

Back to School Family Guide

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Parents and caregivers have always wanted to know more about what their child is learning in school. After all, families are their child's first – and most important – teacher.

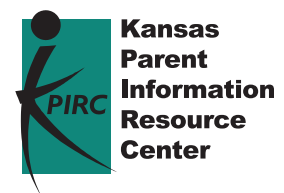
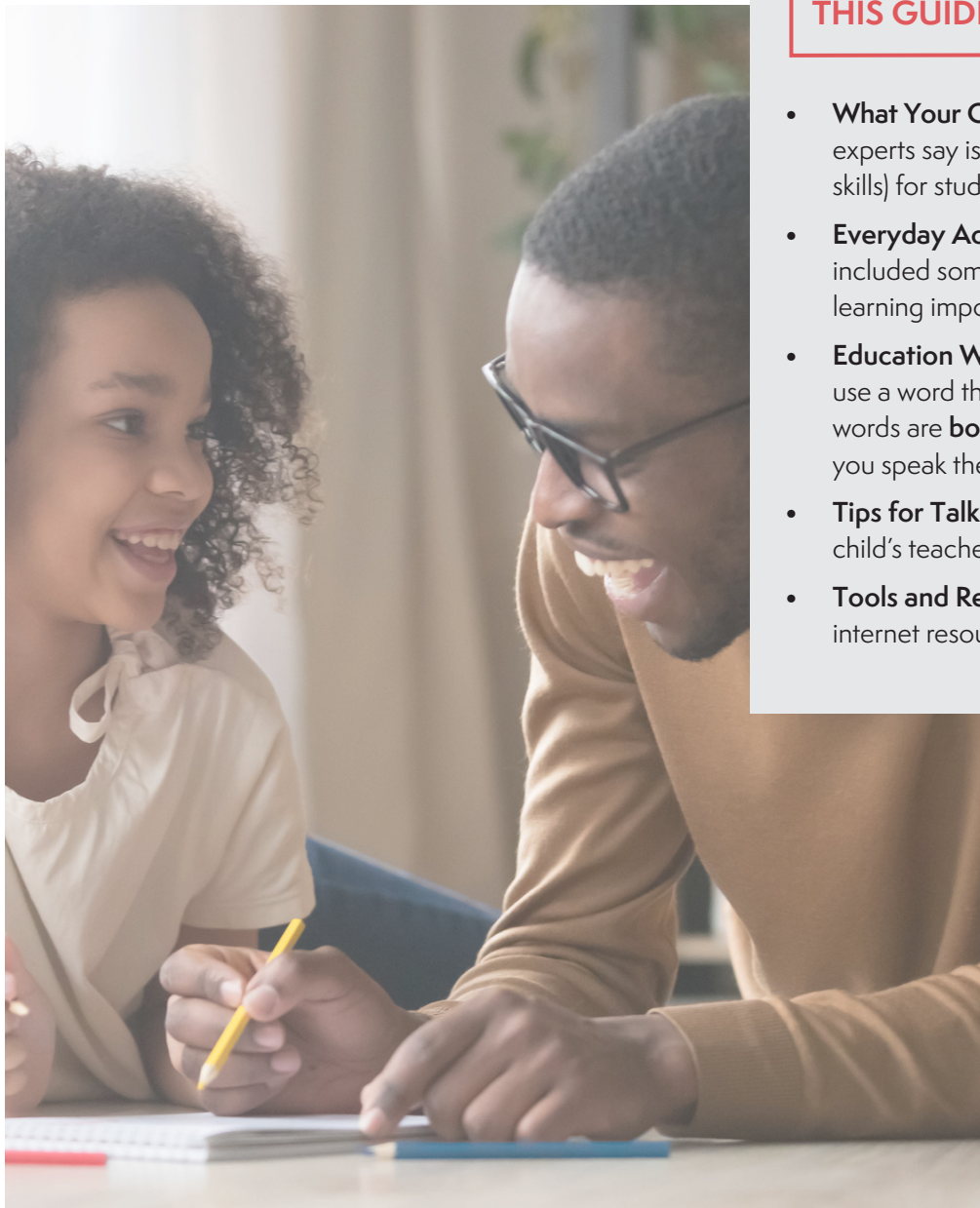
Parents, family members, grandparents, and other caregivers play a critical role in learning at home. So, we include all these people when we talk about how families can support kids.

This guide is meant to support families and students academically in literacy and math. Of course, students will be learning other subjects too, but literacy and math are the building blocks for everything else.

GRADE 3

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- **What Your Child Should Know & Be Able to Do** – What experts say is the most important content (knowledge and skills) for students to learn by end of third grade.
- **Everyday Activities to Support Learning** – We've included some ways you can support your child in learning important content and skills in literacy and math.
- **Education Words** – Sometimes, you'll hear educators use a word that has a specific meaning in schools. Those words are **bolded**. Understanding those terms will help you speak the same language.
- **Tips for Talking with Teachers** – How you and your child's teacher can work together to help your child grow.
- **Tools and Resources to Help** – We've chosen a few internet resources that best match each grade's content.



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LITERACY

WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO



Throughout the school year, 3rd grade students will spend the most time working on the following topics. They should understand them well by the end of the year.

Learning to read and write:

- Matching letters and sounds to sound out and write out most words. Students should be able to decode accurately and write words with several syllables and know and use **suffixes** and **prefixes**.
- Writing complete sentences and simple paragraphs about what they are learning, with mostly correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- Reading grade level texts smoothly and with expression, at a **fluency** rate of around 80-140 words per minute.

Learning about the world through text:

- Asking and answering questions about stories and texts read independently. Retelling what happened, explaining key ideas, and describing connections between ideas. Showing text evidence that supports their thinking.
- Figuring out the meaning of unknown words in text by using context or tools like dictionaries and glossaries. Determining or clarifying the meaning of unknown words, words with multiple meanings, or **figurative language** in context.
- Using linking words and phrases to connect ideas (such as “also,” “another,” “more,” “but”).
- Showing something new they have learned from a text or about a topic. This can be in any form: speaking and conversation, illustrations, letters, journals, stories, posters, or sentences on the page.
- Writing about what happened or information learned from the text. Children should include a title, an introductory sentence or section, well developed examples, and a conclusion sentence or section.



EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Turn on the closed captioning while watching TV to allow your child to read along with the dialogue.
- Encourage your child each day to choose a book they want to read on their own. Reading lots of books over time is more important than the type of text.
- Have “book talk” conversations. Ask your child to share the important ideas in their own words and show you what part of the text provided this information.
- Pick a topic to learn about together. Read books, look online, do things together. You can help your child build knowledge and develop a love of learning.
- Encourage your child to use writing in the real world. This can include authentic writing (grocery lists, notes, chore lists, etc.) as well as writing in a journal, book response notebook, or other creative writing opportunities.



MATHEMATICS

WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO



Throughout the school year, 3rd grade students will spend the most time working on the following topics. They should understand them well by the end of the year.

- Remembering the product of any two single-digit numbers (remembering that $7 \times 9 = 63$). Dividing mentally with ease for problems within the times tables ($56 \div 8 = 7$).
- Solving two-step word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. (For example, “You already have 12 pens. There are 5 new packs of pens with 6 pens in each pack. How many pens do you have now?”)
- Beginning to multiply numbers with more than one digit (multiplying 9×80).
- Understanding the meaning of division. Relating division to multiplication. (For example, “I know that $63 \div 9 = 7$ because I remember $7 \times 9 = 63$.”)
- Understanding fractions as parts of wholes. For example, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch is the length of 3 of the parts when 1 inch is broken into 4 equal parts.
- Understanding fractions as numbers. This includes representing fractions and whole numbers on a **number line** diagram; equating whole numbers and fractions ($\frac{6}{6} = 1$ and $3 = \frac{3}{1}$); and comparing fractions in simple cases where the **numerators** are equal or the **denominators** are equal ($\frac{2}{8}$ is less than $\frac{6}{8}$ because two parts of a given size are less than six parts of the same size).



EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Ask children real-world addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems with two steps. For example:
 - Your teacher, Mr. Dent, had 32 markers. He buys new boxes of markers that have 9 markers in each box. Now, he has 86 markers. How many new boxes did he buy?
 - Students in 3 art classes cut 728 inches of ribbon into 8-inch long pieces. Two of the classes together cut 656 inches of ribbon. How many 8-inch long pieces of ribbon did the other class cut?
- Use the language of unit fractions (one-fourth, one-half, one-third) when sharing. (“You get one-half of the cookie, and your brother gets one-half of the cookie.”)
- Practice times tables (all products of two one-digit numbers) and relate the multiplication to an understanding of division (6×4 is 24, therefore, $24 \div 6$ is 4).
- Read story books about multiplication. Talk about how multiplication makes sense when dealing with groups of objects. Here is a list of some good books from which to choose: <https://www.the-best-childrens-books.org/teaching-multiplication.html>.



EDUCATION WORDS



Sometimes, you'll hear educators use a word that has a specific meaning in schools. Understanding those terms will help you speak the same language!

Automaticity

Automaticity is the ability to do things without thinking about each step in the process. It is usually the result of learning, repetition, and practice.

Figurative language

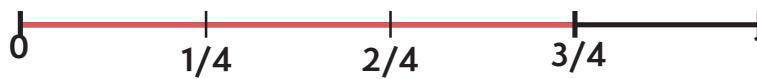
Figurative language uses figures of speech to be more interesting, effective, and impactful. ("My dog's coat is as black as coal." "He was a lion when he fought for what was right.")

Fluency

The ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression that shows comprehension of what is being read.

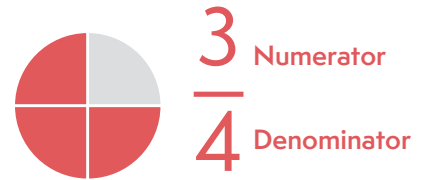
Number line

A straight line with numbers placed at equal segments along its length.



Numerator and denominator

The numerator is the top number in a fraction. It shows how many parts we have. The denominator is the bottom number in a fraction. It shows how many parts the item is divided into.



Prefix

A prefix is a group of letters added to the beginning of a word that change its meaning. Adding "un" to the word "clean" makes the word mean "not clean." Other common prefixes are "re," "dis," "over," "mis," and "out."

Reading level

Teachers often determine the grade level at which a student is reading. But sometimes, children are then limited to reading texts at that level (typically a letter or number). This practice is one to be wary of, particularly if children are limited to reading only texts that are below the grade level goals.

Suffix

A suffix is a group of letters added to the end of a word. Suffixes can change the meaning of a word. Adding "less" to "end" changes its meaning to "without end." A suffix can also change how the word is used. The noun "child" becomes an adjective "childish" when you add the suffix "ish."

Text sets

Text sets are carefully grouped sets of texts and media resources focused on a specific topic designed to help all learners build background knowledge and vocabulary through a lot of reading on science, social studies, and other high-interest topics.



TIPS FOR TALKING WITH TEACHERS

Literacy

- What are my child's strengths, and how do you use them in instruction?
- How do you select texts? Will my child see characters and topics that represent them, their background, and their identity? Will they learn new perspectives and about new and diverse characters through the texts you use in the classroom?
- What topics are children learning about through reading? What should my child be able to understand, write, and talk about as a result of what they have read? Topics in history? Topics in science?
- Has my child mastered decoding single words and words with lots of syllables? If not, what supports will be provided to ensure that they are able to decode accurately and with **automaticity**?
- Is my child able to speak and listen during class discussions and conversations in ways that demonstrate they understand what they are reading and learning about? Are they able to use evidence from the text, present their responses in detail, and speak clearly about the topic or text? If not, what challenges are they facing?
- How frequently does my child read grade level text independently? If they are not reading grade level text independently, why not? How are you supporting any reading needs they have while still allowing for time with grade level text? How can I help?
- What kinds of book(s) is my child reading during independent reading? Are they limited to a specific **reading level**?

Math

- What kinds of number problems are children learning to solve this year?
- Ask for specific updates on how your child is progressing in their understanding of the key content of the grade.
- How does my child approach complex math tasks? What are some suggestions for me to encourage them in learning challenging content? How can I support a positive approach to learning math?
- What should my child be able to understand and talk about as a result of what they have learned?
- Is my child able to demonstrate to you that they understand what they are learning about? If not, what challenges are they facing?
- How can I support a positive approach to learning math?





TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO HELP



Literacy

- What third grade writing samples look like from the start of the year to the end
<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/category/milestones-topics/writing-samples/>
- Forty passages to help students build **fluency** over the course of the school year
<https://achievethecore.org/page/1021/fluency-packet-for-the-2-3-grade-band>
- Easy-to-use materials that help your third grader research and write to inform or explain
<https://www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org/WPDEV/research-packs/>
- Can your third grader complete these literacy tasks?
<https://belearninghero.org/readiness-check/ela-quiz/?level=grade-03>
- How fluently is your third grader reading? Use this tool to find out
http://www.timrasinski.com/presentations/multidimensional_fluency_rubric_4_factors.pdf
- How to use **text sets** to find resources and ideas about learning about any subject through reading
<https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Text%20Set%20Guidance.pdf>



Math

- Parent roadmaps: What should children be learning in Grade 3? How can families support that learning?
<https://www.cgcs.org/Page/244>
- Capture: A fun card game to practice multiplication
<https://twoqu41bs5kerai2f3lyxkm7-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Capture.pdf>
- Video showing how students can place fractions on a **number line**
<https://www.pbs.org/video/good-know-fractions-number-line-grade-3/>
- Fraction bars help students see and understand fractions
<http://toytheater.com/fraction-bars/>
- Missing Divisor: Students select the missing divisor to complete the equation
<http://toytheater.com/missing-divisor/>
- **Fluency** resources to practice Grade 3 math skills
<https://achievethecore.org/page/2948/fluency-resources-for-grade-level-routines>
- Are fractions numbers? Questions to allow students to explain their understanding of fractions
<https://achievethecore.org/page/929/are-fractions-numbers>
- Comparing Fractions: A game to help children understand the size of fractions
<https://achievethecore.org/page/2774/comparing-fractions-game>
- Multiplication and division tasks to practice Grade 3 math
<https://achievethecore.org/page/841/multiplication-and-division-fluency-set-of-tasks>
- A readiness check to find out how your child is doing
<https://belearninghero.org/readiness-check/>
- Tasks for a variety of math topics at the 3rd grade level
<http://tasks.illustrativemathematics.org/content-standards/3>