

Learning Guide for Families

A summary of what children should know
and be able to do and ways for families
to increase learning at home.



*“We believe families are our partners.
They are the first and most powerful
educators of children. Together we will
ensure success for all students.”*

—Superintendent Emmanuel Caulk,
Portland Public Schools

About these learning guides:

This learning guide represents some of the most essential things your child should know and be able to do by the END of the school year in English language arts (ELA) and Math. Learning goals help families and teachers know when students may need extra support and when they need to be challenged even more.

What can families do?

There is a lot you can do to support your child's learning and help prepare them for their future. Here are a few things that will help students learn:

1. Let your child know that education is important to you. Tell them education matters, that it's the foundation for success.
2. Make school a priority, get your child to school on time every day.
3. Work cooperatively with the school and demonstrate respect for teachers and staff.
4. Encourage independence, allow your children to make mistakes and accept responsibility for their choices.
5. Talk to your child about what is happening in school.
6. Talk to your child's teacher to make sure your child is making progress throughout the year.
7. Attend parent-teacher conferences and other school events whenever possible.
8. You have a right to know how your child is doing, don't hesitate to contact their teacher if you have questions.

Talking with your Child's Teacher

It's important to talk with your child's teacher and school regularly about your student's progress toward learning goals. Here are some questions or topics you may want to discuss:

- Review this learning guide and ask where your student is strong and where they need improvement.
- In addition to the learning goals in this guide, are there other goals your child is expected to master?
- Ask to see examples of your student's work and how they meet or do not meet learning goals.
- Ask how your child's progress is measured throughout the year.
- Ask if your child is on track to meet grade-level learning goals. If not, what supports will the school offer? What can you do at home?
- Ask if your child is at or above learning expectations. If so, what else does the school offer? What can I do at home?

Talking with your Child

“How was school today?”

“Fine.”

“What did you do?”

“Nothing”

Does this sound familiar? That’s okay, keep asking! Students whose parents talk with them about school do better in school. Here are some ways you can engage with your child and support their success:

- Make time to talk with your child about school every day.
- Ask your child to tell you one thing they learned today. What does your child think is most interesting? What seems hard?
- Review papers and projects your child brings home from school. Ask your child to tell you what learning it demonstrates.
- Praise your child for hard work and effort, not just “right answers”.
- Ask questions about what your child is thinking: How do you know that? What do you think? What do you notice? Why did you do it that way? Is there another way to find that answer?

Supporting Learning Away from School

Learning doesn’t have to stop when students leave school. Students spend more time out of school than in school. Here are some ways you can support learning outside of school:

- Read to your child, read with your child, and encourage family reading time—in the language you are most comfortable.
- Set up a quiet and comfortable place for your student to do homework or other learning activities.
- Try to establish a regular schedule for doing homework or other learning activities.
- Use this guide to focus on a few learning goals, try some of the suggestions for learning at home.



What your student should know and be able to do in English Language Arts (ELA)

Speaking and Listening

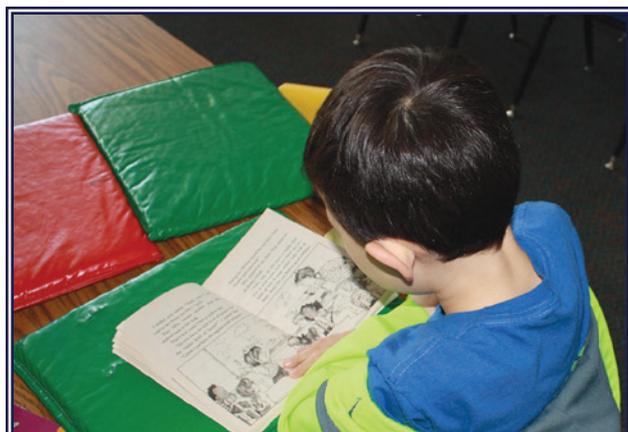
- Take part in conversations involving multiple exchanges with another child or an adult about topics and books being studied in school.
- Use new words and concepts outside of the story or lesson in which they were learned.
- Retell a recent event or a familiar story and discuss what happened.

Reading and Literature

- Read familiar words at home, in the neighborhood, or elsewhere in your child's environment. *For example: common signs, such as EXIT, and frequently used words, such as the.*
- Figure out new words using the sounds of the letters in each word.
- Read a book designed for early readers, such as "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle, or "Mrs. Wishy Washy", by Joy Cowley.
- Identify the main problem, characters, and events in a book that your child reads independently or that is read to them.

Writing

- Use a combination of drawing, talking, and writing to convey messages to others.
- Write letters the student hears in a word. *For example: "dg" for dog or "hs" for house*
- Independently write at least one complete thought using sounds heard in words. *For example: "I lik to swm bcz it fn!"*



What your student should know and be able to do in Math:

- Count objects to 20.
- Recognize and write numbers 1–20.
- Begin to count by 10s.
- Compare two numbers as greater than, less than, or equal to.
For example: say, “I know that 4 is less than 7.”
- Make sense of and solve simple addition and subtraction problems. Use objects, fingers, drawings, or words to show strategies and solutions.
- Identify, describe, extend, and create simple patterns.
For example: ABABABA or red, blue, red, blue, red, blue, red, blue.
- Identify and describe two-dimensional shapes based on their attributes.
For example: a square has four corners or angles.
- Identify three-dimensional shapes, such as a cube.
- Compose simple shapes to form larger shapes. *For example: put two triangles together to form a rectangle or complete a pattern block puzzle.*
- Use nonstandard units of measure to find the length of an object.
For example: “This pencil is 5 cubes long.”
- Compare objects by length and weight using words such as longer, shorter, weighs more, and weighs less.
- Make simple charts or use tallies to represent information.





PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Academics Office
353 Cumberland Avenue
Portland, Maine 04101
207.874.8100
portlandschools.org

This brochure was published by the Portland Public Schools. Content used and modified by permission of Boston Public Schools. Additional content based on the work of Dr. Anthony L. Moore.