

GIPS FAMILY LEARNING GUIDE: A Parent's Guide to Preschool

By the end of the school year, we expect that a preschool student can:

Learning activities you can do at home and in the community:

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

- **Plays cooperatively** with peers (*takes turns, shares*).
- **Can** express feelings with words.
- **Begins** to show concern for others' feelings.
- **Understands** rules and routines.
- **Can** manage some self-control and follow classroom expectations.
- **Separates** from parents/caregivers with ease.

- **Feelings Charades:** Take turns acting out feelings like happy, sad, frustrated, or excited without words. The other person guesses. Helps build emotional vocabulary and empathy.
- **Turn-Taking Game Night:** Play a board or card game that encourages taking turns, following rules, and winning or losing gracefully—great practice for peer interaction.
- **Emotion Drawing:** Ask your child to draw faces that show different feelings (*happy, sad, angry, excited*). Talk about what makes them feel each way.
- **Job of the Day:** Assign your child a simple family "job" (*like watering plants or feeding the pet*). Praise responsibility and talk about how helping makes others feel good.

MATH

- **Counts** to at least 20 (*by rote*).
- **Counts** 5–10 objects touching each item as the number is spoken.
- **Recognizes** numbers 0–10 (*some can go to 20*).
- **Identifies** and creates simple patterns (*AB, AABB*).
- **Recognizes** and names basic shapes (*circle, square, triangle, rectangle, etc.*).
- **Matches** and sorts objects by color, shape, size.

- **Snack Math:** Use snacks like cereal or crackers to create patterns (*AB, AABB*), count out amounts, and compare quantities (*"Who has more pretzels?"*). This supports counting, patterns, and quantity comparison.
- **Number Walk:** Tape numbers (0–10) around the house. Call out a number and have your child find it and jump on it. Then try counting out that many jumps or claps.
- **Counting Silverware:** Let your child help unload the dishwasher by sorting forks, spoons, and knives. Count each item and talk about more/less and same/different.
- **Laundry Sorting:** Let your child sort laundry by color, size, or type (*socks, shirts, etc.*). Ask questions like *"Which pile has more?"* or *"Which shirt is bigger?"*.
- **Shape Sorting Picnic:** Gather items like paper plates, blocks, and toys in different shapes. Have a "picnic" where you only pack items that match a specific shape or size. Let your child decide which items "belong" and explain why.



PRESCHOOLERS experience a broad range of instruction that supports and enriches academic learning and understanding.

Common Expectations: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible.

By the end of the school year, we expect that a preschool student can:

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- **Speaks** in full sentences (5–6 words or more).
- **Can follow** 2–3 step directions.
- **Understands** and uses a growing vocabulary.
- **Asks** and answers “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “why” questions.
- **Identifies** a combination of 25 uppercase and lowercase letters.
- **Recognizes** their own name in print and possibly writes it.
- **Understands** that print carries meaning.
- **Begins** to recognize rhyming words.
- **Identifies** and produces 15 letter sounds.
- **Can** listen to and recall parts of a story in order (*first, next, last*).
- **Knows** how to hold a book and turn pages properly.
- **Understands** and uses positional words (*under, over, behind*).

FINE & GROSS MOTOR

- **Holds** a pencil or crayon with a three finger grasp.
- **Can** trace shapes, lines, and simple words.
- **Can** draw simple shapes and some letters, especially ones in their name.
- **Cuts** along lines with scissors.
- **Strings** beads, builds towers with small blocks.
- **Can** complete simple puzzles (6–10 pieces) without giving up.
- **Runs**, jumps, climbs, and balances with confidence.
- **Throws** and catches a ball.
- **Hops** on one foot and skips (*emerging*).
- **Pedals** a tricycle or bike with training wheels.
- **Walk** up and down stairs alternating feet.

SELF HELP SKILLS

- **Uses** the bathroom independently (*including wiping and handwashing*).
- **Dresses** and undresses with minimal help.
- **Puts** on shoes (*may not yet tie laces*).
- **Cleans** up after self (*puts toys away, throws away trash*).
- **Opens** containers and food packaging.
- **Follow** routines independently.

Learning activities you can do at home and in the community:

- **Family Story Time Retell:** After reading a picture book together, ask your child to retell the story using their own words. Encourage them to include characters, setting, and what happened first, next, and last.
- **Letter & Sound Hunt:** Choose a letter of the day. Have your child find objects around the house that begin with that letter sound (e.g., “B” for *banana, book, ball*). Bonus: write the word and say the sound together.
- **Treasure Hunt With Clues:** Hide objects around the house and give your child 2–3 step verbal clues using positional words (e.g., “Go behind the couch, then look under the blanket”). This builds direction-following, sequencing, and positional vocabulary.
- **Name Rainbow Writing:** Write your child’s name in large letters. Have them trace each letter in different colors to make a rainbow. Say each letter aloud as you trace.
- **Question Jar:** Fill a jar with question starters (“What would you do if...?” “Why do you think...?”). Pull one each day and discuss. Builds vocabulary and comprehension.
- **“What Happens Next?” Game:** Present everyday scenarios like, “If we leave ice cream on the counter, what happens?” Have your child predict the result. This builds cause-and-effect thinking.

Fine Motor:

- **Sticker Lines and Mazes:** Draw wavy or zigzag lines on paper and have your child place small stickers along the path. This builds finger strength, control, and precision.
- **Kitchen Helper Tasks:** Let your child help stir batter, open snack bags, peel stickers off fruit, or pour water into cups. These actions refine grip strength and hand-eye coordination.
- **Playdough Letters & Shapes:** Roll playdough into snakes and form letters or shapes. This strengthens hand muscles and improves control for writing.

Gross Motor:

- **Animal Movement Race:** Call out animals (e.g., *frog, bear, kangaroo*) and move like them across the room or yard. Balancing, jumping, and crawling build strength and coordination.
- **Obstacle Course Challenge:** Create a simple obstacle course using pillows, boxes, and furniture. Include actions like hopping on one foot, crawling under a table, or walking a taped line.
- **Balloon Keep-Up:** Try to keep a balloon in the air using hands, feet, or elbows. This encourages coordination and movement control.
- **Stair Step Counting:** Walk up and down stairs together at home or at the park, counting each step out loud. Try hopping up one step at a time or alternating feet.

- **Race Against The Clock:** Set a timer for common tasks: getting dressed, cleaning up toys, or washing hands. Make it fun by pretending you’re superheroes “*saving the day*” by finishing on time.
- **Snack Time Independence:** Set up a snack station with prepped items and containers. Teach your child to open packages, pour a drink, and clean up after themselves—boosting independence and kindergarten readiness.
- **Morning Routine Chart:** Create a picture chart showing steps for getting ready (*brush teeth, get dressed, eat breakfast*). Let your child check off each step independently.
- **Name Rainbow Writing:** Write your child’s name in large letters. Have them trace each letter in different colors to make a rainbow. Say each letter aloud as you trace.
- **Bathroom Routine:** Use a picture chart for potty training. Pull pants down, sit on the potty, pull pants up, wash hands.
- **Routines:** Establish a bedtime routine with the same tasks completed before bed every night (*brush teeth, put on pajamas, read book*) or a “*leaving the house*” routine (*dressed, hair combed, face washed, shoes on, coat on, backpack ready*).

GRAND ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY, A SUCCESS!



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