

# Elementary School

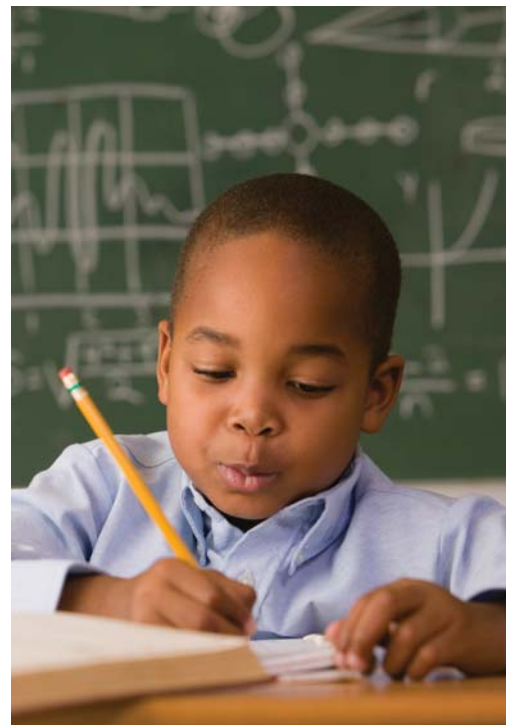
## A PARENT'S GUIDE

### What to know (and do) if your child is in elementary school.

In elementary school, science and math are fun – and that's great news for parents. At this stage, the best thing you can do is make sure there are lots of "hands-on" activities at home (activities like letting your child count the change in your pocket, help you fix something, or measure out the ingredients in a recipe).

Grades 1 through 5 are all about creating interest. If you can get your kid excited about looking at the night sky (or "banking" his allowance), then earth science and algebra will be that much easier.

**Very Important Fact: 5th grade is a "biggie."** Teachers call it the "review and transition" year. The emphasis is on making sure your child has mastered all skills up until now, and is ready for the big step into middle school. Problem solving is key in 5th grade; if possible, try to incorporate some problem solving at home. This could be as easy as asking, "If grandma gave you a dollar, how much could you buy?" or as complicated as a question involving gas and mileage.



#### + TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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**AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress (Reports)**

An online report on how well the state, each school, and school district are meeting federal education requirements.

**CRCT – Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests**

Measures how well students are meeting the Georgia Performance Standards. (CRCT tests are given in grades 1 through 8 and test reading, English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.)

**EIP – Early Intervention Program**

Program for kids who are at risk because of academic, attendance, or behavioral issues.

**ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages**

For students whose first language is not English.

**GKAP – Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program**

Determines whether or not kindergarten students are ready for 1st grade.

**GPS – Georgia Performance Standards**

The new version of Georgia's curriculum. (GPS will be phased in between 2004-2008 and will incorporate more performance standards.)

**NCLB – No Child Left Behind**

The most recent authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is the principal federal law affecting K-12 educators. It requires that all children be assessed each year in order to show adequate yearly progress in reading and mathematics.

## Hints for the elementary school parent:

- + Never, ever admit that you were bad at math or science or that you didn't like those subjects (because if it's okay for you, then it's okay for your kid).
- + Consider the kinds of games you have at home. A lot of older board games – Monopoly, Yahtzee, etc. – are great for math skills and can be a fun way to spend some family time.
- + If your child is obsessed with video games and wouldn't be caught dead playing Monopoly, don't worry – there's still some learning to be had! Get your son or daughter to talk to you about strategy. (It almost always involves math and probability.) And encourage him or her to learn more about computer science and animation.
- + Be aware of all the stuff you do at home that involves math and science and involve your child whenever possible. That might mean measuring sugar; it might mean looking under the hood of a car.
- + Talk to your kids about how you use math and science at work. Ask them about what they might want to do when they grow up and encourage them to find out what kinds of skills they'll need for that career. (A firefighter, for example, had better have a solid understanding of heat and energy.)
- + Get into the habit of asking your kids, "What did you learn today?" and then have them teach you. This will help you keep track of what they're learning. And it will help them retain the information.
- + Take your kids to new places to learn about new things. Museums and nature centers are great. So are family trips.
- + Encourage the mindset that, "It's okay if it's hard." Because if your child isn't afraid of a challenge, then half the battle's won.



## + MATH AND SCIENCE LINKS TO EXPLORE:

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<http://public.doe.k12.ga.us>

Georgia Department of Education website. Online information for parents and students.

[www.georgiago.org](http://www.georgiago.org)

Information on helping kids stay in school and complete their education.

[www.brainpop.com](http://www.brainpop.com)

Fun and informational (subscription-based).

[www.hotmath.com](http://www.hotmath.com)

Online access to textbooks and step-by-step help with real problems (subscription-based).

[www.math.com](http://www.math.com)

Basic information and help with all levels of math.

[www.funbrain.com](http://www.funbrain.com)

Fun and informational.

<http://yahooligans.yahoo.com>

Fun and informational.

[www.kidsclick.com](http://www.kidsclick.com)

Educational software for kids.

<http://dsc.discovery.com>

Programming information for the Discovery Channel.

<http://kids.msfc.nasa.gov>

Kids' site for NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids>

Activities, crafts, and feature stories (subscription-based).