

Parent's Guide to 2nd Grade

Part 1: What to Expect in Second Grade

An easy-to-use resource to prep parents and young learners for a new school year



- Changes in Teaching and Learning
- Why Are the Changes Happening?
- Developing a Connection With Your Child's Teacher
- Development Milestones



Changes in Teaching and Learning

The world of education has experienced many exciting changes over the years. Today’s demands of college, the workforce, and the global marketplace have reframed the skills students need in order to meet those challenges. As a result, the way that we teach must also evolve to support the best possible learning outcomes. Oftentimes, that means the classrooms parents grew up with no longer resemble the classrooms of today.

	10 Years Ago	Today
How do students work?	mostly independently	independently and in small groups, with partners, and even with people across the globe!
How do students show what they know?	answering questions on multiple choice tests	through multiple choice tests, essays, and real-world tasks
What’s important in learning?	memorizing facts and learning skills that aren’t necessarily connected to each other	applying their learning in many different situations and using many skills and strategies to do so
What’s important in solving problems?	there is one right answer and one right way to find a solution	there are many different ways to get to a solution, and being able to prove it is key
How do students answer questions?	using their outside knowledge and experience	using evidence from the text coupled with knowledge and experience
How important are literacy skills?	reading and writing are taught only in English class	literacy is practiced in math, social studies, science, and electives
What’s the role of the teacher?	a lecturer	a coach and facilitator
What’s the role of technology?	a separate subject	a tool for teaching and learning



Why Are the Changes Happening?

PART 1: OVERVIEW



Teachers and parents across the country are working to prepare students for the higher demands of college and careers today and in the future. The changes in teaching and learning are to ensure all children will graduate high school with the skills they need to be successful.

As you experience school with your child this year, you might notice that what they are learning and practicing are also skills that will benefit them long after school is over!

Top 10 Skills Employers Seek

1. Ability to work in a team structure
2. Ability to make decisions, think creatively, and solve problems
3. Ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization
4. Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
5. Ability to obtain and process information
6. Ability to analyze quantitative data
7. Technical knowledge related to the job
8. Proficiency with computer software programs
9. Ability to create and/or edit written reports
10. Ability to sell and influence others

--Source: Forbes Magazine, 10/11/2013



Developing a Connection With Your Child's Teacher

A positive relationship between you, your child, and your child's teacher is important to a happy and productive year. Here are some tips to opening the door for that positive relationship!

- **Attend back-to-school night (in-person or virtually):** This sets the stage for the home-school relationship and shows your eagerness to participate in your child's learning this year. It is also a great time to meet other parents and families with kids in the class.
- **Converse with the teacher:** Even though teachers are busy during the school day, they are more than happy to carve out time for a brief meeting before or after school, or virtually.
- **Share information:** When there is information that is important for your child, let the teacher know. For example, if your child gets embarrassed to ask to use the restroom, the teacher may use a card system instead (e.g., green card means "I'm fine," red card means "I have to go").
- **Be present:** If you need to have an important conversation with your child's teacher, make sure you are able to focus and be totally present.
- **Say thank you:** When your child reports that something good happened at school or they liked the book they read, let the teacher know.





Development Milestones

Every child develops at their own pace. While the sequence of milestones are generally predictable, everyone reaches stages at different times. The milestones below **are a reference point for you and not meant as hard and fast rules.**



Physical Milestones

At this age (7–8), your child is building more muscle strength and developing greater coordination and balance. Your child is able to play and be active for longer periods of time without getting tired. You will probably see your second grader:

- develop their balance (by the end of the year, your child should be able to ride a two-wheel bicycle)
- combine different movements with ease, like jumping to catch a ball and then running with it
- catch a small ball with their hands, without having to hold it against their body
- dribble a ball, do cartwheels and handstands, and jump rope
- run farther and for a longer amount of time
- demonstrate improved handwriting
- draw detailed and recognizable pictures of people and animals
- use scissors to cut along curved and straight lines on a piece of paper, without deviating more than half an inch from the line
- dress and undress themselves easily, handling snaps, buttons, zippers, and tying their shoes

Cognitive Milestones

At this age, thinking and problem-solving skills are taking off as your child starts understanding more complicated ideas. Children tend to interact with more peers and adults and start to show more of an interest in specific activities. Cognitively, most children at this age:

- look for the reasons behind things and ask questions to get more information
- understand cause-and-effect relationships and make more in-depth connections (in subject areas, like reading and science, as well as everyday life)
- start planning ahead (e.g., create a drawing of something to build or plan for an experiment they want to conduct)
- identify simple rules of behavior that they should follow, like buckling their seat belt in the car
- have a longer attention span (e.g., sit and pay attention to something that interests them for at least 30–45 minutes)
- like to classify, sort, and collect things, like rocks, crystals, pencils, or something else that interests them