

PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS GRADES K-1-2

Dance • Music • Theatre • Visual Arts

Snapshot of Arts Learning in Kindergarten

Students in kindergarten are exploring their world through their senses and improving their perceptual skills by learning about, creating, performing, presenting and responding to dance, music, theatre and the visual arts. They act out the stories they hear and pictures they see as they perform in collaborative groups. They sing songs and tap out rhythms.

Students turn everyday movements such as walking and jumping into a dance. They draw a picture of their friends and family. Students

learn to use glue and scissors while exploring the use of line, color, shape, texture, value and space in their artwork. They see, listen and respond to dance, music, theatre and the visual arts from various cultures and time periods. For kindergarten students, the arts are among their first exciting adventures in learning. They are beginning to develop the vocabulary and the skills that are unique to the arts yet can be applied to learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Students turn everyday movements such as walking and jumping into a dance.

Snapshot of Arts Learning in the First Grade

In first grade, students begin to develop the focus needed to succeed in creating, performing and presenting works in the arts. They also learn to work with others both in creating artworks and in sharing the space and the materials needed. They listen when others speak and watch others perform as they participate by being an audience member. By connecting the arts with other content areas, students build their vocabulary and pre-reading skills, such as defining the plot, predicting, summarizing and recognizing the sequence of events in a story. They perform brief dance sequences with a beginning, middle and end. Through folk and traditional dances, students learn more about why, when and where people dance and how dances are similar or different. Singing and playing classroom instruments improves students' listening skills, technique and understanding of musical forms. Acting through facial expressions, gestures and movements helps students develop characters as they improvise scenes. In visual arts, students work both in flat, two-dimensional formats and create three-dimensional works of art as they learn about the use of color, lines and shapes in their artwork.

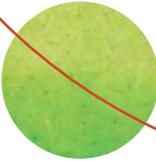




Snapshot of Arts Learning in the Second Grade

Second grade students are expanding their knowledge and skills in the arts and become excited when they discover they can connect their previous learning in the arts to problem solving in something new. In a dance sequence, students move slowly then quickly and reach high then low while communicating an idea or mood. A new world of music opens up to them as they listen to different musical expressions from various time periods and learn verbal syllables for the musical scale such as *sol* and *fa*. This is the beginning of learning to read, write and perform basic patterns of pitch, which opens the door to, playing, singing and composing music. Cooperation and communication skills are developed as students create and perform theatrical group improvisations and tableaux. Intriguing new visual art-making processes are introduced to students as they learn to do printmaking and collage. Now students are beginning to evaluate their own work as they analyze what they intended to express in the arts and how well they succeeded.

Cooperation and communication skills are developed as students create and perform theatrical group improvisations and tableaux.



Dance Content

Examples of Dance Learning in Kindergarten

- Performing basic locomotor movement skills in response to oral instructions such as walking, jumping, hopping and balancing.
- Creating movements alone or with a partner that reflect a variety of personal experiences, such as being happy, excited sad or angry.
- Improvising a dance that has a beginning, middle and end.
- Explaining and demonstrating basic features that distinguishes one kind of dance from another such as speed, the force/energy used, costume, setting, cultural expression and music.

Improvising a dance that has a beginning, middle and end.



Examples of Dance Learning in First Grade

- Creating and performing a short sequence of movements by themselves and with others that includes forming shapes and lines, becoming big then small and movements that have a beginning, middle and end.
- Naming and performing basic locomotor movements (movement progressing through space from one spot to another) like skipping, leaping and axial movements (when the body stays in one spot while a body part moves around this axis) such as stretching, bending and turning in place
- Responding in movement sequences to a wide range of stimuli such as music, books, pictures, rhymes, fabrics and props.
- Naming and performing folk/traditional dances from the United States and other countries.

Examples of Dance Learning in Second Grade

- Creating and performing short movement sequences using varied tempos (slow to fast) and rhythmic patterns (timed movements through space).
- Creating, memorizing and performing original expressive movements alone and with peers by using stories, poems, or nursery rhymes to inspire dance ideas.
- Naming and performing rhythms from different cultures such as those made through clapping, stamping or using whole body movement.
- Using basic dance vocabulary to describe a dance observed or performed by peers and to describe how the dance communicated an idea or mood to the viewer.



Music Content

Examples of Music Learning in Kindergarten

- Identifying, describing and performing basic elements in music such as high/low, fast/slow, loud/soft and beat.
- Singing age-appropriate songs from memory.
- Playing classroom instruments and moving or verbalizing to demonstrate awareness of beat, tempo, dynamics and melodic direction.
- Identifying, discussing and singing or playing music from various cultures written for a specific purpose such as for play, a work song, a celebration or a lullaby.

Examples of Music Learning in First Grade

- Singing songs with increased expression and playing singing games from various cultures.
- Identifying and performing simple musical forms such as a phrase and ABA. A phrase is comparable to a sentence or to poetry. AB is a form in music composition that has two parts, an A theme and a B theme.
- Reading, writing and performing simple patterns of rhythm and pitch, using beat, rest and divided beat (two sounds on one beat).
- Improvising simple rhythmic parts to accompany a melody using body percussion (e.g., snapping, clapping) or classroom instruments.

Examples of Music Learning in Second Grade

- Reading, writing and performing simple rhythmic patterns, using eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes and rests and patterns of pitch.
- Identifying and describing individual wind, string, brass and percussion instruments used in a variety of music.
- Singing songs by memory and playing singing games from various cultures with increased accuracy.
- Identifying how musical elements such as pitch, tempo, form and dynamics communicate ideas or moods.

Singing songs by memory and playing singing games from various cultures with increased accuracy.



Theatre Content

Examples of Theatre Learning in Kindergarten

- Learning and using the vocabulary of theatre such as actor, setting, audience and cooperation while performing group pantomimes and improvisations to retell familiar stories.
- Speaking clearly and expressively to convey the thoughts, feelings and ideas that a character might have or when retelling a familiar story.
- Performing imitative movements, rhythmical activities and theatre games such as freeze, statues and mirrors.
- Retelling or dramatizing stories, myths, fables and fairy tales from various cultures and time periods.

Retelling or dramatizing stories, myths, fables and fairy tales from various cultures and time periods.

Examples of Theatre Learning in First Grade

- Using the vocabulary of theatre, such as play, plot (beginning, middle and end), improvisation, pantomime, stage, character and audience as they describe a theatrical experience.
- Identifying how and why items such as props, costumes, masks and sets are used in theater.
- Being a good audience member then expressing personal responses to what they liked about a theatrical experience and their own emotional reaction to the experience.
- Demonstrating skills and the ability to work cooperatively in presenting a tableau, an improvisation and a pantomime, which may be based on a story or a life experience.

Examples of Theatre Learning in Second Grade

- Using the vocabulary of theatre, such as plot (beginning, middle and end), scene, sets, conflict and script to describe experiences in theatre.
- Performing in group improvisational theatrical games that develop cooperative skills and concentration.
- Discussing an actor's performance as to the use of voice, gesture, facial expression and movement to create a character.
- Using problem-solving and cooperative skills in sequencing story points and identifying characters, setting and conflict to dramatize a story, a current event or a concept from another subject area.





Visual Arts Content

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in Kindergarten

- Identifying and describing the elements of art (line color, shape/form, texture, value, space) in the world around them and in works of art.
- Developing safe use of tools such as scissors and skills in using glue to construct a three-dimensional form from paper or to make a collage.
- Using question words (i.e., who, what, where, when, why and how) to describe works of art showing people, places and things from a variety of times and places and including what they think is being expressed or communicated in the artwork.
- Discussing their own works of art using the art vocabulary they are learning to tell how they made a specific artwork and giving reasons why they like the artwork they made.

Identifying and describing the elements of art (line color, shape/form, texture, value, space) in the world around them and in works of art.

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in First Grade

- Identifying the elements of art in objects in nature, in the environment and in works of art, such as the lines in a leaf, the texture of different fabrics and the different shapes used in a painting.
- Participating in color mixing with paints by combining two primary colors to create a secondary color (red and yellow makes orange, blue and yellow makes green and red and blue makes violet).
- Creating drawings, paintings and/or sculptures (e.g.: clay or papier-mâché) based on observations of actual objects such as flowers, people, animals, or buildings.
- Identifying and describing various subject matter in art such as in landscapes, seascapes and portraits, and describing various art forms from different cultures such as African masks, Mexican ceramics, Japanese Sumi-e painting and Native American baskets.

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in Second Grade

- Identifying the elements of art they used in their own artwork and in objects in nature, the environment and in works of art such as lines, colors, shapes, textures and space.
- Demonstrating beginning skills in the use of basic tools, art-making processes and media such as stencils, printmaking, oil pastels and watercolors.
- Depicting the illusion of depth (space) in a work of art and using overlapping shapes, relative size and placement within the picture.
- Identifying and discussing how art is used in events and celebrations in various cultures, both past and present, including the use of art in their own lives.



Talking to Your Child's Teacher About the Visual and Performing Arts

Visual and performing arts programs vary widely throughout the state as to what is offered, how much time is spent on arts learning and who teaches the arts. When you talk to your child's teacher about the arts program, it will be helpful to get a clear picture of your child's opportunity to engage in arts learning as well as the content and/or focus of the instruction at this grade span. Following are four questions that may guide a conversation with your child's teacher.

1. How much instructional time does my child receive per week or month or during the school year in each of the arts: dance, music, theatre and visual arts? Is this time dedicated to the arts or are the arts integrated into learning in other areas of the curriculum? (Note: The California Education Code requires instruction in dance, music, theatre and visual arts for grades one through grade twelve.)
2. Is arts instruction based on the state standards and is it sequential through the grade levels?
3. Who teaches each of the arts to my child at this grade level? Here are some examples: the classroom teacher, a credentialed dance, music, theatre and/or visual art teacher, a teaching artist from a community arts organization or a volunteer such as an artist or parent.
4. What does my child particularly enjoy and/or need to work on in each of the arts disciplines?
5. Reflecting on the list of sample arts learning provided in this document at my child's grade level, what are two or three of your curricular goals for the students in each of the arts?

Helping Your Child Learn in the Visual and Performing Arts at School, at Home and in the Community

At school:

- Volunteer your time by assisting in the classroom when the arts are being taught.
- Share your personal expertise in the arts through school or classroom performances, demonstrations and lessons.
- Share your expertise in a folk or traditional art form with your child's class.
- Assist with costumes and props for theatre and dance.
- Offer support for the arts program by donating supplies and/or equipment for the arts program.

At home:

- Talk about good health-related habits that a dancer, like an athlete, would need.
- Ask your child to teach you a simple song or musical pattern such as ABA.
- After reading a story with your child, ask him/her to talk about the main character, the setting and the conflict in the story.
- Set up an "art space" for your child where she/he can keep a pad of white paper, a box of crayons and a beginner's set of watercolors along with a brush and a plastic cup for water. Don't forget the paper towels.

In the community:

- Support your child's learning in the arts with lessons and experiences outside of school at art museums or art centers, and with community dance, theatre and music groups or teachers.
- See if art museums have free days and activities for families or if performing artists are appearing in a park or library.
- Take your child to art gallery exhibits and performances of dance, music and theatre that are appropriate for this grade level.
- Participate in the art form along side of your child sharing the experience together.



Expanding or Improving the Arts Program at Your Child's School

If you want to support the visual and performing arts program in your child's school or see what you can do to strengthen arts instruction across the grade levels in your school, here are a few ideas for getting started.

- Go to the California Department of Education's Visual and Performing Arts pages starting with the following: www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/vp/vapaguidance.asp
- Look to the Statewide Arts Education Database to find out how your school district is doing in providing arts education to students in grades 6-12. Visit createca.net to read about the Arts Ed Data Project and search data for your school or district.
- Visit the California State PTA website to learn why a full curriculum that includes the arts is essential for all students. You'll be able to view and download free resources in multiple languages. www.capta.org
- Join PTA's SMARTS Parents for the Arts Network to receive newsletters and information directly to your inbox.
- Be a champion for the arts in your school. To get started, download an informational flier. www.capta.org/smarts
- Start or join an "Arts Now" coalition in your community, www.artsed411.org

Find more resources by contacting other statewide organizations that support arts education such as:

The California County Superintendents Education Services Association Arts Initiative

A statewide network of County Offices that believes that the visual and performing arts are an integral part of a comprehensive curriculum and are essential for learning in the 21st century. www.ccsesaarts.org

The California Alliance for Arts Education

The Alliance advocates for high quality arts education for all students by providing policy expertise and by mobilizing a statewide network of advocates and allied partners. www.artsed411.org/about_us

CREATE CA

CREATE CA is a coalition of dedicated and innovative leaders who understand that together we have the power to create lasting change for every California student. Our mission is to ensure ALL students are able to reach their full potential by advancing an education model that promotes creativity and the arts for the workforce of tomorrow. www.createca.net

