

2011–2012



PARENT GUIDE *to Elementary Curriculum*

K

Kindergarten

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

MATHEMATICS

SCIENCE

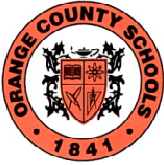
SOCIAL STUDIES

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

ARTS EDUCATION

HEALTHFUL LIVING

WORLD LANGUAGE



Orange County Board of Education

200 East King Street
Hillsborough, NC 27278

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

This Orange County Schools Curriculum Guide reflects the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* for students in grades K-5. It is designed to give you an overview of the content students study in grades K-5 as well as the variety skills students need in order to be successful. More in-depth information can be found about specific subjects and skills by visiting the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction at its web site www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum.

It is important to understand that reading and writing skills are process skills that students learn and master in grades K-12; consequently, there are no grade specific skills or month-by-month sequential topics in reading and writing. Instead, it is the level of complexity with which students are able to analyze, interpret, generalize, and hypothesize that changes from grade to grade. As students advance from grade to grade the text levels that students will read and work with across content areas becomes more difficult. Finally, vocabulary and grammatical techniques become more advanced as students progress.

Through this Guide, we hope to provide you with enough information to enable you to discuss curriculum with your child and his/her teacher(s). The Orange County Schools teachers are happy to discuss curriculum in depth so that you have knowledge of how our district works to ensure that each student reaches her/his potential.

The Standards-Based Report Card for Grades K-5, which we began using in 2006-2007, reports more accurately how students are performing in relation to state described proficiency standards. Should you desire more information about how the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the Orange County Report Card align, please ask your child's teacher to discuss this with you.

Finally, we believe that all students deserve the best teachers and the best educational opportunities possible. To this end, we in Orange County Schools commit ourselves to plan and deliver a purposeful program of study that challenges all students to be learners and generators of knowledge and maximizes their many and varied abilities.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information or assistance to you, your family, and your Orange County Schools student(s).

Sincerely,

Denise Morton, Ed.D, Chief Academic Officer

Lisa Ann Napp

Lisa Ann Napp, Ed.D, Director of Elementary Instruction

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

During the kindergarten year, students experience the enjoyment of reading while they learn foundational strategies and skills that enable them to participate in fluency building activities and read independently. Students learn:

- **To apply the skills of phonemic awareness, letter names, sound-letter correspondences, decoding skills, high frequency vocabulary, and comprehension**
- **To listen to the life experiences of others, express their own life experiences, dramatize stories, and respond to stories through art and writing activities.**

Students extend their oral language skills as they:

- **Follow directions that have a series of steps**
- **Express the main point of a conversation**
- **Adjust language to different situations**
- **Use talk to clarify ideas or experiences**
- **Track print when listening to a familiar text being read or when rereading their own writing.**

Finally, students learn how oral language is recorded to convey experiences and ideas as they:

- **Observe their own experiences being written**
- **Develop spelling strategies and skills by representing spoken language with temporary and/or conventional spelling**
- **Write most letters of the alphabet**
- **Draw and write signs, labels, and notes, copy environmental print, dictate a story/information**
- **Understand that writing conveys meaning.**

Students spend from two to three hours each day engaged in English Language Arts activities.



MATHEMATICS

The North Carolina Mathematics Standard Course of Study is organized around five strands or goals for all K-8 students. These strands are: Number and Operations, Measurement, Geometry, Data Analysis and Probability, and Algebra. The knowledge and skills required from students become more complex at each grade level.

Kindergarten students are expected to:

- **Recognize, model, and write whole numbers through 30**
- **Explore concepts of measurement**
- **Explore concepts of geometry**
- **Collect, organize, and display data**
- **Model simple patterns and sort objects**

Students spend approximately one hour each day engaged in a study of mathematics.



SCIENCE

Students begin their kindergarten year in science by focusing on their five senses to observe animals, earth materials, weather, and other objects. Within their classrooms and around their schools, they begin to explore the physical world around them. Their natural curiosity leads them to investigate by observing and manipulating common objects and materials as well as collecting and interpreting simple data. Learning is guided by the unifying concepts of evidence, exploration, and measurement.

SCIENCE – continued

Kindergarten students explore and observe in order to better understand:

- **Similarities and differences in animals**
- **Weather concepts**
- **The common properties of objects**
- **The use of measurements to increase their ability to describe their world.**



SOCIAL STUDIES

Kindergarten students begin their study of social studies by first looking at themselves, their families, and other families around the world. They learn how individuals and families grow and change and compare how they are alike and different. This global approach to social studies enables students to approach the understanding of self and family while they develop and define concepts about the universal concept of family structure. For example, they acquire the concept that all families have basic common needs; yet they meet these needs in a variety of ways.

During the year, kindergarten students focus on:

- **The importance of responsible citizenship in the school and other social environments**
- **The concept of change**
- **How special days and events are celebrated**
- **How economic and geographic factors affect real life situations**
- **How technology is used.**



INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Students in kindergarten are introduced to identifying sources of information and relevant sources of information, understanding the difference between text read for enjoyment and text read for information, using technology tools, understanding the importance of good questions in conducting research and safety and ethical issues related to information and technology resources.

The kindergarten curriculum provides structured, supervised learning experiences that require students to:

- **Identify Sources of Information (e.g., print, non-print, electronic, people).**
- **Identify the relevant Sources of Information for a given task.**
- **Understand the meaning of fiction and nonfiction.**
- **Identify resources with appropriate factual information.**
- **Use a variety of technology tools to gather data and information (e.g., Web-based resources, e-books, online communication tools, etc.).**
- **Use a variety of technology tools to organize data and information (e.g., word processor, graphic organizer, audio and visual recording, online collaboration tools, etc.).**
- **Use technology tools to present data and information (multimedia, audio and visual recording, online collaboration tools, etc.).**
- **Identify questions that are relevant for a given topic or purpose.**
- **Identify examples of responsible use and care of technology hardware and software.**
- **Remember internet safety rules.**
- **Recognize the importance of respect for the work of others**



MUSIC

The purpose of the music program is to provide experiences and opportunities which develop childrens' creativity, growth in musical knowledge and skills, and an appreciation for a variety of cultures and musical styles. The focus in grades K-2 is to create, respond to, and perform music. The music program reinforces instruction in other areas by providing a connection to the total school curriculum.

Children engage in creating, performing, and responding to music. Singing, playing instruments, creating, moving, and listening to music enable students to acquire musical skills; they also provide opportunities for development of higher level thinking skills.

The music curriculum is based on a continuum of musical concepts. At all levels, the focus is based on developmentally-appropriate activities, materials, and song selections. Kindergartners focus on music which develops basic rhythmic and melodic skills, socialization skills, positive self-concepts, and appreciation for different kinds of music through connected content activities.



VISUAL ARTS

Students in kindergarten are introduced to the four basic areas of the visual arts: art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. Importance is placed on fostering confidence by involving students in art activities directly related to their own experiences. The development of observation skills, exploration of imagination, and eye/hand coordination are also encouraged and reinforced.

HEALTHFUL LIVING

A comprehensive healthful living education program is designed to help each student develop pro-active health promotion behaviors. Students should develop positive attitudes toward regular physical activity and its effect on health. The following educational descriptors are reflective of the goals and objectives found in the K-3 healthful living education curriculum:

By the end of grade three:

Students will be aware of the important health risks for their age group and will comprehend some of the major influences on their own health, especially including the role of their own behaviors in regard to eating breakfast and balanced meals; rest and exercise; using seat belts; responding to traffic, fire, and other warning signs, sounds, and symbols; avoiding burns and getting help in an emergency; and the impact of substances, including alcohol and tobacco, on their lives; identify social and psychological contributions of physical activity.

Students will be able to demonstrate ways in which they can manage stress; be responsible for their own behaviors; cope with fear, embarrassment and failure; recognize and respond appropriately to teasing, aggression and bullying; resolve conflict; cooperate, share, and respecting the rights of others; know safe practices, class rules and procedures and apply them with little or no effort.

Students will know and understand the value of being physically fit and the types of activities that contribute to total fitness; express feelings with challenges; be aware that choosing to be physically active is a conscious decision and personal choice for both enjoyment and health-related benefits. Students will be able to demonstrate fundamental motor skills; develop and refine creative movements; demonstrate manipulative skills; work cooperatively with others to complete a task; display appropriate behaviors during social situations; express an enjoyment for movement experiences; and want to participate in community activities.

HEALTHFUL LIVING – continued

Healthful Living Focus Areas – Kindergarten

- • Personal hygiene
- • Personal responsibility
- • Personal safety
- • Recognize categories of My Pyramid and identify healthy food and beverage choices
- • Develop emerging skills of catching, kicking, throwing, and striking
- • Heart Rate identification
- • Respectful participation



WORLD LANGUAGES

In the Elementary School Foreign Language Program, the primary goal is the development of listening and speaking skills and cultural awareness through concrete experiences. Because language acquisition begins with listening, successful language learning activities emphasize comprehension rather than speaking at the beginning stages.

Successful language learning activities involve students in interpersonal communication as they learn songs, recite poems, and give oral commands. At this level, reading and writing are not introduced; instead, emphasis is placed on the oral language necessary for students to become good readers and writers later on.



MODIFIED CURRICULUM

Because some students learn at a more rapid pace than others, because some students come to school who speak a language other than English, and because some students require additional assistance to be successful in learning the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, accommodations are made which modify and/or adapt the curriculum to meet students' needs. Students who qualify for accommodations may have extended time to complete assignments or take tests or they may have the opportunity to work on assignments that have been compressed. The pace of the lessons may be slowed down or increased depending on students' needs.

K-2 ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are both formal and informal in nature. On the one hand, they are part of an on-going informal process to enable each classroom teacher to design instruction to meet the individual needs of each child; on the other hand, they are more formal and enable the teacher to compare the child's progress against a standard measure and complete a report to parents. The same instrument may be used for both informal and formal assessments because it monitors achievement of benchmarks in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

While teachers continually use assessment to plan instruction, results are reported to parents at the end of each nine-week marking period.

Grade K-2 Literacy assessment provides for documentation of each student's development and progress in reading and writing skills, strategies, and comprehension, as well as documentation of growth over time. Grade K-2 mathematics assessment provides documented, on-going, individualized assessments throughout the year and a summative evaluation at the end of the year.

The intended purpose of these assessments is fourfold:

- **To provide information about the progress of each student for instructional adaptations and early interventions**
- **To provide next-year's teachers with information about the status of each of their incoming students**
- **To inform parents about the status of their children relative to grade-level standards at the end of the year**
- **To provide the school and school district with information about the achievement status and progress of groups of students (by grade, by school, etc.**

