.3. restate facts and details in text to inform and organize ideas | 2.3. demonstrate comprehension by pin-pointing answers in text | 2.3. know and use the functions of language |
| 2.5. relate background knowledge to textual information | 2.4. interpret information from diagrams, charts, and graphs | 2.4. summarize major | |
| 2.6. describe the central | | | |

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Literary Analysis and Response

Draft Standards From The State of California Academic Standards Commission

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Students listen and respond to stories based on familiar characters, themes, plots, and setting.

Source

State of California
Academic Standards
Commission

KINDERGARTEN

Structural Features of Literature:

- 3.1. distinguish fantasy from realistic text
- 3.2. identify different text genres, including everyday print materials

such as storybooks, poems, newspapers, signs, labels

Narrative Analysis:

- 3.3. identify characters, settings, and key events

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Students read and respond to a wide variety of children's literature, distinguishing between the structural features of text, and literary terms or elements (theme, plot, setting, and characters).

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| GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|---------|---------|---------|---------|



Writing Strategies

Draft Standards From The State of California Academic Standards Commission

[Credits](#)

Students write words and brief sentences that are legible.

Source

State of California
Academic Standards
Commission

| KINDERGARTEN |
|---|
| <p>Organization & Focus:</p> <p>1.1. use letters and phonetically-spelled words to write about experiences, stories, people, objects, or events</p> <p>1.2. write consonant-vowel-consonant words (demonstrate the alphabetic principle)</p> <p>1.3. write using a left to right, top to bottom progression</p> <p>Penmanship:</p> <p>1.3. write uppercase and lowercase letters independently, attending to form and spatial alignment</p> |

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Students write clear, and coherent sentences and paragraphs that elaborate a central impression, using stages of the writing process.

| GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | |

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Listening & Speaking Strategies

Draft Standards From The State of California Academic Standards Commission

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Students listen and respond to oral messages and speak in clear and coherent sentences.

Source

State of California
Academic Standards
Commission

KINDERGARTEN

- 1.1. understand and follow one-and two-step oral directions
- 1.2. share information, opinions and questions, speaking audibly in coherent, complete sentences

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Students listen and respond critically to oral messages and speak in clear and coherent sentences that guide and inform the listener's understanding of key ideas, using appropriate phrasing, pitch and stress.

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|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Comprehension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 listen attentively by orienting self to speaker1.2. ask questions to clear up confusion about a topic1.3. give, restate and follow simple two-step directions <p>Organization & Delivery of a Speech:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.4. select a focus when speaking1.5. use descriptive words when speaking about people, places, things, and events1.6. read aloud with fluency and comprehension in a manner that sounds like natural speech | <p>Comprehension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1. determine the purpose(s) for listening (e.g., get information, solve problems, for enjoyment)1.2. ask for clarification and explanation of stories and ideas1.3. paraphrase information shared orally by others1.4. give and follow three- and four-step oral directions <p>Organization & Delivery of a Speech:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.5. organize presentations to maintain a clear focus1.6. speak clearly at an understandable pace | <p>Comprehension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1. retell, paraphrase, and explain what has been said by a speaker1.2. connect prior experiences, insights, and ideas to those of a speaker's1.3. respond to questions with appropriate elaboration1.4. identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or instances of onomatopoeia) <p>Group Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.5. work in small groups to make presentations (e.g., specify goals and the best course of action, take turns speaking) | <p>Comprehension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1. ask thoughtful questions and respond to relevant questions with appropriate elaboration in oral settings1.2. summarize major ideas and supporting evidence presented in spoken messages and formal presentations1.3. identify how language use (sayings, usages) reflects regions and cultures1.4. give precise directions and instructions <p>Group Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.5. address a specific problem in a group by specifying the goals, devising alternative |



Speaking Applications (Genres and their Characteristics)

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Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests

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| KINDERGARTEN |
|---|
| 2.1. describe people, places, things, location, size, color, shape and action |
| 2.2. recite short poems, rhymes, and songs |
| 2.3. relate an experience or creative story in a logical sequence |

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Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests that are organized around a coherent thesis statement, demonstrating command of standard English and the organizational and delivery strategies noted above.

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| GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 |
|---|--|---|--|
| 2.1. recite poems, rhymes, songs, and stories | 2.1. recount experiences or present stories that | 2.1. make brief narrative presentations that: | 2.1. make narrative presentations that: |
| 2.2. retell stories using basic story grammar, sequencing story events by answering who, what, where, when, how and why questions | 1) move through a logical sequence of events 2) describe story elements such as characters, plot, and setting | 1) provide a context within which an incident occurs 2) provide insight into why this incident is memorable 3) include well-chosen detail to develop character, setting and/or plot | 1) relate ideas, observations, and/or memories using narrative strategies 2) provide a context to enable the listener to imagine the world of the event or experience 3) provide insight into why this incident is memorable |
| 2.3. relate an important event in life using simple sequencing | 2.2. report on a topic including appropriate facts and details and drawing from several sources of information | 2.2. plan and present dramatic interpretations of experiences, stories, poems, or plays, using clear diction and pitch, tempo, and tone | 2.2. make research presentations that |
| 2.4. provide descriptions with careful attention to sensory detail | | 2.3. make descriptive presentations that use concrete sensory details to present and support unified impressions of people, | 1) frame a key question 2) demonstrate a literal understanding about the topic |

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Oral and Written English Language Conventions

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Students use knowledge of standard English conventions in their oral and written work.

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| KINDERGARTEN |
|--|
| Sentence Structure: 1.1 recognize and use correct word order in sentences when speaking |
| Spelling: 1.2. use phonetic knowledge and sounds of the alphabet to spell independently |

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Students use knowledge of standard English conventions, including punctuation, capitalization, usage, spelling, and sentence and paragraph structure in their oral and written work.

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| GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 |
|---|--|--|---|
| Sentence Structure: 1.1. write and speak in complete, coherent sentences Grammar: 1.2. identify and use singular and plural nouns 1.3. identify and use contractions (e.g., isn't, aren't, can't, won't) and singular possessives (e.g. 's, my/mine, his/her, hers, your/s) in writing and speaking Punctuation: 1.4. use period, exclamation mark or question mark at the end of sentences | Sentence Structure: 1.1 distinguish between complete and incomplete sentences and recognize and use correct word order in written and oral sentences Grammar: 1.2. identify and use various parts of speech, including nouns and verbs in writing and speaking Punctuation: 1.3. use commas in greeting and closures in a letter and with dates and words in a series 1.4. use quotation marks | Sentence Structure: 1.1. demonstrate understanding of, and use, complete and concise declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in writing and speaking Grammar: 1.2. identify and use subject/verb agreement, pronouns, adjectives, compound words, and articles in writing and speaking 1.3. use past, present, and future verb tenses in writing and speaking 1.4. identify and use subject and predicate of single-clause sentences in | Sentence Structure: 1.1. use simple and compound sentences in writing and speaking 1.2. combine short, related sentences with appositives, participial phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases Grammar: 1.3. identify and use regular and irregular verbs, adverbs, propositions, and coordinating conjunctions in writing and speaking |



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Top 10 Signs of a Good Kindergarten Classroom

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[Encouraging Creativity in Early Childhood Classrooms](#)

[Preventing and Resolving Parent-Teacher Differences](#)

Kindergarten is a time for children to expand their love of learning, their general knowledge, their ability to get along with others, and their interest in reaching out to the world. While kindergarten marks an important transition from preschool to the primary grades, it is important that children still get to be children -- getting kindergarteners ready for elementary school does not mean substituting academics for play time, forcing children to master first grade "skills," or relying on standardized tests to assess children's success. Kindergarten "curriculum" actually includes such events as snack time, recess, and individual and group activities in addition to those activities we think of as traditionally educational. Developmentally appropriate kindergarten classrooms encourage the growth of children's self-esteem, their cultural identities, their independence and their individual strengths. Kindergarten children will continue to develop control of their own behavior through the guidance and support of warm, caring adults. At this stage, children are already eager to learn and possess an innate curiosity. Teachers with a strong background in early childhood education and child development can best provide for children what they need to grow physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Here are 10 signs of a good kindergarten classroom:

1. Children are playing and working with materials or other children. They are not aimlessly wandering or forced to sit quietly for long periods of time.
2. Children have access to various activities throughout the day, such as block building, pretend play, picture books, paints and other art materials, and table toys such as legos, pegboards, and puzzles. Children are not all doing the same things at the same time.
3. Teachers work with individual children, small groups, and the whole group at different times during the day. They do not spend time only with the entire group.
4. The classroom is decorated with children's original artwork, their own writing with invented spelling, and dictated stories.

5. Children learn numbers and the alphabet in the context of their everyday experiences. Exploring the natural world of plants and animals, cooking, taking attendance, and serving snack are all meaningful activities to children.
6. Children work on projects and have long periods of time (at least one hour) to play and explore. Filling out worksheets should not be their primary activity.
7. Children have an opportunity to play outside every day that weather permits. This play is never sacrificed for more instructional time.
8. Teachers read books to children throughout the day, not just at group story time.
9. Curriculum is adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help. Because children differ in experiences and background, they do not learn the same things at the same time in the same way.
10. Children and their parents look forward to school. Parents feel safe sending their child to kindergarten. Children are happy; they are not crying or regularly sick.

Individual kindergarten classrooms will vary, and curriculum will vary according to the interests and backgrounds of the children. But all developmentally appropriate kindergarten classrooms will have one thing in common: the focus will be on the development of the child as a whole.

Additional Resources:

Good teaching practices for older preschoolers and kindergarteners. 1990. Washington, DC: NAEYC #522. 50¢ each/100 for \$10. Spanish edition, *Prácticas de enseñanza apropiados para niños mayores en preescolar y kinder*, #523.

Peck, J., G. McCaig & M.E. Sapp, *Kindergarten policies: What is best for children?* Washington, DC: NAEYC. #141/\$6.

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