

Parent Guide

Building a strong foundation
for school success.



FOR
CHILDREN
AGES

**THREE
AND
FOUR**



You are important!

Whether you are a parent, guardian or caregiver, your child needs your help and support to be fully ready for school. This “Parent Guide”, created based on the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, provides information about the standards and ways you can help your child develop.

WHAT IS SCHOOL READINESS?

Each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child’s success.

SCHOOL READINESS SCREENER

Kentucky schools use a common kindergarten entry screener to determine a child’s readiness for school in these developmental areas:

- Approaches to learning
- Health and physical well-being
- Language and communication development
- Social and emotional development
- Cognitive and general knowledge

Please note the screener will NOT be used to determine whether a child is eligible to attend kindergarten.

WHY DOES KENTUCKY SCREEN FOR SCHOOL READINESS?

- To inform school districts, parents, and communities about early learning
- To make informed policy decisions to support early learning experiences for young children
- To establish local goals for program improvement
- To begin collecting data for the Kindergarten through 3rd grade Program Evaluation



APPROACHES TO LEARNING

The way a child engages in learning experiences is referred to as their “Approaches to Learning.” It’s important to understand that:

- Every child learns differently.
- Each child’s approach to learning is unique.
- Some children may be reserved and thoughtful when first engaging in learning experiences while others eagerly join in new activities.

Research identifies Approaches to Learning as one of the most “powerful predictors of later success in school.” This means that young children who develop an early interest and joy in learning are likely to achieve future scholastic success.

THE 3 COMPONENTS OF APPROACHES TO LEARNING:

- Initiative and Curiosity – How curious is a child about learning? How does a child engage in and initiate learning experiences?
- Persistence and Attentiveness – How persistent is a child when engaging in activities? Does a child continue in tasks that are challenging or frustrating?
- Cooperation – Does a child play in groups or pairs based on interest?

EXAMPLES OF APPROACHES TO LEARNING USING THE 3 COMPONENTS:

- Jillian looks intently at the top of a “jack in the box” as the handle is turned by her big brother. (Initiative and Curiosity)
- Dakota tugs on his mother’s skirt when he wants to be picked up. (Persistence and Attentiveness)
- Philip takes turns using cups, bowls and spoons in the sand. (Cooperation)

Throughout this guide, you will see suggestions on how you can recognize and foster your child’s Approaches to Learning. Each page includes activities that you can do with your child to encourage learning in ways that will keep the child interested and engaged.



Arts & Humanities

ARTS AND HUMANITIES STANDARD

Participates and shows interest in a variety of visual arts, dance, music and drama experiences.

Your child's experiences with visual arts, music, dance and drama will enhance their problem-solving skills, encourage relationships with others, and extend their attention span with activities they enjoy.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Opportunity to engage in many types of creative art processes.
- Developing skills in creating various types of art, dance, music, and drama (theater, dramatic play, puppets).
- Opportunities to participate in the creative art process through many activities that involve art (painting, drawing), music, dance, and drama.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

• Encourage Exploration

- Praise and display your child's art. Let your child know how special these creations are!
- Sing along and dance with your child. Encourage your child to describe the music.
- Sing songs with movements together, such as "I'm a Little Teacup" or "Itsy-Bitsy Spider."
- Encourage your child to put on plays, puppet shows, and other performances.
- Use different voice inflections as you read with your child. Help them act out the characters.

• Provide Learning Opportunities

- Painting, Play-Doh, and drawing. Provide your child with a variety of art materials (markers, paint, glue, blank paper, etc.) and space. Don't be afraid to make a mess!
- Expose your child to art created by others – visit museums, look at picture art books together and talk about them.
- Offer your child experiences with a wide variety of music, including jazz, country and classical.
- Attend different types of dance performances with your child and talk about these experiences.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with musical instruments.
- Provide props for your child's pretend play such as dress up clothes or a play kitchen set. Pretend with them!



APPROACHES TO LEARNING: INITIATIVE & CURIOSITY

Encourage your child to explore different ways to make a collage (artwork made of various materials) using paper scraps, ribbon, yarn, glue, tape, and any other items you have handy. This allows your child to take initiative in their planning and follow through with their artistic idea.

English/ Language Arts

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARD 1

Demonstrates general skills and strategies of the communication process.

Your child's communication skills include the ability to express himself/herself, as well as understand others.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Ability to use gestures or symbols to communicate with others.
- Ability to talk with others including expressing feelings and asking questions.
- Use of simple sentences to express themselves.
- Learning more words to describe and understand the world around them.



APPROACHES TO LEARNING: PERSISTENCE AND ATTENTIVENESS

Responding to your child's gestures allows your child to be persistent in their communicating of their wants and needs.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING: COOPERATION

Responding to your child's gestures allows your child to be persistent in their communicating of their wants and needs.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARD 2

Demonstrates general skills and strategies of the listening and observing process.

Your child's communication skills include the ability to listen to others and learn by observing.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Ability to listen and understand the speech of others.
- Ability to follow simple directions.
- Ability to watch, listen and understand what is being said.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

- **Encourage Exploration**
 - Encourage your child to draw. Have them tell you about their picture.
 - Respond to your child's gestures or movements.
 - Have conversations with your child throughout the day. Be sure to listen and respond to your child's statements and questions. Introduce new words when appropriate.
- **Providing Learning Opportunities**
 - Ask your child about their feelings. Provide them words if they do not have the vocabulary to express their emotions. In addition to words like "happy" and "sad", use words like "frustrated," "relieved," and "angry."
 - Ask your child questions about their environment. "Why do you think that happened?" or "What do you think will happen next?" These types of questions provide an opportunity for your child to add new thoughts and to extend conversations.
 - Model correct grammar. Your child will make grammatical errors but do not correct them directly. Instead, model the appropriate grammar.



English/ Language Arts

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARD 3

Demonstrates general skills and strategies for the reading process.

Your child's growing reading skill and interest in books, letters and sounds will help him/her become a better reader in elementary school.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Enjoys and participates in storybook reading.
- Beginning to understand the basic concepts of reading.
- Able to identify some letters of the alphabet, especially those in his/her name.
- Pays attention to how words sound.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

• Encourage Exploration

- Read to your child every day. Make it part of your bedtime routine.
- Encourage your child to read to you. Ask your child to look at the pictures and tell you the story.
- After the story, act it out with your child with each of you playing different roles.

- Be a reader. Children are more likely to read if they see their family members and caregivers reading.
- Talk to your child about the letters of the alphabet but make it fun! Use alphabet books, puzzles, or just the letters in your child's name.

• Provide Learning Opportunities

- While reading to your child, ask your child questions about the story, the pictures, and what he/she thinks will happen next. Talk about parts of the story that relate to your everyday experiences. For example, when reading "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," talk about those times that you have seen caterpillars.
- Provide a wide variety of books. Visit the library and let your child choose different types of books and stories.
- Use audio books as a way to read stories in a different way.
- Have fun rhyming with your child. Sing rhyming songs and read rhyming books together.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING: PERSISTENCE AND ATTENTIVENESS

Include reading a story as part of your child's bedtime routine. Even if you do not finish the whole story, reading a little more each day helps your child to be more attentive in listening and talking about the book.



English/ Language Arts

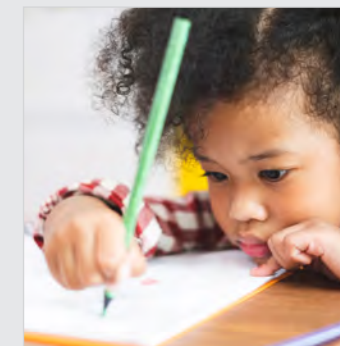
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARD 4

Demonstrates competence in the beginning skills and strategies of the writing process.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Understanding that letters and words have meaning and writing is an important part of communication.
- Early abilities to write begin with scribbles and eventually lead to writing letters and words



WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

• Encourage Exploration

- Ask your child to tell you about their writing.
- Give your child something to write about. For example, making a birthday card for grandma or writing a note for the teacher.
- Encourage, praise and display your child's writing efforts.



• Provide Learning Opportunities

- Encourage your child to write. Provide different types of writing supplies (paper, markers, pencils, crayons, etc.) to make writing interesting and fun.
- Do not worry if your child is not writing all the letters correctly. Those scribbles are good practice!
- Comment on the writing you see in your home: on cereal boxes, in recipes, and on the computer.
- Encourage your child to write his/her name, helping with the spelling if needed.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING: INITIATIVE AND CURIOSITY

Include reading a story as part of when children "write" their thoughts on paper and then tell their "story," they are taking initiative.

Health Education

HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARD

Demonstrates health/mental wellness in individual and cooperative social environments.

Your child is learning about self-care routines, such as washing hands, as well as social skills like getting along with others and playing together.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Ability to care for some of their own needs such as eating healthy foods.
- Developing relationships with other children.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

- **Encourage Exploration**
 - Talk to your child about friends. Provide opportunities to spend time with his/her selected friends.

- Model cooperation talk about how you help your friends and family.
- Encourage your child to be helpful and assist others. For example, picking up toys when playing at a friend's house or helping you with the laundry.
- **Provide Learning Opportunities**
 - Provide opportunities to make healthy choices. ("Would you like apples or peaches with your lunch today?")
 - Assist (if needed) in basic health needs like brushing teeth and washing hands.
 - Provide opportunities to play with other children. Be sure to supervise these play experiences and help the children resolve conflicts that may arise. Help them use words to solve their problems.
 - Plan activities and trips. Talk about how you will spend your day together.



APPROACHES TO LEARNING: INITIATIVE & CURIOSITY

Encourage your child to explore different ways to make a collage (artwork made of various materials) using paper scraps, ribbon, yarn, glue, tape, and any other items you have handy. This allows your child to take initiative in their planning and follow through with their artistic idea.

Mathematics

MATHEMATICS STANDARD

Demonstrates general skills and uses concepts of mathematics.

Your child is growing in the understanding of numbers, shapes, and patterns in the everyday world. This will help develop the math skills needed in elementary school.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Understanding numbers and how they can be used for counting.
- Understanding shapes and how things are organized in space.
- Making comparisons and recognizing patterns and the very beginning understanding of measurement

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

• Encourage Exploration

- While playing with your child, provide opportunities to make comparisons. For example, ask your child who has the most crayons or who has the least amount of juice.
- Point out numbers in your environment and talk about how they are used. Examples: speed limit signs, clocks, and prices on a menu.
- While talking with your child, use words that deal with spatial relationships like “under” and “over” as well as words relating to time like days of the week, yesterday, and tomorrow.
- Encourage your child to describe and sort objects. For example, sorting pennies and nickels into different piles.

• Provide Learning Opportunities

- Count with your child during daily activities. Count the number of towels to be folded or how many cookies you baked.
- Have your child help with activities at home like setting the table.
- Talk about shapes with your child. Concentrate on shapes you see in your home. Shape books can also be fun!
- Play matching games like “Memory” to help your child matching skills.
- Provide opportunities to explore measuring using measuring cups, scales etc. Also let your child “measure” things in fun ways. For example, “How many hops does it take to get to the kitchen?”

APPROACHES TO LEARNING: INITIATIVE AND CURIOSITY

When your child completes different and fun ways to measure things, this shows an interest in the use of math concepts.



Physical Education/ Gross and Fine Motor Skills

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/GROSS AND FINE MOTOR SKILLS STANDARD

Demonstrates basic large and small motor development.

Your child's ability to move his/her body. Includes moving large muscles, such as walking and running, as well as gaining control of small muscle movements such as scribbling and cutting

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Coordination skills that help your child run, jump, and skip.
- Using hands and fingers to do small tasks, such as buttoning, grasping, zipping or writing.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

- **Encourage Exploration**
 - Play together outside at a park or playground.
 - Play outdoor games that include hopping, skipping, and running.
- **Provide Learning Opportunities**
 - Provide opportunities to play with balls, ride trikes and bikes.
 - Help develop small muscles in activities such as creating things with Play-Doh, Legos, scissors and paper.
 - Help and encourage your child to get dressed and learn to use zippers, buttons, and snaps.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING: PERSISTENCE AND ATTENTIVENESS

The small motor skills children develop through tasks at home will help them learn to write when they enter school. They are being persistent in doing these tasks on their own



Science

SCIENCE STANDARD

Demonstrates scientific ways of thinking and working (with wonder and curiosity).



APPROACHES TO LEARNING: INITIATIVE AND CURIOSITY

When children spend time making “discoveries,” they are being curious about the world around them and taking the initiative to learn something new.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Fostering your child’s growing understanding of the world around them.
- Supporting natural curiosity about how things work.
- Ability to solve simple problems.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

- **Encourage Exploration**
 - Spend time with your child in the garden, at the grocery store, going for a walk, and at the petting zoo. Talk about these experiences and encourage your child’s curiosity.
 - Ask about how things they see, smell, or touch are alike or different. Ask how their favorite colors, their toys and art supplies might be alike or different.
 - Help find answers to questions about nature and how things work. (“What’s thunder?” “How do you make ice?”). Feel free to use dictionaries, the internet, or books.
- **Provide Learning Opportunities**
 - Provide opportunities to play with and examine a wide variety of tools, such as magnets, scales, and magnifying glasses.
 - Explore nature together. Take walks, catch bugs, dig in the dirt. Talk about these experiences, and answer their questions.
 - Have your child document these experiences through drawing or writing, in your home: on cereal boxes, in recipes, and on the computer.

Social Studies

SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARD

Demonstrates basic understanding of the world in which they live.

Your child's understanding of the roles of the people in the community is important for their social development.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Ability to identify family, friends and strangers.
- Understanding time as related to past, present and future.
- Understanding that people come from different places.
- Ability to understand simple rules.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD?

• Encourage Exploration

- Reflect on your child's past and future experiences. Talk about what they did at grandma's house and their plans for a play date with a friend.
- Point out changes in the environment – talk about the changing leaves in the fall and the heat in the summer.
- Show that behavior has consequences. "You'll need to pick up the blocks you dumped on the floor before you play with another toy."

• Provide Learning Opportunities

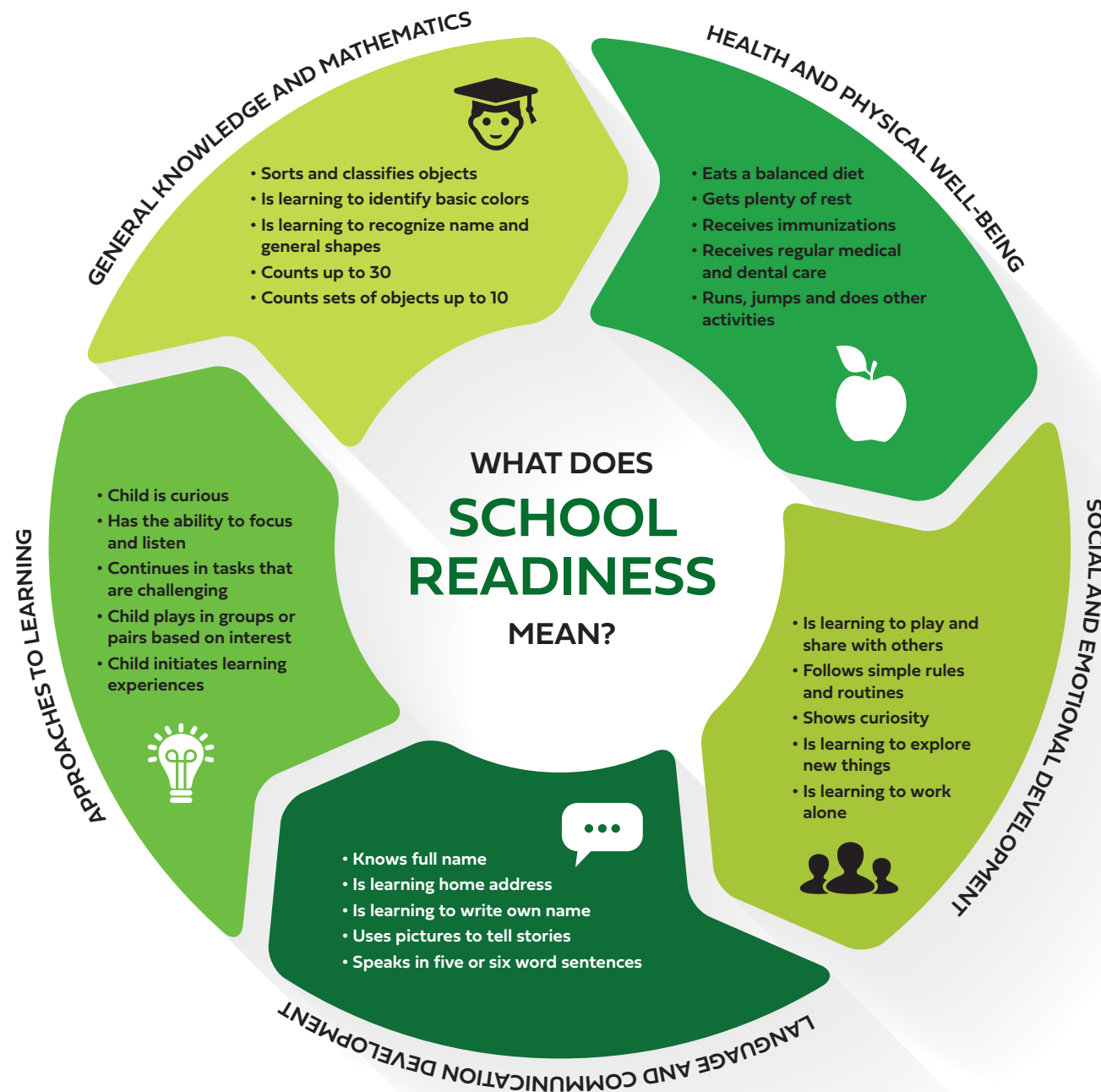
- Introduce your child to maps. Help them draw maps of their room, the backyard, or other places in their world.
- Introduce the concept of money. Have your child help pay at the store and play with play money at home.
- Help your child understand and follow the rules in different settings. For example, "We use quiet voices in the library."
- Provide predictable routines. Predictability helps your child understand and anticipate what is going to happen next.
- Have conversations about your family. Draw pictures of family members and talk about the relationships.
- Talk about how people are the same and different. Consider differences in food choices ("I like pizza and you love hamburgers.") as well as differences in skin color, language, and ability.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING: INITIATIVE AND CURIOSITY

Encourage your child to explore different ways to make a collage (artwork made of various materials) using paper scraps, ribbon, yarn, glue, tape, and any other items you have handy. This allows your child to take initiative in their planning and follow through with their artistic idea.



School Readiness in Kentucky



School readiness means that each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child’s success and ability to be Ready to Grow, Ready to Learn & Ready to Succeed.

The skills listed in the diagram on the left are helpful for children to know before entering Kindergarten. The indicators included represent the hopes and aspirations for incoming students, not the expectations. Kentucky recognizes that children develop and learn at different rates and times. Not every child will master all of the skills and behaviors listed prior to Kindergarten. These skills and behaviors are NOT USED to determine school eligibility. In Kentucky, all children who meet the legal age requirement are entitled to enter public school.

Families, early care and education providers, schools, and community partners must work together to provide developmental experiences that promote growth and learning, to ensure that all children enter school eager and excited to learn. The purpose of this definition is to give parents, child care and preschool, and communities an overview of the expectations of schools for incoming students and to help families and communities prepare children for school. In addition, a readiness profile provides teachers, child care providers, and parents a tool to better inform them on the specific strengths and needs of each individual child.

In 2003, Kentucky released the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards. These standards were developed to help early childhood programs across the state understand appropriate expectations for young children from birth to age five. Using the standards as a guide, programs can improve the quality of their services by providing children with appropriate experiences that support their overall growth and development.

The development of the Early Childhood Standards led to the creation of this document that was originally submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education by a subgroup of the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards Workgroup. This Parent Guide is designed to support families in understanding and using the document, Building a Strong Foundation for School Success: Kentucky’s Early Childhood Standards (Summer, 2003).

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A complete and detailed list of the early childhood standards can be found at <http://kidsnow.ky.gov>

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If you have concerns about your child's development, contact First Steps at (800) 442-0087 or TTY (502) 564-5777. For more information about this publication or to request additional copies, please contact the Governor's Office of Early Childhood at (502) 782-0200.

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