Oklahoma State Department of Education

The Parent's Guide to PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)

Sandy Garrett, State Superintendent

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A Message from
Sandy Garrett,
State Superintendent

As Oklahoma's elected education leader and advocate for children, I am committed to ensuring that all boys and girls in our state have the essential skills needed for a high quality life.

Oklahoma's *Priority Academic Student Skills* (*PASS*) serve as a set of specific school academic standards covering all areas of a student's growth: language, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts.

It is important for you and your school to work together as partners in building a strong foundation of these essential skills. To help you, we have created this parent guide which explains each *Priority Academic Student Skill*.

We have an awesome responsibility in educating our children; they are the future of Oklahoma! This tool will assist you as you partner with us in building a quality life for your child.

All the Best!

Sandy Garrett

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Young children learn best when they are encouraged to use all of the senses as they learn. Teachers use play (games, center activities, creative art experiences, songs and movement, and pretend play) as a means for providing practice of developing knowledge. During large group time, such as the morning circle, children are introduced to new concepts combining many subject areas.

Concepts are embedded in themes that interest young children so that children understand the connections between what they are learning and how it applies to their daily life activities. Because Pre-Kindergartners are strongly connected to their families, teachers should talk with families often and encourage their participation in the classroom. Teachers ensure that classroom learning experiences involve all of the areas of development: intellectual, language, physical, and social/emotional development.

The classroom is typically arranged in learning centers (blocks, science, art, dramatic play, reading, puzzles, for example). Centers allow children to choose activities of interest and to find success in practicing new skills. Teachers also arrange the schedule so children experience both active and quiet activities, teacher-chosen and child-chosen activities, and small- and large-group activities. This way the individual needs of each child can be met with greater ease.

Learning is an active process, so the curriculum begins with what children already know and can do, then challenges them to take on new skills and concepts. The curriculum should also give children a variety of information and topics and encourage healthy relationships among the children and between the children and the adults in the room.

The Pre-Kindergarten *PASS* are the minimum curriculum expectations for Pre-Kindergarten. Teachers ensure that daily curriculum activities include the Pre-Kindergarten *PASS* as well as provide other skills and opportunities based on the individual needs of each child. A Pre-Kindergartner's development is documented throughout the year through the use of a student portfolio, teacher's observations, and school district approved assessments.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Standard 1: Approaches to Learning – A Pre-Kindergartner should be showing increasing positive attitudes and habits towards learning at school.

As the year progresses, a Pre-Kindergartner will:

- ☐ Show increasing eagerness and interest in learning.
- ☐ Listen more intently.
- ☐ Gain independence.
- ☐ Make plans for their play.
- ☐ Handle changes in the schedule and routine with greater ease.
- ☐ Follow rules.
- ☐ Find ways to solve every day problems.
- ☐ Be willing to choose new activities.

The teacher fosters these skills by encouraging children to play and talk with one another, by making learning fun and playful, and by choosing activities that interest the children.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Separation can be difficult for some young children. Always talk about school in a positive way, ensuring that your child makes happy connections with going to school. Talk with your teacher regularly, allowing your child to see the relationship that you are building with your classroom teacher. Invite one of your child's fellow classmates to your home after school so that your child can extend his or her relationships from school to home life. Reinforce good school habits at home: be on time to school, lay out clothes the night before, turn in at-home activities on time, and attend parent teacher conferences faithfully.

CREATIVE SKILLS

Standard 1: Pre-Kindergartners should have many opportunities to participate in creative activities that encourage them to find new ways to solve everyday problems, to express their individual ideas in art and music, and to play imaginatively.

Pre- Kindergartners develop creative skills by:

- ☐ Participating in art and music activities.
- ☐ Listening to music and doing finger plays and classroom performances.
- ☐ Using familiar and unfamiliar art materials.

Teachers are mindful to encourage sufficient time for imaginative play and provide new materials to extend play and the child's individual ideas.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Encourage your child to play at home, using familiar household items and unfamiliar materials. Ask your child "How else could you use those blocks (or other play item)?" "What new ideas do you have today?" "Can you think of a better way to . . .?"

LANGUAGE ARTS—Oral

Standard 1: Listening – Listening is the ability to hear and understand. Pre-Kindergartners should be able to listen with interest and to follow simple oral directions.

Pre-Kindergartners will have many opportunities:

- ☐ To hear stories and talk with others in the classroom.
- ☐ To follow simple oral directions such as: put your coat on the hook, walk to the line, and place the blocks in the tub.

Teachers encourage and support good listening skills by making group time activities fun and relevant to young children.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Help your child develop good listening skills by making a game out of it: give them nonsense directions when also giving them simple directions to see if they can catch you saying something silly. For example, you could say, "put the socks in the refrigerator" or "help me fold the blocks (instead of laundry)."

Standard 2: Speaking – Speaking is the ability to share ideas or opinions with others. This could be to one person or to a group of people.

Pre-Kindergartners should be able to:

- ☐ Tell others what they are interested in and what their needs are.
- ☐ Sing songs and repeat rhymes.
- ☐ Speak in sentences that are increasing in length.
- ☐ Talk with others during play.

Pre-Kindergartners are given many opportunities to talk with their classmates: group time, center time, outdoor play, and during small group times. It is most important in Pre-Kindergarten to encourage children to talk with one another and for adults to be present so they can add new words and ideas. The relationships built in Pre-Kindergarten are the most critical factor for developing the ability to read later.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

You can help by speaking daily to your child, adding new words and longer sentences as your child grows. Ask them questions that encourage them to continue talking. You can encourage your child to talk with other family members over the phone, developing proper phone manners and using complete ideas as they speak.

LANGUAGE ARTS—Literacy

Standard 3: Print Awareness - Print awareness is the ability to understand all of the parts of a book and that letters, words, and sentences are symbols for what is spoken.

Pre-Kindergartners should be given opportunities to gain print awareness by:

- ☐ Talking about books and acting them out.
- ☐ Reading books, noticing the front and back cover of a book and following the words on a page.
- ☐ Playing with letters, words, and sentences, recognizing that print is all around them and that letters and words are connected to what is spoken and has meaning.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Read to your child every day, pointing out the front and back cover. As you read, follow the words with your finger so that your child begins to understand the direction that words flow across a page. As you are driving in your car, point out familiar signs and other print. You can play an "I spy" game by stating "I spy a sign that says Wal-Mart" or "I spy a sign that has the name for the place where you can buy a Happy Meal."

Standard 4: Phonological Awareness – Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and speak chunks of sounds (such as syllables and rhymes).

Pre-Kindergartners are just beginning to hear and speak rhymes. They should be showing increasing ability to:

- ☐ Clap the syllables in spoken words.
- ☐ Hear and speak rhyming sounds.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Make up silly nonsense rhymes with your child while you are waiting at the doctor's office or in line at the grocery store. Think of rhyming words for the groceries you have in your cart. You can also make a game of clapping words and keeping track of words that have a "lot of claps."

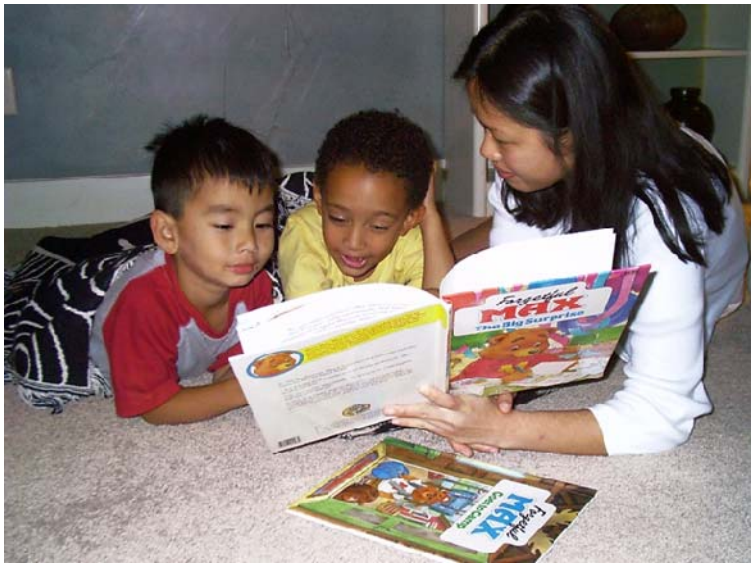
Standard 5: Phonemic Awareness - Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear and speak individual sounds (such as the first sound in a word).

Pre-Kindergartners practice:

- ☐ Hearing and identifying the beginning sound in a word.
- ☐ Recognizing a group of words that all start with the same sound.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Help your child begin to hear individual sounds in words by playing the name game. You can group family and friends names by the letter that they begin with, or change the first letter in their names to make up silly, nonsense names.



Standard 6: Phonics (Letter Knowledge and Early Word Recognition) - Phonics/Decoding is a strategy readers use to give sounds to individual letters and groups of letters in order to make meaning out of unknown words.

Pre-Kindergartners should be able to:

- ☐ Recognize their own name.
- ☐ Show increasing ability to recognize letters, particularly those that are in their own name.
- ☐ Begin to associate some sounds for some letters.
- ☐ Recognize that written letters are the symbols used that match the name of the letter that is spoken.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Play alphabet games with your child: alphabet memory (alphabet cards are laid face down and your child tries to find matching cards by turning them over—limit cards to 10); use alphabet foam letters in the bath tub to spell family names; draw alphabet letters on the sidewalk with chalk; hide plastic alphabet letters in a tub of sand or rice for your child to find (they could be the letters in their name and you could encourage them to put them in order after they find them).

Standard 7: Vocabulary - Vocabulary is the entire collection of words an individual knows, uses, and speaks.

Pre-Kindergartners should:

- ☐ Show increasing vocabulary.
- ☐ Be able to understand and follow directions that include position words.
- ☐ Connect classroom learning experiences with what they already know about a topic.

A Pre-Kindergartner's vocabulary development is one of the most important indicators of the readiness to learn to read. It is extremely important during the first four years of life that adults talk with and expand their child's vocabulary by providing rich and new experiences.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Take your child to new places and provide experiences that will encourage them to gain new vocabulary words. A trip to the park or the lake will encourage them to talk about the water, the plants, the animals, and how they move and live. Make homemade books about your excursions together by taking photographs and putting them in inexpensive photo albums. Add vocabulary words to the bottom of the pages as text for the book.

Standard 8: Comprehension - Comprehension is the ability to understand what has been read. It includes the ability to make a guess about what might happen and to be able to tell others about a story that has been read.

Pre-Kindergartners should practice:

- ☐ Thinking about the meaning of a story.
- ☐ Making guesses about what might happen in a story.
- ☐ Using pictures to help them understand the story.
- ☐ Telling others about stories they have heard.
- ☐ Remembering events in a story.
- ☐ Making connections to their own life experiences when they read or listen to a story.
- ☐ Telling what is happening in a picture.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Before you read a story, scan through the pictures and make guesses about what the story might be about. Be sure to ask questions as you read that might encourage your child to think about how the book applies to their own life. For example, if you are reading a book about a fish named "Swimmy" you might talk about your own pet fish and what it must be like to be a fish.

Standard 9: Writing Process – The Writing process is the process through which children begin to express their ideas and feelings. It involves the understanding that what is written represents someone's idea, that there are many ways to show what we think about, and that it is an efficient way to remember thoughts.

Pre-Kindergartners develop knowledge about writing by:

- ☐ Participating in daily writing experiences.
- ☐ Watching the teacher model writing.
- ☐ By using writing in play (scribbles, shapes, or pictures to share their ideas with others).

A Pre-Kindergartner should readily participate in writing experiences and feel confident in using their own unique marks to become good at writing.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Provide writing materials for your child and encourage your child to use them for different purposes: sending a letter to a family member, drawing a picture of a special event, or helping with the grocery list. Accept your child's attempt at writing. Say, "Tell me about your writing."

MATHEMATICS

Standard 1: Patterns - Patterning is the ability to put objects into a set that all have the same characteristic (such as sorting brown socks into a set and black socks into a set). It also means to repeat the order of different objects that make a specific design or creating an order of different objects, with the intent to repeat it. For example, laying a red block, then a blue block, then a red block, then a blue block.

Pre-Kindergartners should be able to:

- ☐ Put similar items into a group.
- ☐ Explain what the items have in common (same color, same shape, same size, for example).
- ☐ See, repeat, and explain patterns (red, black, red, black, red, black).

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Have your child assist with household chores that involve patterning or sorting. For example, your child can place silverware in the appropriate tray, or cups/dishes on the appropriate shelf. You can make simple patterns with your child's toys (alternating toy cars or colored blocks).

Standard 2: Number Sense – Number sense is the ability to understand that a written numeral represents the quantity or value of that numeral. For example, the numeral 6 represents six objects.

Pre-Kindergartners should be showing increasing ability to:

- ☐ Count to ten orally.
- ☐ Know the value of a set of objects up to five.
- ☐ Begin to show one-to-one correspondence (one napkin per person, for example).
- ☐ Recognize numbers up to five.

Pre-Kindergartners are just beginning to use numbers in their speech and writing.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

As you prepare meals or do simple household chores, find ways for your child to think about numbers and counting. For example, if you need two eggs, ask your child to help you count two eggs in the carton. Discount stores have foam numbers or magnetic/plastic numbers that your child can use to play number games. You can make a homemade number book by taking a picture of your child with their friends in different groups up to five. Add the pictures to a photo album and have your child help you write at the bottom of the page, "____friend(s)" inserting the appropriate number of friends in the blank.

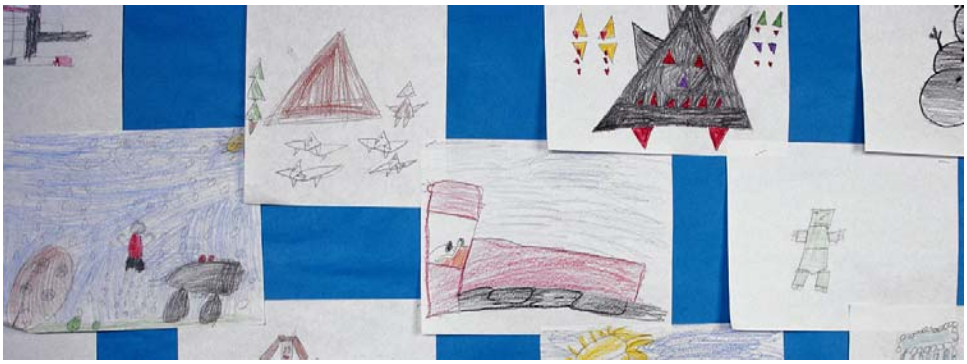
Standard 3: Geometry and Spatial Sense – Geometry and spatial sense is the ability to use shapes and their positions in space.

Pre-Kindergartners should:

- ☐ Practice knowing the names of shapes and to be able to describe them.
- ☐ Show increasing ability to understand position words such as "under, over, and on."

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

As you are driving, point out shapes you see. Play guessing games with your child: "I am thinking of a shape that is round (circle)"; or, "I am thinking of a shape that has four sides that are the same (square)." Young children like to use their bodies as they are learning, so ask your child to pretend to be a giant circle, or a triangle. How could they show this shape with their body?



Standard 4: Measurement – Measurement is determining the length, width, height, depth, weight, or volume, of an object. It includes both standard measurement (using a ruler or scale) and nonstandard measurement (using a pencil or a paper clip).

Pre-Kindergarteners are expected to:

- ☐ Use nonstandard units (pencils, blocks) when measuring.
- ☐ Recognize different sizes of objects and use comparison words such as bigger or smaller when comparing.
- ☐ Place objects in order by size, and begin to understand time concepts such as today or yesterday.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Provide opportunities for your child to measure every day objects such as toys or furniture. Make a measuring game by asking your child to find the largest or smallest object in the room and to tell you how many blocks long the object is. Accept their attempts at measuring, recognizing that the process of measuring is more important than accuracy during the Pre-Kindergarten year.

Standard 5: Data Analysis – Data Analysis is the ability to gather data and think about and discuss the data in a group setting. For example, children may graph the number of students wearing tennis shoes and the number of students wearing sandals. Children work together to create the graph and then discuss the information gathered in the graph (which has more, which has less).

Pre-Kindergartners are expected to:

- ☐ Begin using numbers as a means for solving problems.
- ☐ Participate in activities that encourage them to collect information and share that information with others (such as drawings or graphs).
- ☐ Talk about the differences and similarities between objects.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Keep record of your child's height and weight, observing changes in their growth. Talk about photographs of your child as she has aged and compare to other family photographs. How are family members alike and different?

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Standard 1: Large Motor Skills – Large Motor Skills are those skills that relate to movement of the arms, legs, or torso.

Pre-Kindergartners should be able to:

- ☐ Show basic movements: hopping, jumping, sliding, pulling or pushing.
- ☐ Show increasing ability to stop and change directions when they are moving.
- ☐ Incorporate movements that require them to remain in the same location, but move part of their torso (bending, stretching, turning, for example).

They are becoming better at throwing and catching, kicking and bouncing, coordinating the arm muscles to paint or climb, and to balance their bodies.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Provide your child with daily opportunities to play outdoors (if the weather permits) so that they are gaining increasing ability to coordinate their large muscles. Protect your child from excessive television, video, or computer games. These hamper your child's growth and development of the muscles of the body. Since the Pre-Kindergarten year is a time for children to refine these skills, it is very important that they are physically active and that adults join them in their activities.

Standard 2: Small Motor Skills – Small motor skills are those skills that relate to the coordinated movement of the hands and fingers.

Pre-Kindergartners need practice:

- ☐ Developing eye hand coordination (puzzles, cutting, drawing, painting, gluing).
- ☐ Using tools to accomplish smaller tasks (tongs, eyedroppers, for example).

Teachers ensure that children have daily opportunities to practice these skills, and do not become overly worried by messes that occur. Spilling and other mistakes are natural as young children become more adept at using these muscles.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Make sure your child has the opportunities to cut, draw, glue, and paint at home. Playing with play dough, linking small interlocking blocks, and typing on a keyboard also increase a young child's small motor skills. Expect that your child will sometimes make mistakes and that it is the effort that is most important, and not the final product. Your child should enjoy using his or hands to create new things. This fosters a positive attitude towards beginning to write.

Standard 3: Health Enhancing Activity Development – Health enhancing activity development refers to participation in and appreciation for health and fitness activities.

Pre-Kindergartners should be:

- ☐ Showing healthy physical growth and increasing strength and coordination.
- ☐ Learning healthy habits for rest, exercise, and eating.
- ☐ Displaying independence in personal care such as washing hands, brushing teeth, eating, dressing, and toileting.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Develop healthy routines at home that encourage your child to be independent. Model healthy habits such as exercise, rest, and healthy eating; remember, a good night's rest is essential for your child to do well in school. If your child is struggling in gaining independence in toileting, visit with your local pediatrician and your teacher to develop a plan for guiding your child towards full independence.

SCIENCE

Standard 1: Science Processes and Inquiry – Science processes and inquiry are the strategies that students use to experiment with or investigate objects in order to learn more about them.

Pre-Kindergartners should:

- ☐ Show increasing ability to sort, compare, and contrast.
- ☐ Use simple science tools and be willing to participate in simple experiments.
- ☐ Be encouraged to ask questions, make science guesses, and to talk about what they have observed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Model an inquisitive nature and the willingness to seek information by experimenting or asking experts. Nurture your child's wonderment by supporting them in finding answers to their own questions. Play the "what if" game: ask your child "what would happen if…" and make up silly nonsense situations your child might enjoy talking about.

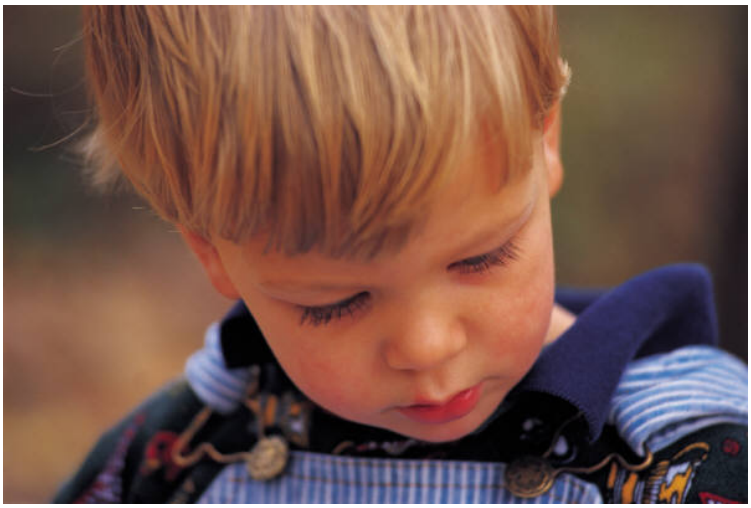
Standard 2: Physical Science – Physical science is the knowledge of characteristics of objects as well as how they move.

Pre-Kindergartners are encouraged to:

- ☐ Use all of their senses to learn about objects.
- ☐ Experiment with items that float or sink.
- ☐ Compare the textures of objects.
- ☐ Find out if an object is magnetic or not.
- ☐ Consider the liquid and solid state of matter, among other experiences.
- ☐ Talk about how objects move.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

On your trip to the grocery store, visit the produce section and talk about the colors of the fruit you see. Discuss their textures and smells and encourage your child to describe what she or he sees and feels.



Standard 3: Life Science – Life science is the knowledge of how things live and grow and the changes that living things go through during their life.

Pre-Kindergartners should have opportunities to:

- ☐ Understand what plants and animals need to grow.
- ☐ Recognize that animals and plants change as they grow.
- ☐ Be respectful of living things.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

When you plant flowers in your flowerbed, encourage your child to assist you with planting and talk about the things that plants need to grow. Provide a spray bottle for your child to mist plants; this reduces the potential that your child might over water the plants or damage young plants. If you have a family pet expect your child to be gentle in handling the pet and be involved in feeding him or her.

Standard 4: Earth Science – Earth Science includes knowledge about the earth and its characteristics, properties of the earth, weather, seasons, and how to take care of the environment.

Pre-Kindergartners should have the opportunities to:

- ☐ Develop an awareness of common earth materials such as soil, rocks, and water.
- ☐ To talk about the weather and the seasons.
- ☐ Begin to participate in conservation activities.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

As you prepare for the day, talk about the weather and appropriate clothing for the day. Take photographs during the seasons of a favorite tree in your yard with your child in front of the tree; create a homemade book about the tree. Place the photographs in sequence in the photo album and encourage your child to dictate a description of the tree during the seasons. This makes a very special family heirloom.

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SKILLS

Standard 1: Pre-Kindergartners will have the opportunities to develop relationships with others and interact with them appropriately.

Pre-Kindergartners should show increasing ability to

- ☐ Play well with others.
- ☐ Stand up for themselves when needed.
- ☐ Understand the feelings of others.
- ☐ Express their own feelings appropriately.
- ☐ Take turns during a conversation and in games.

When they need assistance, they should have the confidence and ability to seek help from adults. It is important during the Pre-Kindergarten year that children begin developing a respect for other people and cultures.

Standard 2: Pre-Kindergartners should begin developing the skills to be flexible and to adjust to new settings.

Pre-Kindergartners should be able to:

- ☐ Say their full name, age, and names of their family members.
- ☐ Show increasing ability to adjust to new settings and situations.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Ensure that your child plays with friends and has opportunities to interact with adults at church, at home, or in other community settings. Teach them how to identify adults that can help if it is needed (uniformed officer, store employee, teacher) and have them practice these skills. Provide your child with experiences in new settings so that your child feels confident about approaching other children and other adults.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Standard 1: Civics—The Pre-Kindergartner will have the opportunity to show increasing civic responsibility by playing cooperatively, working in a group, listening to others, and being respectful.

Pre-Kindergartners should have many opportunities to:

- ☐ Interact with other children and adults so that they learn to interact respectfully.
- ☐ Recognize some American symbols.
- ☐ Begin to understand how our actions impact other people and the environment.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Model good citizenship by voting, caring for the environment, and being respectful to your neighbors and community members. Participate with your child in neighborhood clean-up days, canned food drives, or other civic activities. Tell your child that he or she is never too young to make this world a better place.

Standard 2: Pre-Kindergarten students will show that they understand simple geography concepts such as the location of familiar places and an understanding of his or her own community.

Pre-Kindergartners should be able to:

- ☐ Locate familiar places such as their favorite restaurant, their home, and their school.
- ☐ Talk about and describe these places with other people.

Standard 3: Pre-Kindergarten students will have the opportunity to talk about how people around the world and in our own communities are alike and different.

Pre-Kindergarten students should have opportunities to:

- ☐ Talk about how children around the world have similar needs (clothing, food, shelter) and different characteristics (languages, food, customs).
- ☐ Experience the traditions and customs of the families represented in the classroom.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Reinforce and talk about your family traditions with your child. Participate in your child's classroom by sharing with the class your favorite family recipe or holidays.

Standard 4: Pre-Kindergartners will have the opportunity to talk about and experience different kinds of jobs and to learn that money is used to buy things.

Pre-Kindergartners should have the opportunity to:

- ☐ Take field trips, experience guest speakers, and to pretend play various jobs.
- ☐ Gain awareness of what is required to do a job well both in the school and in the community.
- ☐ Have practical experience seeing how money is used to purchase things.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Take your child to your work so they can see what your job requires. Encourage them to learn about many different types of jobs. It is important for children to talk about "what they want to do when they grow up." This is an important part of developing initiative and confidence.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Eric Carle

All about the phenomenal children's author and illustrator, Eric Carle. Includes author information, a museum of picture books, news publications, and upcoming events.

<http://www.eric-carle.com/>

The Idea Box

Early childhood education and activity resources, including Idea of the Day, seasonal ideas, children's health, music and songs, and craft ideas.

<http://www.theideabox.com/>

Internet Guide for Parents

For many of us, computers are exciting, but puzzling. Our children know far more about computers than we do! This site helps bridge the gap between what our children know and what we know to be able to assist them with their school work and help them get ready for the information age of the next century.

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/internet/index.html>

Jan Brett

A delightful site with lots of activities, coloring pages, games, bookmarks, word lists.

<http://www.janbrett.com/>

Kids Health

A project from the medical experts at The Nemours Foundation. Information for parents, kids and teens.

<http://kidshealth.org/>

National Association for the Education of Young Children

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the nation's largest and most influential organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade.

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

Parents as Teachers

All parents are their child's best first teacher. Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a national award-winning nonprofit parent education and family support organization.

<http://www.parentsasteachers.org/site/pp.asp?c=ekIRLcMZJxE&b=272091>

Ready Set Read

Ready Set Read is an America Reads Challenge booklet that is filled with activities and ideas that you can use to help your young children learn about language.

<http://www.ed.gov/Family/RSRforFamily/index.html>

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SANDY GARRETT

STATE SUPERINTENDENT
OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION