



Dear Kindergarten Family:

Thank you for your interest in Grace Valley Christian Academy's kindergarten class. We have put together a packet that will help you help your child prepare for kindergarten at our school.

In this packet you will find the following:

- Benchmarks for Incoming Kindergarteners
- Kindergarten Curriculum
- More Than 50 Ways to Learn Letters Without Holding a Pencil
- Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child Concepts of Print
- Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child Letter Recognition
- Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child Letter Sounds & Phonemic Awareness
- Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child Reading Comprehension
- Neurological Impress Method for Reading
- Helpful Websites for more information

If you have any questions, please contact the school office: [gvca@gracevalley.org](mailto:gvca@gracevalley.org) or 530.758.6590.

Best regards,  
Grace Valley Christian Academy

# **Benchmarks for Incoming Kindergarteners**

- ☐ State age and birth date.
- ☐ State first and last name.
- ☐ Identify eight basic colors: purple, blue, red, orange, yellow, green, brown and black.
- ☐ Count to 20.
- ☐ Isolate and identify numbers 1-20.
- ☐ Count objects to 10 with 1:1 correspondence.
- ☐ Hop on one foot; left and right.
- ☐ Bounce and catch a large rubber ball.
- ☐ Zip jacket and pants; button clothes; buckle a belt; tie shoes.
- ☐ Recite (not sing) the alphabet.
- ☐ Isolate letters, know all names and sounds.
- ☐ Write correctly all capital letters in Standard Manuscript form.
- ☐ Hold pencil correctly
- ☐ Print first name using upper case for the first letter and lower case for remaining letters (example: Susie, Robert).
- ☐ Hold scissors correctly, snip paper and cut on straight line.
- ☐ Use bathroom independently and appropriately.

# Kindergarten Curriculum

## LANGUAGE ARTS / ENGLISH

- I. Phonemic Awareness
- II. Phonics
- III. Reading and Writing
- IV. Poetry/Fables
- V. Literature:  
Fiction/Informational/Biography
- VI. Sayings and Phrases

## MATHEMATICS

- I. Patterns and Classification
- II. Numbers and Number Sense
- III. Money
- IV. Computation
- V. Measurement
- VI. Geometry
- VII. Graphing Data
- VIII. Time

## HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

- I. Maps and Globes
- II. Overview of the Seven Continents
- III. American Geography
- IV. Native Americans
- V. Early Exploration and Settlement  
(Columbus and Pilgrims)
- VI. American Holidays
- VII. American Presidents, Past and  
Present
- VIII. United States Symbols and Figures

## SCIENCE

- I. Plants and Plant Growth
- II. Animals and their Needs
- III. Human Body (Five Senses)
- IV. Introduction to Magnetism
- V. Seasons and Weather
- VI. Taking Care of the Earth
- VII. Science Biographies
- VIII. Insects
- IX. Scientific Method

## VISUAL ARTS

- I. Elements of Art
- II. Sculpture
- III. Looking at and Talking About Art
- IV. 2 & 3 Dimensional Art Using  
Various Media

## MUSIC

- I. Elements of Music
- II. Listening and Understanding
- III. Songs

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- I. Motor Planning
- II. Balance

# More Than 50 Ways to Learn Letters Without Holding a Pencil

1. Use magnetic letters to sequence and match letters. Build words and sentences.
2. Use felt letters or alphabet cards to sequence and match letters.
3. Put plastic letters in a feel bag or box and let children guess what letter they are feeling.
4. Paint letters on an easel.
5. Finger paint letters

## **Write letters with your finger:**

6. In cornmeal
7. In sand
8. In pudding (dry or prepared)
9. In foam soap
10. In shaving cream
11. In bird seed
12. In colored sand
13. Glue beans, noodles, cloth, cotton balls, miniature marshmallows, rice or paper to make mosaics in the shape of letters.
14. Use push pins to outline letters.
15. Build letters with Play dough, pretzel or bread dough.
16. Use letter stamps to sequence the alphabet or words.
17. Air write letters. Use a dowel with colorful streamers attached.
18. Water paint letters on the blackboard.
19. Make letters with wikie sticks or pipe cleaners.
20. Play alphabet bingo.
21. Play mystery writing: take the student's hand and write a letter with his or her hand while his eyes are closed. Have the student guess what letter it is.
22. Cut out letters with scissors.
23. Provide wooden, cardboard, or paper shapes to build alphabet letters.
24. Use Scrabble tiles to match letters, build words or sentences.
25. Use computer games and programs to reinforce letter recognition such as "Baily's Book House" by Edmark.

**Use masking tape or rope to make letters on the floor and have children:**

26. Trace Letters with their feet
27. Walk or crawl on them following the path of the letter
28. Drive toy cars on them
29. Follow the shape of the letter by “painting” with a paint roller (paint free of course!)
30. Roll them out with rolling pins
31. Hop or jump along the letter lines

**Make alphabet cards for matching (visually or by touch) and tracing with:**

32. Colored glue
33. Yarn and glue
34. Dry Jello and glue
35. Puff paint
36. Glue and sand, cornmeal etc.

**Note:** *You can make the tactile alphabet cards by either cutting out alphabet shapes from cardboard and covering it with sand paper or by “writing” the letter with glue and covering that area with tactile media.*

**Write letters on:**

37. Magna-doodles
38. Clay trays (Styrofoam try with clay spread on it. Use a dowel to write the letters in the clay.)
39. Black boards
40. Dry-erase boards
41. Paper with sandpaper under it
42. Paper with a bumpy board under it
43. Sort letters
44. Play “go fish” with alphabet cards.
45. Fish for letters using a homemade fishing pole with a magnet hanging on a string. Letter cards can have paperclips placed on them.
46. Complete an alphabet puzzle of all the letters or sequence alphabet cards.
47. Make alphabet cards and cut them into half; have students match them.
48. Have students match upper and lowercase alphabet letters.
49. Find letters in magazines, books, on cereal boxes and other household items.

50. Hide letter in sand, rice and beans or birdseed and have students find them and identify them by feeling them.
51. Make an ABC book by cutting out pictures that start with a given letter.
52. Sponge paint letters.
53. Play “I Spy” with letters. For example: “I see the letter r hiding on this page”; “I see a word that begins with the letter r.” Then have the student find the letter or word.
54. Play Concentration or Memory with letter cards. Place cards face down. Each student takes a turn by turning over two cards. If they match they are removed. If they don’t match, the cards are turned over again and the next student plays. Use as many or as few matching letter cards as you want.
55. Make body letters. Give several students a letter to make. Have the students use their bodies to form the letter. They may try doing this standing or lying on the floor. Have other students guess the letter.
56. Sew letters by making your own lacing cards in the shape of letters or having the students sew their names onto colored burlap.
57. Play “guess a letter.” Give clues about a letter and have students guess the letter. “I am thinking of a letter that is short and comes after D in the alphabet.” Ask the student to tell the name and sound of the letter.
58. Play “what letter is missing.” Sequence alphabet cards from A to Z. Remove several letters and have students guess what letter is missing.
59. Play “that’s not right.” Sequence alphabet cards but misplace several cards. Have the students find the errors and correct them.
60. And when students are ready to write letters on paper, do it with

Crayons,

Markers,

Chalk,

Paint,

Grease pencils,

Colored pencils,

Vibrating pens (Wiggle Pens)

or a

Number 2 pencil.

## **Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child Concepts of Print**

- Read at least 2 stories a day with your child. Books on tape are also fun and educational.
- For each book you read, discuss the front cover, back cover, the title, the author (who writes the story), and the illustrator (who draws the pictures). Use these terms often when reading books.
- Do not simply skip over the table of contents. Discuss how the table of contents tells us what information will be in the book, and on what page to find that information. Practice turning to the correct page to find a particular story or topic.
- Point to the words with your finger as you read the sentences. Pre-school age children believe that the story is in the picture and that you are making up the words as you go along. They do not yet realize that the words, not the picture, tell the story. Show your child how you point to the first word on the page and read across the page from left to right. When you come to the end of a sentence, you then move your finger down the page and to the left again. Thus we read from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Have your child mimic you as you follow the words on the page with your finger.
- Show your child the difference between a letter, a word (made up of letters), and a sentence (made up of words, ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark).
- When reading, ask your child to show you a letter (and name it if possible), a word, and then a sentence.
- Do not only use these reading strategies occasionally, make them a habit with every book.

## Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child Letter Recognition

- Sing the alphabet song often. Write the ABC's on a large piece of paper, or find a toy or a book with the printed ABC's. As your child sings the alphabet song, have him/her point to the letters one at a time. This will help the child match the spoken letter to the written letter.
- Buy ABC or phonics flashcards. Mix them up and have the child practice naming the letters one at a time.
- Use the flashcards to play a game. Lay the cards out faced-down and have the child turn them over one at a time. The child names the letter. If s/he is correct, the card stays turned over. If incorrect, the card is flipped faced-down again. The goal is to name all 26 letters, lowercase and uppercase.
- Have your child cut and paste letters from magazines to make the alphabet or to spell his/her name.
- When reading stories or signs outside, point to letters and ask the child to name them. Point to whole words and ask the child to spell the word.
- Have your child practice writing his/her first and last name. Then ask the child to name all the letters in his/her name. Mix up the letters and see if the child can still name all of the letters in his/her name.
- When you read stories to your child, point at random letters and ask the child to tell you what letter you are pointing at. When you are walking or driving, say the letters on the signs together, such as W-A-L-K and S-T-O-P. When you talk to your child, spell some words instead of saying them, such as G-O, S-I-T, N-O, Y-E-S, M-I-L-K, and D-O-G.
- Choose educational toys that incorporate upper and lowercase letters. LEAPFROG® carries a great line of DVDs and electronic toys and books that teach letter and sound recognition.



## Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child

### Letter Sounds and Phonemic Awareness

- When your child is comfortable with the alphabet and can recognize all or most of the letters, then begin to introduce sounds. When reading stories, point out how the words match the picture. For example, if you are reading about an apple, point to the picture of the apple and then the word “apple”. Show the child that the word apple begins with the letter a. Have the child repeat “a-a-apple” repeating the beginning sound /a/. Emphasize beginning sounds, such as “b-b-ball”, “c-c-cat”, “d-d-doll”, and “e-e-egg”.
- Point at letters when reading books and ask, “What letter is this?” and “What sound does this letter make?” When in the house or in the car, ask questions such as “What letter does *radio* start with?” or “What sound do you hear at the beginning of *car*?”
- Buy a set of phonics flashcards. These cards will have, for example, the letter Aa and then pictures of words that begin with /a/.
- Have your child match letter flashcards to toys that start with that letter. Give the child a letter card and say “I dare you to find 3 toys that start with this letter.”
- Have your child cut and paste pictures from magazines that start with certain letters. For example, make a collage of “b” words. Or write the alphabet and for each letter, cut and paste a picture to match the sound the letter makes.
- Play clapping games with your child around the house or in the car to practice counting syllables in words. For example, clap once and say “chair”, clap twice and say “ta-ble”, clap three times and say “ba-na-na”, clap four times and say “tel-e-vi-sion”. When you are reading stories, choose some words to clap out the syllables.
- Read a lot of rhyming poems and rhyming stories. Listen to and sing rhyming songs. Allow the child to hear rhyming words all the time and they will probably start making up their own rhymes in no time.
- Play rhyming games around the dinner table or in the car. Start a rhyme and have your child finish it, or say “I am thinking of a word that rhymes with *boy*...” and have the child guess the answer.

## Simple Strategies for Teaching Your Child Reading Comprehension

- Before reading a story, show the child the cover of the book and read the title. Tell the child to look through the pictures and guess what happens on each page. Then read the story. Afterwards discuss how the predictions were correct or incorrect. Incorrect predictions are fine, as long as they make sense according to the pictures.
- After reading stories, do not simply say “The End” and close the book. Take 2-3 minutes to talk about the story. Ask the child who the characters were in the story. Ask what the setting was (where and when did it take place). Use the terms *characters* and *setting*, as the child will need to use them in kindergarten. Ask the child what happened in the beginning, the middle, and at the end of the story. Use the book and flip back through the pages to recall all the important events in order. The child should use complete sentences and not bounce around. Encourage the child to use sequence words such as first, next, then, after that, last, and finally.
- Make these post-reading discussions a habit.
- After reading a story, have the child draw a picture about what happened in the story, or what they learned from the story. The child should draw the characters and the setting, as well as at least one event. Practice this often.

## **How to Use the Neurological Impress Method to Accelerate Reading Fluency with “Books That Sing and Rhyme”**

**Providing repeated reading experiences** using the Neurological Impress Method (N.I.M.) is a simple, yet powerful, strategy for developing fluent readers. It was originally devised and researched by R.G. Heckelman, PhD in the 1960's and since has been proven successful for thousands of young readers. **This approach of oral read-along practice provides one-on-one language modeling using a fluent reader in a relaxed, non-threatening environment.** It is ideal for our “parents as partners” nightly reading at home—especially with the predictable literature of songs, poems, and rhythmic rhyming language.

**Now you can help train your child's eyes to sweep across the page, as his finger movements and voice are all synchronized to the words.** Your child will greatly benefit from repeated readings of the familiar language along with your voice as a model. Soon he will be able to independently perform the reading with fluency, expression, confidence, and delight.

### **How to do it:**

- **Dr. Heckelman recommends that the reading tutor or parent sit to the right of the child,** with the child slightly in front so the parent's voice can be close to the child's ear. We think it is equally important to be in a comfortable and relaxed setting.
- **Let your child choose the song picture book or anthology pages** of poems and rhymes that they want to practice reading with you.
- **Read the material with your child, using a little louder voice** and reading with fluency, careful articulation, and enthusiasm.
- **Move your finger and your child's under the spoken words in a smooth continuous manner,** matching the precise speed of the verbal reading. Help the child gradually take over the tracking.
- **Pay special attention to the end of a line.** Move the finger rapidly back to the beginning of the next line to train the eye. Keep everything synchronized. Reread a line, page, or section of a book repeatedly to build fluency.
- **At no point should you correct, teach the child, or ask questions.** The focus is on the fluency of language and making the voice-to-print match.
- You might call this “practice for performance reading.” **Keep these “read together” sessions short and enjoyable.** This should only take 5 to 10 minutes of your nightly reading time.
- **Compliment your child for their effort and progress.** Soon they will be able to perform the reading of this book or poem for any appreciative audience.
- From time to time we will send home audiocassettes with accompanying books. **Reading aloud with an audiocassette also produces accelerated reading gains.**



Start with the repetitive language of a highly predictable book. **Give your child positive encouraging feedback:**

- “Let’s read that together again.”
- “That sounds so good, let’s read it again.”
- “Now I bet you can read this page all by yourself.”
- “Listen to you – you are learning to read!”

“Let’s go read it to Dad!”

**Train your kindergarten parents and “Reading Buddies”** to value “magical memory reading” and transition into “touch reading” and later independent reading using the Neurological Impress Method.

### **Build a Parent Lending Library of Predictable Literature**

Consider building a parents’ library with multiple copies of your favorite predictable books to send home with families at the beginning of the year. Some of these may be the same books you use for shared literacy. (See page 265 for a list of quality literature with high picture and text support for emergent readers.)



## More Information Can Be Found At The Following Websites

- ☺ **education.com:** Wonderful section of Kindergarten Readiness and great worksheets and activities for all ages. FREE
- ☺ **readworks.com:** Reading passages and comprehension at all grade levels. FREE
- ☺ **lakeshorelearning.com:** Lots of wonderful things to buy, but they also have a wonderful section of worksheets, activities and ideas for parents and teachers. FREE
- ☺ **hwtears.com:** Great for Pre-K writing activities, free on line seminars, and things to buy. FREE
- ☺ **KindergartenReadiness.net:** A terrific site for parents, filled with ideas and helpful hints to help your child get ready. FREE
- ☺ **kids.discovery.com:** Lots of ideas and interactive on-line learning games. FREE
- ☺ **Starfall.com:** Reading site; from learning ABC's to reading fluency. FREE
- ☺ **enchantedlearning.com:** Great worksheets, activities and books to copy. \$20 per year membership cost for running off books and worksheets.