

SECOND GRADE

Parent Guidebook



Dear Parent

Welcome to second grade. This is an exciting time for your child. In second grade, students develop new academic skills, expand their knowledge, and become more independent learners. Second graders also develop important social skills and become more responsible and self-sufficient.

As a parent, there is a great deal you can do to help your child succeed in school. Read on to learn how you can support your second grader during this very important year.



We know that many children are being raised by grandparents or guardians. For the sake of simplicity, the term “parent” refers to any primary caregiver.

Second Grade Parent Guidebook

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Introduction

In second grade, students make huge strides in developing and improving their academic skills. They learn to read fluently, improve and expand their math skills, and use writing to communicate their ideas. This is a very important year, and your support and guidance are key to your child's success.

This book walks you through the ways your child will learn and grow this year—physically, intellectually, and socially. It also discusses what your child might study and learn in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Most importantly, this book provides a number of simple things you can do at home to help your second grader be successful, both in and out of the classroom.



Let's make this a great year!

Children develop at different rates

There is a wide range of what “normal” looks like at this age. Schools recognize that second graders have varying skill levels, and second grade teachers are prepared to work with students with an array of skills and learning preferences.

Growing Up: Second Grade



Physical Development

Second graders' muscle strength and stamina are increasing and they can play and be active for longer periods of time. Muscles in their hands and fingers are also stronger, and their fine motor skills are more coordinated.

Encourage fun physical activities, such as riding bikes, swimming, hiking, or playing catch. You may also consider putting a limit on screen time, especially on weekends when children can spend hours in front of a tablet, computer, or TV.

Intellectual Development

Second graders' thinking and problem solving skills are rapidly developing, which can translate to a lot of questions. Children this age also like to spend lots of time doing (and talking about) the things that interest them.

The vocabularies of children this age are increasing, making it easier for second graders to express their ideas and engage in discussions. Have conversations at dinnertime, and ask your child to tell you about his/her day, or about something specific that happened at school.

Social Development

In second grade, the pressures of the peer group begin to take hold. Children this age often develop "best" friends, and may value their peers' opinions as much as those of their parents.

Since second graders often worry and show a lack of confidence, your child may sometimes need extra encouragement and reassurance from you.

Second Grade Academics

Second grade academics vary depending on the school; however, there are certain skills and subjects you can expect your child to work on this year.

Reading

In second grade, the focus is on “reading for meaning” (reading to understand and remember). There is also an emphasis on fluency (reading with speed, accuracy, and expression).

As the year progresses, students become much better readers. They learn to recognize more words by sight, and learn strategies that help them figure out new words.

Here are some skills your second grader might work on this year:

- ▶ Reading independently, both in the classroom and at home.
- ▶ Reading longer stories, including beginner chapter books.
- ▶ Predicting what will happen next in a story.
- ▶ Using context clues (other parts of a sentence or story) to figure out unknown words.



Create a summary folder

Whenever your child reads a book or watches a TV show or movie he/she enjoys, have your child write a short summary of it, complete with pictures and decorations.

Keep summaries in a folder for your child to share with family members and friends.



Here's what you can do to help your child become a better reader.

Read together

Read to your child every day and have your child read to you. Ask questions such as *"What do you think will happen next?"* and *"What would you do?"*

Help improve comprehension

After reading a book to your second grader, ask your child to tell you what the book was about. Being able to remember and restate important details of a story are key to reading comprehension.

Mix it up (but not too much)

Make reading fun by picking out new books at the library, in bookstores, and online. Encourage family members to give books during gift-giving holidays and birthdays.

New books are fun, but don't forget about the books you've read over and over. Ask your child to read a favorite book aloud, changing the tone of his/her voice for different characters. When your child is familiar with the plot and structure of a story, he/she can work on proper pronunciation and reading in a smoother, more natural tone of voice.

Help decode unknown words

As reading material becomes more challenging, your child is likely to encounter words he/she doesn't know. Help your child decode unfamiliar words by sounding them out, and by using clues from other parts of the sentence or story. Also, help your child look up new words in a print or online dictionary.



Writing

Second graders' writing and spelling skills grow tremendously throughout the year, making it possible for them to write longer sentences, paragraphs, and even stories.

Second graders start writing about different topics, experiences, and their opinions. They also practice finding and correcting their spelling and punctuation errors.

Here are some ways to help your second grader develop and improve his/her writing skills.

- ▶ Help your child write thank you notes for gifts, letters to favorite relatives, and get well cards to sick friends. These are great ways for your child to practice writing with an audience in mind. Also talk about how to use correct capitalization and punctuation.
- ▶ Create a "dialogue journal" (a notebook in which you and your child write back and forth to each other). Your entries can include questions for your child, stories from your life, jokes, and more. Your child can respond and do the same. This will help your child practice both reading and writing.

Encourage creative writing

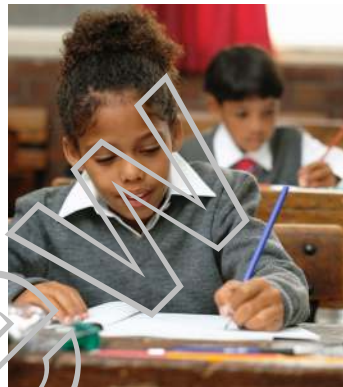
These websites provide fun online writing prompts and story starters for kids:

- ▶ thinkwritten.com/writing-prompts-for-kids
- ▶ journalbuddies.com

Math

This year, your child will learn more ways to work with numbers, including real-world applications. Here are some of the math skills your second grader might work on this year.

- ▶ Adding and subtracting two digit numbers
- ▶ Memorizing addition and subtraction facts
- ▶ Skip counting by fives and tens
- ▶ Telling time and using money
- ▶ Measurement (e.g., inches and ounces)



Try these activities to boost your child's math skills.

- ▶ Quiz your child on addition and subtraction facts (e.g., $8 + 3$, $10 - 4$) while you're eating breakfast, driving to school, or making dinner. Be sure to keep it fun and pressure-free!
- ▶ Give your child a ruler to practice measuring objects around the house. When you're cooking, have your child help you read the recipe and measure ingredients
- ▶ Let your child practice counting money using play or real money. Encourage him/her to pay attention when you check out at the grocery store.

Your child may be learning math very differently from how you learned it. Let your child teach you how he/she does math!

If you or your child need help with a math problem or skill, visit [khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org). This website has many excellent free online math videos.

Encourage a positive attitude

Second graders are learning new math skills and may become frustrated at times. If your child is feeling discouraged or frustrated, provide encouragement and keep a positive attitude. Remind your child that being good at math isn't something you're born with—math is something you learn.

Science

Second grade science varies greatly from school to school; however, most second grade science classes cover topics such as the human body, the solar system, and features of the natural world (e.g., landforms and weather).

The best way to nurture your child's interest in science is to encourage curiosity. Visit museums. Explore nature. Search online together for answers to questions such as "Why is the sky blue?" or "How are thunder and lightning formed?"



Social Studies

In social studies, children continue learning about communities—their own community and others. Students may also start learning about different cultures as well as historical events and figures.

Help your child connect social studies topics to his/her own life. Have an older relative relay their recollections of historical events, or help your child draw a map of your neighborhood or community.

Encourage conversation

Ask your child open-ended questions. Instead of "How was school?" ask, "What did you do in science today?" or "What's something new you learned in social studies?"



Work with Your Child's School

Support and work with the principals, teachers, and counselors at your school. Like you, they want your child to enjoy school and have a successful year.

Stay informed. Attend all parent programs, meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. Also, regularly check your school's website for news and updates.

- ▶ By your words and actions, show your child that doing well in school and getting a good education are very important.
- ▶ Make sure your student is in school every day, and insist that your child follow the school rules and treat everyone with respect.
- ▶ Make the most of parent-teacher conferences. Before each conference, make a list of the information you want to share, along with any questions or concerns. Also, ask your child if there is anything you should discuss with the teacher.

Talk to your child's teacher

If you have concerns about your child's progress, or if your child is having any problems with school, be sure to talk to your child's teacher.

Help Your Child Succeed

Good organizational skills and study habits will help your student succeed in second grade, and for years to come. Here's how you can help.



Develop routines

Routines for sleep, meals, homework, chores, and play provide stability for young learners. What might seem like a simple routine to you may be a source of comfort and accomplishment to your child. Following routines at home may also help your child get better at following routines at school.

Establish morning and nighttime routines that include getting to bed early enough to get the recommended 10-11 hours of sleep.

Make choosing clothes for the next day a part of your child's bedtime routine. It will give your child a sense of control—and make your mornings run more smoothly.

Make homework time productive

Have a quiet, well-lit, comfortable place for your child to study. Equip this area with paper, pencils, pens, a ruler, and markers. When your child is working on homework, limit distractions. Turn off the TV, remove video games, and make homework time a quiet time in your household.



Help improve organizational skills

Second graders often need help with organization. *This is one area in which you can really make a difference!*

- ▶ Make sure that your child has a folder for each class. Remind your child to put all handouts, assignments, and returned tests in the appropriate folders. Loose papers should not be stuck inside books or stuffed into a backpack.
- ▶ Have your child use a student planner to keep track of assignments. Check it regularly to make sure your child is using it correctly.
- ▶ Encourage your child to regularly clean out his/her backpack.
- ▶ Help your child learn how to organize and prioritize homework. Have your child explain to you what needs to be completed, and then help him/her develop a plan to get it all done.
- ▶ Large assignments often seem overwhelming. Show your child how to break down large assignments and projects into smaller, more manageable tasks.
- ▶ Have your child get everything ready for the next day before he/she goes to bed.

Social and Emotional Growth



Second graders are starting to take friendships seriously and they want to be accepted by their peers. They may even have a best friend. But as second graders become more social, they need their parents to help them navigate new situations and emotions.

Making friends

Help your child build social skills by providing opportunities to interact with other children in a variety of settings, such as play dates and extracurricular activities.

Because second graders may start being more selective with their friendships, now is a good time to talk about bullying and exclusion. Talk about how excluding and being mean to other children is hurtful, and make it clear that you're always available to listen and help if someone is causing problems for your child.

Building understanding

Second graders are able to identify and express their feelings. They are also better able to understand how other people feel.

Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings, and discuss yours as well. For example, tell your child that you get frustrated when his/her toys haven't been picked up, and explain why.

Help develop your child's self-esteem

As a parent, you play a vital role in developing your child's self-esteem. First and foremost, understand that your words and actions make a difference to your child.

What you can do

Parents are often quick to express disapproval, but they don't always get around to complimenting their child's behavior. Be on the lookout for situations in which your child is doing a good job or displaying a positive character trait. For example, if you like the way your child completes a chore, say something like, *"I really appreciate your help in the kitchen. You always remember to clean up any mess you make."* Give specifics to reinforce the behavior.

There will be times when you need to correct your child's behavior. Be constructive, and avoid criticism that is harsh or unnecessary, especially in front of others.

Children remember positive statements, so give your child some words of praise and encouragement every day.



In Closing

Helping your child have a successful year doesn't require doing extraordinary things. It's the little things you do every day that provide the guidance and support your child needs.

With your encouragement, love, and support, your child is sure to be successful this year, and in the years to come.

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**Information, tips, and advice
for parents of second grade students**

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