

# The ABCs of the Kindergarten Curriculum

Source: <http://tvoparents.tv.org/article/abcs-kindergarten-curriculum>

There are six key learning areas in the new curriculum:

- Personal and social development
- Language
- Math
- Science and technology
- Health and Physical Activity
- Arts

## **Expectations:**

Teachers look for certain benchmarks when they are evaluating the progress of students. Reading is one of the most important milestones for parents, but experts warn that reading depends on the child, the school, parental involvement and the child's maturity level. To see where your child should be at, check out this article on [milestones](#).

A snapshot of what kids should know after kindergarten:

- Children should be able to write a short piece of text like a grocery list (don't worry, spelling doesn't matter!)
- They should be able to retell a story with a beginning, middle and end.
- They should be able to estimate certain quantities, count and make out math equations using words instead of numbers.
- They should be able to work alone and with other children
- They should be able to talk about their own interests and accomplishments (I like dancing. I can sing.)
- They should be able to do things like dress themselves and be willing to try new things.
- They should be curious about the world around them.

## **Personal and Social Development:**

If your child can talk about their likes and dislikes, describe what they did at school and play with their friends, they get an A+ in this category.

## **Why is it in the curriculum?**

This is the Ministry's way of trying to level the playing field. Kids come into the school system with a broad range of experiences. Some come from preschool and are used to being around kids while others come from the home and have never had to share a toy in their lives. Some already

know their alphabet, while others have no idea what school is. For some kids, a school environment is a huge change from what they're used to. In the grades ahead, they will need to work with others and work well on their own.

### **What does it mean?**

Basically, personal and social development means kids should become more aware about themselves and the world around them. They learn to share with others and work with others. They also learn their own likes and dislikes.

### **By the end of kindergarten, children should be able to:**

- Show a sense of self and a positive self-image. This means they can recognize their own interests and talk about them (e.g. I like to sing) and they should be able to talk about their own accomplishments (e.g. I can write my name).
- Show that they are beginning to understand that everyone is different.
- Recognize when someone else is upset and they'll role-play emotions with dolls and toys.
- Know how to make themselves and others feel better.
- Play and work with other children (offer to help others, listen to their friends)
- Know some things about the world around them (ie: farmers live in farms, some kids live in the country and some live in apartments)

### **Language:**

Reading and writing can only happen after a child learns to use language.

### **Why is it in the curriculum?**

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are all connected. Knowing how to use words to express themselves helps children build the vocabulary they will need to read and write.

### **What does it mean?**

Basically, it means that children will learn how to communicate what they are thinking by speaking or writing.

### **By the end of kindergarten, children should be able to:**

- Talk to and listen to you, their teacher and their friends.
- Show that they understand books that are read to them by retelling the stories and reading aloud.
- Enjoy reading and writing (no matter how good they are at it!).
- Try to read and make sense of what they are reading.
- Try to write simple messages.
- Talk about the cartoons they see and what they like and don't like about them.

## **Mathematics:**

The language is complicated but they will not be expected to solve pi. This is basic math, like counting and measuring.

### **Why is it in the curriculum?**

This isn't algebra or calculus so the reason this is in the curriculum is pretty simple--kids need it. They need to know how to count, take measurements and problem solve for virtually all aspects of life.

### **What does it mean?**

The one thing the curriculum does make clear is that learning math in kindergarten must be active, hands-on, child-centred, and problem-based.

What does that mean? Kids will work at learning centres through play rather than sit-down with a paper and a bunch of math problems. So put away the protractors and calculators, the kids won't need them yet.

### **By the end of kindergarten, children should be able to:**

- Show that they understand that numbers are used for counting and measuring and that numbers and quantities can get bigger or smaller
- Measure and compare length, weight, temperature and size of different objects. For instance, they can line up toys from the smallest to the biggest or measure how many steps it takes to get across the room.
- Compare two and three-dimensional objects and sort them. For instance, they know the difference between a rectangle and a triangle and they can sort the rectangles by size.
- Make out patterns in words and objects. For instance, they will know what comes next if the pattern is one nail, two buttons, three beads, one nail, two buttons, three beads.
- Group objects together based on size, shape, colour or other attribute. For instance, they will pile all their pink teddy bears together and put the blue teddy bears in a different pile.

## **Science & Technology:**

Kids are naturally curious and love to ask questions about the natural and human-made world around them. This is about teaching them how to answer those questions.

### **Why is it in the curriculum?**

Since kids have a natural sense of wonder, kindergarten is the time to build on that curiosity. In learning that it's okay to ask questions and seek answers, children are well on their way to becoming little scientists.

### **What does it mean?**

It means that kids will look at natural occurrences, like the leaves changing colour or wood floating on water, ask questions and try to answer those questions.

**By the end of kindergarten, children should be able to:**

- Show that they are curious about the natural and human-made world.
- Conduct simple science experiments.
- Show that they care about the natural world.
- Talk about the differences in materials like you can see through saran wrap but not tinfoil. And also talk about different properties of materials like sand can be wet or dry.
- Understand how to use materials and tools safely, like don't run with scissors.
- Understand how to use technology safely like computers, CD players, staplers.

**Health & Physical Activity**

It's good to be active. Turn off the TV, put down the chips and take the kids outside!

**Why is it in the curriculum?**

Physical health and development is important in a child's overall development. In kindergarten, children need to develop a good attitude towards health and physical activity.

**What does it mean?**

Kids will learn about what to eat and what to do to stay healthy.

**By the end of kindergarten, children should be able to:**

- Understand that getting regular exercise and eating well will keep themselves and others healthy
- Know what to do if they feel unsafe or if they are being bullied, like 911, block parents and playground monitors
- Participate in physical activity, like dance, games, fitness breaks, tossing and catching
- Have some control of their large muscles, like good balance and hand-eye coordination so they can throw, climb and catch.
- Have some control of their small muscles, they can use play dough, build with blocks, play in the sand, use a pen or paintbrush

**The Arts**

All children love to feel like an artist, dancer, actor or musician. It gives them time to flex that imagination.

**Why is it in the curriculum?**

The Ministry recognizes the value of the arts and how they stimulate learning.

## **What does it mean?**

Kids will be exposed to three areas of the arts: visual arts, music, and drama and dance. So they will be doing what most of us did in kindergarten drawing, painting, singing, dancing and pretending.

## **By the end of kindergarten, children should be able to:**

- Show the little artist inside and be able to describe their drawings
- Know what art is
- Show different ideas in their art.
- Be aware of different types of art from different cultures
- Use different materials to create art.

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What to expect of your 5 year old <http://tvoparents.tvoparents.org/article/what-expect-your-five-year-old>

Reading and Math help at home: <http://tvoparents.tvoparents.org/article/reading-and-math-help-home>