

In 1st grade, your child will become a more independent reader and writer. Your child will continue to learn and practice rules for recognizing the sounds that make up words and will be able to sound out more complex words. Such foundational skills are necessary and important components of developing proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend a wide range of materials. Students will learn to think about what they read and talk about the main ideas of simple stories. As they write and speak, 1st graders will learn to use language appropriately; this includes using complete sentences and spelling words with increasing accuracy.

## Skills Your Child Will Be Working On

- Using phonics (matching letters and sounds) and word analysis skills to figure out unfamiliar words when reading and writing
- Describing characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details
- Getting facts and information from different writings
- Writing about a topic, supplying some facts, and providing some sense of opening and closing
- Participating in shared research and writing projects (e.g., exploring a number of "how-to" books and using them to write a sequence of instructions)
- Taking part in conversations about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others and asking questions to clear up any confusion
- Describing people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly and with complete sentences
- Producing and expanding complete simple and compound statements, questions, commands, and exclamations
- Identifying the correct meaning for a word with multiple meanings, based on the sentence or paragraph in which the word is used (e.g., deciding whether the word bat means a flying mammal or a club used in baseball)
- Learning to think about finer distinctions in the meanings of near-synonyms (e.g., marching, prancing, strutting, strolling, walking)

## Learning Activity to Use at Home

### READING ACTIVITY

As you are reading to your child, ask him or her to identify the main characters in the story and where the story takes place. Stop periodically at key points in the book and ask your child to name some of the key events that have taken place in the story. As you are reading to your child, express your own opinions about things that happen in the story and ask your child whether or not they agree with you and to explain why.

Use your "adult" words to talk to your child. Try to expand your child's vocabulary by using as many adult words and synonyms for the same thing or idea. For example, instead of always saying "Let's talk about that." you could use the **synonyms**, "chat," "discuss" or even "converse" about a topic to expand your child's vocabulary.

### WRITING ACTIVITY

To help your child understand how to sequence events on 'how to do' something, talk with your child about a daily routine (i.e. getting ready in the morning, prepare a simple breakfast, describe the bed time routine, etc.). Pick one routine, and have your child explain each step to you. First, have your child talk through the order of events using 3-4 steps (First, second, third, and last or first, then, next, finally). After you have discussed each of the steps together, next, use a large piece of paper (i.e. 12 x 18), and fold it into four squares. Label each square (1, 2, 3 and 4). In each box, have your child write the word (first, second, third, and last). Make sure to leave lots of space in each box, and have your child draw a picture of each step in the correct order. If your child has more to say about each step, you can dictate what they say and write it down within available space in each box.

**Teacher and Parent Conferencing** - Topics for ongoing conversations throughout the school year with your child's teacher.

The focus in these early years should be in the development of good reading habits. When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In first grade, these include:

- Is your child reading on grade-level orally with accuracy and **fluency** to support comprehension
- Can your child explain the major differences between books that tell a stories and books and books that give information?
- Is your child writing in complete sentences

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?