



## 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.

