

# FOURTH GRADE

## Parent Guidebook



# Dear Parent

Welcome to the fourth grade! This is an exciting time for your child. Your fourth grader is becoming more self-sufficient and independent every day; however, your support and guidance continue to be very important.

This book provides the information you need to help your child not only succeed academically, but to also thrive and grow. With your involvement and support, your fourth grader is sure to have a great 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.

# Fourth Grade Parent Guidebook

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
Growing Up: Fourth Grade .....	5
Fourth Grade Academics .....	6
Reading .....	6
Writing .....	7
Math .....	8
Science .....	9
Social Studies .....	9
Support Your Child's School .....	10
Help Your Child Succeed .....	11
Social and Emotional Growth .....	14
In Closing .....	15



**Woodburn Press**  
Copyrighted Material  
All Rights Reserved

---

# Introduction

Fourth grade is an important year. In fourth grade, students have more complex assignments, more homework, and they are expected to work more independently. With greater expectations in school and their increased involvement with friends, fourth graders need their parents to help them stay organized and on track.

This book goes over what your child is likely to study and learn in language arts, math, science, and social studies. It also provides information on the ways your child will learn and grow this year—physically, intellectually, and socially. Most importantly, this book provides a number of simple things you can do at home to help your fourth 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 fourth graders have varying skill levels, and fourth grade teachers are prepared to work with students with an array of skills and learning preferences.

# Growing Up: Fourth Grade

---



## Physical Development

Fourth graders have improved coordination, balance, and stamina, enabling them to participate in a wide variety of physical activities. Independent play is still important, but children this age also benefit from organized sports and activities.

Fourth graders come in a variety of shapes and sizes, with some beginning to experience early signs of puberty. Talk to your child about physical differences and the changes that come with puberty. Remind your child that everyone grows and matures at their own pace.

## Intellectual Development

Fourth graders have an interest in, and a better understanding of, world events and social issues. Be open to questions and have age-appropriate discussions on real-world issues and events.

If your child expresses an opinion or preference, ask why he/she feels that way. This will help your child think about how to express his/her thoughts so that they make sense to others.

## Social Development

Peers are important to fourth graders, and children this age like being part of a group. Fourth graders' emotions can change quickly and cliques can be an issue, especially for girls. Encourage your child to be the best he/she can be, and have frequent conversations about how things are going at school and with friends.

---

# Fourth Grade Academics

**Fourth 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

The focus of fourth grade reading is comprehension—being able to understand the meaning of what’s read. Fourth graders read a variety of genres: fiction, nonfiction, poems, fables, and more. They are also likely to have reading assignments in subjects such as science and social studies.

To help your child handle the increasing length and difficulty of reading assignments, encourage your child to develop good reading habits (e.g., remove distractions, read difficult text slowly or out loud). Also, promote reading as a fun, worthwhile activity.

- ▶ Choose a book series to work through together (e.g., *Harry Potter*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*). Take turns reading to each other.
- ▶ Encourage independent reading by getting books at the library on topics of interest to your child.
- ▶ Have family reading time – 30 minutes when everyone reads.
- ▶ Be a good role model. Let your child see you reading newspapers, books, and magazines. At dinner, talk about what you’ve read.

Fourth graders are often asked to discuss or write about books they’ve read. Get your fourth grader used to communicating his/her thoughts and opinions by regularly asking your child to tell you about what he/she is reading.

# Writing

Fourth graders do many different types of writing: essays, reports, stories, and poems. They also work on building their vocabulary and improving their editing and proofreading skills.



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

- ▶ Give your fourth grader a notebook, diary, or journal and encourage your child to use it daily to write down his/her ideas, thoughts, dreams, and goals.
- ▶ Show interest in anything your child writes and praise his/her efforts. Resist the temptation to correct errors unless you're asked to do so.
- ▶ Find ways to encourage writing. Have your child write thank you notes, exchange emails with relatives (using your account), write letters to friends, or write a poem or short story to share with your family.
- ▶ Tap into your child's interests. If your fourth grader likes music, encourage him/her to write a song. And for students who enjoy solving puzzles, crossword puzzles are a fun way to improve spelling and vocabulary.
- ▶ During family vacations, ask your child to keep a travel log and write about the places you go, and the things you see and do.

## Encourage creative writing

Websites such as these provide fun online writing prompts and story starters for kids:

- ▶ [thinkwritten.com/writing-prompts-for-kids](http://thinkwritten.com/writing-prompts-for-kids)
- ▶ [journalbuddies.com](http://journalbuddies.com)



## Math

In addition to working on multiplication, division, and fractions, fourth grade students are given word problems to solve—problems that involve ideas and applications, not just numbers.

Here's what you can do to help your child build his/her math skills.

- ▶ Ask your fourth grader to help you solve real-life math problems. For example, have your child help you figure out how long it will take to drive to a particular destination, how much an item will cost if it's half price, or how much lumber to buy for a home project.
- ▶ Quiz your child on multiplication facts while you're eating breakfast, driving to school, or making dinner. Keep it fun and pressure-free.
- ▶ Model problem solving. If your child asks for help with homework, verbalize your thinking as you determine how to work out a problem.
- ▶ Tap into your child's interests. If your fourth grader likes to cook, have him/her help alter a recipe. If he/she likes sports, study the stats of a favorite player or team.

*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.*

### Maintain a positive attitude

Fourth graders are learning many 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

Fourth grade science varies from school to school. However, in most fourth grade science classes, students begin learning the scientific method. They conduct hands-on experiments, predict what they think will happen, and record what they find. Fourth graders also often study the solar system, matter and energy, and ecosystems.

The best way to boost your child's skills in science is to nurture his/her curiosity about the world and how it works. Watch documentaries about nature and the natural world. Visit museums. Explore topics of interest, and search online together for answers to questions you don't know.



## Social Studies

In social studies, fourth graders often study ancient civilizations, geography, early U.S. history, economics, our political system, and much more.

To encourage your child's interest in social studies:

- ▶ Find ways to relate social studies to your child's life. For example, help your child draw a map of your neighborhood or community.
- ▶ Ask your child to tell you about what he/she is learning in social studies and go online together to learn more about the topics your child finds most interesting.
- ▶ Include your fourth grader in conversations about current events and ask for your child's opinions.



## Support Your Child's School

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(s).

---

# Help Your Child Succeed

To succeed in school this year, and in the years to come, students need to be organized and have good study skills. Here's how you can help.

---

## Help improve organizational skills



With more homework and more activities, it's important for fourth graders to develop good organizational skills. When students are organized, they get better grades, they're less frustrated, and they have more time for family and friends.

*Organization is an area in which parents can really help their children.*

- ▶ Make sure your fourth grader has a folder for each subject. 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, tests, quizzes, and anything else he/she needs to remember. Check it regularly to make sure that your child is using it correctly.
- ▶ Encourage your child to get everything ready for the next day before going to bed, and to regularly clean out his/her backpack.

If your child has trouble keeping organized, often loses things, or frequently forgets to complete homework assignments, be supportive and encouraging, but insist that your child work on improving his/her organizational skills.



## Monitor homework

Fourth graders usually have nightly homework assignments. Your attitude toward homework says a lot about the value you place on education. *Make sure your child understands that you consider homework to be very important.*

- ▶ When your child is working on homework, remove as many distractions as possible. Turn off the TV and make homework time a quiet time in your household.
- ▶ Help your child learn how to organize and prioritize homework. Ask your child to explain what needs to be done, and then help him/her develop a plan.
- ▶ Large assignments can sometimes seem overwhelming. Show your child how to break down large assignments and projects into smaller, more manageable tasks.
- ▶ Help your child create a schedule that makes homework a part of your daily routine.
- ▶ If your child tends to rush through homework in order to get it done quickly, insist that you look over all completed homework.
- ▶ If homework assignments seem excessive, or if your child consistently struggles with homework, contact your child's teacher and express your concerns. Work with the teacher to ensure that homework doesn't become a problem.

## Promote responsibility

Students must learn to be responsible for keeping track of their assignments, completing assignments accurately, and turning assignments in on time. Parents need to make homework their child's responsibility.

## Promote active learning

Active learning is learning that engages the student in the learning process (e.g., exploring personal interests, asking and answering questions). Participating in team sports, visiting museums, and playing a musical instrument are a few examples of active learning activities.

Here are a few ways you can promote active learning at home.

- ▶ Spend time listening and talking to your child. Involve your child in family discussions and ask for your child's input.
- ▶ Play games, involve your child in projects, and turn daily activities (e.g., meal preparation) into learning experiences.
- ▶ Have discussions and ask for your child's thoughts and opinions on current events, movies, music, and TV shows.

Active learning activities will help your child develop and grow, and be more successful in school.

## Develop decision-making skills

Students this age are better able to process information and make decisions, which makes this a good time to help children develop their decision-making skills.

Help your fourth grader learn how to make good choices by giving your child opportunities to make his/her own decisions (e.g., when to do homework, what clothes to wear, which sport to play). Encourage your child to weigh the pros and cons of each choice, and to consider the possible consequences of a choice or decision.



By allowing your fourth grader to make small “safe” decisions, you are helping your child develop the skills needed to make the bigger, more important decisions later.

# Social and Emotional Growth

---

**Fourth graders are developing important social skills.**

**Here are some ways you can help your child develop socially and emotionally.**



## **Provide support**

There is a lot going on in fourth grade—more homework, harder classes, growing bodies, and more complex social interactions. Regularly talk to your child about what’s going on at school and with friends. Be supportive and help your child navigate through tough situations—keeping in mind that something that seems trivial to you might be a big deal to your child.

## **Set guidelines**

Fourth graders are often concerned about what’s “fair” (or more likely “unfair”). They like to test the limits of physical play, school rules, home rules, and at times, even your patience. Set clear guidelines and limits, and take the time to explain to your child the “why” behind school and home rules.

## **Develop routines**

Your fourth grader may be more interested in spending time with peers than with family, a trend that is likely to continue. It is, however, important to have family activities and routines your child can depend on (e.g., nightly family dinners or weekly family outings). This allows your child to expand his/her social network while having the comfort and security that comes with family.

---

## Communicate with your child

**As fourth graders become more independent and focused on peers, communication can become more challenging. Here's what you can do.**

**Show interest in what your child has to say.** Remove distractions and take time to really listen. When parents show that they're truly interested, children are more likely to open up.

**Ask open-ended questions.** Instead of "How was school?" say, "Tell me about your day" or ask, "What's that book about?"

**Recognize the importance of nonverbal communication.** Children aren't always able to put into words what they want or need their parents to know. Pay attention to body language, moods, eating habits, sleeping patterns, and school performance. These can be good indicators of how things are going at school and with friends.

**Make time for fun one-on-one activities.** It's often easier to talk to your child when you are doing something you both enjoy, such as watching a game, cooking, working on a car, taking a walk, or going out for ice cream. These are all great ways to engage in meaningful conversations while spending quality time with your child.



## 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.

# FOURTH GRADE

## Parent Guidebook

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

Linda O'Brien, MEd • Krystal Chenault, MA



WOODBURN PRESS  
[www.woodburnpress.com](http://www.woodburnpress.com)