



PREPARING FLORIDA CHILDREN FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

The B.E.S.T. Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) are literacy standards for Florida students that will shape their education and make Florida the most literate state in the nation. The B.E.S.T. Standards will pave the way for Florida students to receive a world-class education and prepare them for a successful future.

Education leaders across the state of Florida improved the academic content standards, creating new expectations for what students need to know and be able to do. These benchmarks are goals that students are expected to achieve by the end of the school year. The B.E.S.T. Standards are designed to ensure that ALL students reach their greatest potential.

THESE STANDARDS EMPHASIZE:

- Explicit and systematic phonics instruction
- Critical thinking skills
- A deep respect for literature from historic time periods
- Knowledge building through content-rich texts

Preparing your child for success begins in Kindergarten and continues as your child moves up through each grade. This guide will support parents and families with children in first grade by helping you:

LEARN

about the B.E.S.T. Standards and why they matter for your child.

TALK

with your child's teachers about what he/she will be learning in the classroom.

LOCATE

activities and resources to support your child's learning in practical ways at home.

UNDERSTAND

important educational (academic) words that you will see in your child's grade-level standards.

LEARN ABOUT THE FIRST GRADE STANDARDS

YOUR CHILD WILL EXPLORE THE WORLD THROUGH TEXT BY:

- Matching letters and sounds to sound out and write simple words. Students should be able to sound out and write words with short vowel sounds, final -e, common long vowel spellings, blends and r-controlled vowels.
- Reading and writing first grade high frequency words, decodable or not, with automaticity.
- Writing all letters correctly.
- Writing narrative, opinion and expository texts that follow rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling.

IN READING AND WRITING, YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Retell stories, including characters, setting and sequence of events.
- Retell informational texts, including the topic and the important details.
- Demonstrate understanding of the topic of the informational text by using the text features.
- Figure out the meaning of unknown words using picture clues, context clues and background knowledge.
- Compare and contrast two texts on the same topic.



LOCATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

- ✓ Read aloud to your child for 20 minutes each day. Find books based on topics that your child is interested in and that they would like to become an expert on. Talk about what is happening in the text. Ask what they are learning.
- ✓ Have fun with the stories you read! Use different voices. Make sound effects and funny faces. Act out the stories. March, dance or move around as the characters.
- ✓ Be frequent visitors to your local public library. Let him or her see you choosing, checking out and enjoying books.
- ✓ Be a reading role model. If your child sees you reading, he/she will want to learn to read too.
- ✓ Everywhere you go, tuck at least one little book in your bag. Pull it out to enjoy together anytime you can.
- ✓ Listen to your child read and reread a decodable text at their reading level to build their automaticity.
- ✓ Have your child engage in real-world writing. They can write the grocery list, write a letter to a family member or write down their list of chores. Have your child sound out the words and write the letters they hear.
- ✓ Encourage your child to give detailed responses during conversations. Ask your child questions about what he/she sees and experiences. Be sure your questions call for sentence answers (more than yes/no answers).

FIRST GRADE SUGGESTED BOOK LIST



Daffodowndilly by A.A. Milne

Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau by Dan Yaccarino

Madeline by Ludwig Bemelmans

The Three Little Pigs by James Halliwell-Phillipps

Eletelephony by Laura Richards

From Seed to Pumpkin by Wendy Pfeffer and James Graham

***My Name is Celia/Me llamo Celia:
The Life of Celia Cruz/la vida de Celia Cruz***
by Monica Brown and Rafael Lopez

The Tortoise and the Hare by Aesop

A Picture Book of Benjamin Franklin by David Adler

How People Learned to Fly by Fran Hodgkins

Police Officers by Paulette Bourgeois and Kim LaFave

Chickens Don't Fly by Laura Lyn Disiena

I Am Enough by Grace Byers

The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams

Clifford the Big Red Dog by Norman Bridwell

I am Helen Keller by Brad Meltzer

Put Me in the Zoo by Robert Lopshire

The White House by Lloyd Douglas

Danny and the Dinosaur by Syd Hoff

I Wonder by Tana Hoban

The Slug by Elise Gravel

Tooth By Tooth: Comparing Fangs, Tusks, and Chompers
by Sara Levine

Drum Dream Girl by Margarita Engle

Keep a Poem in Your Pocket by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers

SUPPLEMENTAL READING OPTIONS

A Child's Garden of Verses
by Robert Louis Stevenson

A First Book of the Sea
by Nicola Davies

Little House in the Big Woods
by Laura Ingalls Wilder

The Lion and the Mouse
by Aesop

The Emperor's New Clothes
by Hans Christian Andersen

The Very Hungry Caterpillar
by Eric Carle

Love You Forever
by Robert Munsch

The Tale of Peter Rabbit
by Beatrix Potter

Stellaluna
by Janel/Cannon

The Ugly Duckling
by Hans Christian Andersen

Goodnight Moon
by Margaret Wise Brown

The Kissing Hand
by Audrey Penn



TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Remember, you are your child's first teacher. Think about a conference as a "team meeting" in which you will discover the special contributions each of you can bring to your first grader's success. Here are some questions you could ask to prompt discussions:

In the area of literacy, what are my child's strengths? How are those strengths supported during instruction?

What phonics skills should my child have mastered at this point? Has my child mastered them? Can I see an example of a phonics task that my child is working through?

What topics in connection to science and social studies is my child learning about through reading?

Where is my child struggling and how can I help?

What types of books is my child reading during independent reading? Are they limited to a specific reading level? Can I see an example of the type of texts my child is reading independently?

Can my child show you that they understand what they are reading and learning about through drawing, talking and writing? If not, what challenges are they facing?

EDUCATIONAL (ACADEMIC) WORDS TO KNOW

AUTOMATICITY

When reading, it is the ability to read words quickly and accurately.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (PRIOR KNOWLEDGE)

Information that is important to understanding a situation or problem; what you already know from experience.

DECODING

Translating a word from print to speech by using knowledge of letter-sound relationships; also, the act of reading a new word by sounding it out.

EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION

Teacher/parent-led interactive instruction that is direct and includes a clear explanation of the targeted skill.

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS

A small group of words (300-500) that regularly appear in print. Often, they are referred to as "sight words" as students should be able to recognize these words at a glance.

PHONICS

Teaches students how to connect sounds of letters or groups of letters in order to read words.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The foundation for learning to read. Refers to the ability to work with words orally (the spoken sound) and does not involve print.

READING LEVEL

Independent reading level is the highest level at which a reader has adequate background knowledge for the topic and can read text very quickly and with very few errors.

SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION

A carefully thought out and planned sequence of instruction.

TEXT FEATURES

The parts of a story or article that are not the main body of the text; includes the title, headings and illustrations.

