

# Fourth Grade

Knowing the essential skills and strategies our kids will be learning in school helps us know how to support them all year. Find out, by subject, what your kids will be learning this year and read on for strategies to help them be successful students.

## Reading at School:

- Describing the basic elements of stories - such as characters, events, and settings - by drawing on specific details in the text.
- Paying close attention to key features of informational books and articles: these include understanding the main and supporting ideas; being able to compare and contrast information; and explaining how the author uses facts, details, and evidence to support particular points.
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures.
- Relating words that are common in reading to words with similar meanings (*synonyms*) and to their opposites (*antonyms*).

## Support Reading at Home:

Read with your child every day. When your kids see you read, they will read too. Make time every day for reading at home. Read the newspaper, magazines, books, comics, web pages - showing your children that reading is important to you will make it important to them.

Community resources that support reading include the library, of course. Use this priceless resource to supply reading materials throughout your house. Reading and following recipes in the kitchen reinforces Non-fiction reading skills, and talking about the events in a magazine article reinforces sequencing, retelling and identifying facts.

Practice reading will improve reading for your fourth grader. Provide opportunities for practice, and get involved. Ask questions, connect stories, verify facts, tell stories out of order so your child can put them in order, read stories of many different kinds and identify them by name.



## Speaking and Listening at School:



- Paraphrasing and responding to information presented in discussions, such as comparing and contrasting ideas and analyzing evidence that speakers use to support particular points.
- Reporting orally on a topic or telling a story with enough facts and details.

## Support Speaking and Listening at Home:

Paying attention to the things we're learning makes us better at them. Getting students to pay attention to speakers will make them better at delivering speeches of their own. When you are watching TV with your child, point out people giving speeches and talk about what they are doing that makes them easy to listen to.

Things like pace, gestures and eye contact are easy to point out, while individual word choice and emphasis are a little trickier, but equally important. When your child is preparing a speech, or just talking about something important, gently remind him or her of these techniques you noticed together. These conversations will strengthen the vital skills of speaking and listening.

## Writing at School:



- Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with a set of well-organized facts, details, and examples.

- Independently conducting short research projects on different aspects of a topic using evidence from books and the internet.

- Writing complete sentences with correct capitalization and spelling.

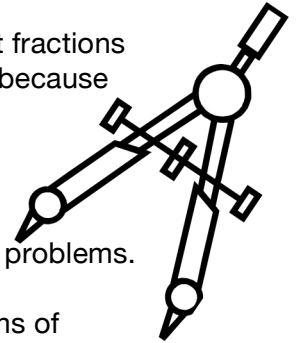
## Support Writing at Home:

Fourth graders are writing for a variety of purposes. To support their development as writers, include writing activities in your family routine. Family journals are a great way to provide motivation and purpose for writing.

Get a blank book or spiral notebook and explain that this is a method for you to communicate with each other. Once or twice a week write and share back and forth. When you notice errors, gently point them out and provide guidance for their correction. You will not only know your child better and better through this method, but you will watch their writing become more expressive and correct.

## Math at School:

- Using whole-number arithmetic to solve word problems, including problems with remainders and problems with measurements.
- Adding and subtracting whole numbers quickly and accurately (numbers up to 1 million)
- Multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers in simple cases (e.g., multiplying  $1,638 \times 7$  or  $24 \times 17$ , and dividing 6,966 by 6).
- Understanding and applying equivalent fractions (e.g., recognizing that  $\frac{1}{4}$  is less than  $\frac{3}{8}$  because  $\frac{2}{8}$  is less than  $\frac{3}{8}$ ).
- Adding, subtracting, and multiplying fractions in simple cases (such as  $2\frac{3}{4} - 1\frac{1}{4}$  or  $3 \times \frac{5}{8}$ ), and solving related word problems.
- Understanding simple decimals in terms of fractions (e.g., rewriting 0.62 is  $\frac{62}{100}$ )
- Measuring angles and finding unknown angles in a diagram.



## Support Math at Home:

Fourth graders are learning about the connection between fractions and decimals, gaining fluency with multiplication and division facts, and finding the area of two-dimensional shapes.

Practice multiplication facts; use flash cards to help your child know these correctly and quickly. Provide opportunities to relate fractional amounts to decimal amounts – play with these concepts with money: .25 is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a dollar. When shopping, have your child figure out how much change you should receive. Area is a simple exercise to do with your child – how big is a wall? A section of floor? How do you know? Help your child to solve these kinds of problems.

## Science:



This year in science, students build their understanding of the natural world learning about classifying living and non-living things, physical changes in matter, and the properties of energy. They compare and contrast fossils and living organisms, study Earth materials and the changes that take place on Earth's surface. Students become more familiar with scientific inquiry and engineering design as they support their learning through investigation, experimentation, problem solving, and analyzing. Support your child's curiosity by providing opportunities for these types of explorations every day.