

GEMS American Academy Qatar

A Parent's Guide to KG2

GEMS prides itself on offering an outstanding educational program where highly effective classroom teachers use an engaging and challenging curriculum to help students meet or exceed grade-level standards. Academic progress is measured in two ways: by monitoring student learning to provide for ongoing dialog (formative assessment) and by evaluating student progress against standards and benchmarks using tests, assignments, and projects (summative assessment). The GAAQ report card is designed to show how well a student is doing in relation to grade-level standards, and also illustrates that by the completion of the academic year, the student will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed at the next grade level.

This guide will help parents understand the concepts and skills that are the focus of instruction in the KG2 classroom, as well as the broader academic and thinking skills that will lead to college readiness and beyond. And because parental involvement is a key factor in a student's academic success, this guide also offers suggestions about how parents can support their child's learning at home. A concise overview cannot fully represent the comprehensive curriculum and all units of study in KG2, so parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have questions.

Language Arts

Reading – Writing – Speaking – Listening - Language

What your child will learn:

Instruction in KG2 is focused on developing foundational skills that prepare students for later learning in all the content areas. A primary focus of language arts instruction is helping students make sense of the alphabet and its role in reading. It is critical that students develop phonological awareness so they can move on to decoding words; yet reading in KG2 is not merely decoding words. Students learn to comprehend and analyze what they are reading.

Students begin to develop writing skills by using a combination of drawing, dictation, and writing to express opinions, relate an event, or provide information. With guidance and support from adults, they learn to use digital tools to produce and publish writings.

Students develop skills in speaking and listening through discussions with peers and adults. Conversations are centered on KG2 texts and topics, which provide opportunities for students to practice new vocabulary, especially content-specific vocabulary. In both writing and speaking, students learn the conventions of English.

Students also have to understand and use academic language to succeed in school. Academic language refers to the language of literacy and books, tests, and formal writing. It can be words or phrases that apply to specific content areas or that are used to express abstract concepts or feelings. In KG2, students learn academic language in context while reading, writing, listening, and engaging in discussions about books and grade-level topics.

What you can do at home:

Reading at home is critical to the development of early literacy skills, so visit the school library often and read, read, read every day. Encouraging reading is one of the most important things a parent can do to help their child develop language acquisition skills and a love of learning. When you are reading with your child, discuss the book, the characters, and the important details. Make predictions as you read and create different endings to stories. Ask your child questions about the book and have them retell the story to you. Talk about the book and the words in it. Identify words that your child may already know, and pick out new and unfamiliar words to expand language acquisition and a love of learning.

Mathematics

Overview	
<p>Students are introduced to the relationship between numbers and quantities and build a foundation for place value as they count, represent, and compare whole numbers, initially using sets of objects. Students also describe and model objects in their environment using simple geometric shapes and vocabulary.</p>	
Counting and Cardinality	Operations and Algebraic Thinking
<p>What your child will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number names and the counting sequence • counting to tell the number of objects • comparing numbers 	<p>What your child will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding addition as putting together and adding to, and understanding subtraction as taking apart and taking from
Number and Operations in Base Ten	Measurement and Data
<p>What your child will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with numbers 11 to 19 to gain foundations for place value 	<p>What your child will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describing and comparing measurable attributes • classifying objects and counting the number of objects in each category
Geometry	Mathematical Practices
<p>What your child will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying and describing shapes • analyzing, comparing, creating, and composing shapes 	<p>What your child will learn:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making sense of problems and persevering in solving them. 2. Reasoning abstractly and quantitatively. 3. Constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others. 4. Modeling with mathematics. 5. Using appropriate tools strategically. 6. Attending to precision. 7. Looking for and making use of structure. 8. Looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning.

What you can do at home:

Make math fun and meaningful for your child by looking for real world math problems in your daily life. Use everyday objects for counting, sorting, estimating, and creating story problems. Ask questions that require mathematical thinking (e.g., counting, greater/less than, basic addition and subtraction problems). Encourage your child to keep trying even when a problem may be challenging, talk to them about how they find an answer to a problem, and praise them for effort, resiliency, and perseverance even if they aren't getting the "right" answer.

Integrated Content

Science	Social Studies
<p>What your child will learn: Students participate in classroom discussions to share ideas and evidence and are provided with opportunities to change or revise understandings based on new evidence. Hands-on activities and games help develop skills and include explicit teaching of scientific concepts and vocabulary. Students use their senses of sight, sound, and touch to investigate a variety of objects and learn how to classify, compare, and sort these objects. KG2 science topics are organized into three standard sets: Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, and Earth Sciences. As students learn the content defined by the standards in the Life, Earth, and Physical Science strands, they are also practicing investigation and experimentation skills.</p>	<p>What your child will learn: Students explore the meaning of good citizenship by learning about rules, working together, and the basic idea of government. Teachers may use classroom problems that arise as opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving. Students need help in analyzing problems; considering why the problem arose; examining other alternatives; developing awareness of how alternative behaviors might bring different results; and learning to appreciate behaviors and values that are consistent with the democratic ethic. Students and teachers can dramatize issues that create conflict on the playground, in the classroom, and at a home, and then brainstorm solutions that exemplify compromise, cooperation, and respect for rules and laws. Students will have opportunities to discuss these more desirable behaviors, try them out, and examine how they lead to more harmonious and socially satisfying relationships with others. Students also learn the purpose of rules and laws and why a government is necessary.</p>

What you can do at home:

Make a routine of checking, discussing, and perhaps even graphing the weather (temperature, precipitation, etc.). As students study plants and animals in school, caring for indoor plants, outdoor gardens, and even family pets can be great ways to reinforce these units of study.

What you can do at home:

Talk to your child about the importance of rules at home and in the community. Identify symbols of different countries such as flags and expose your child to maps of various kinds. Look for opportunities to share, discuss, and experience different cultures that are both similar and different from your own.

Art

What your child will learn:

Elementary art education encompasses several key components and KG2 students observe and comprehend various types of art. In art classes, students invent, create, and critique works of art, and they relate, connect, and transfer the skills that they learn into other content areas. They create art to communicate ideas, feelings, or emotions, and utilize the visual arts to relate various experiences.

What you can do at home:

Art activities are important for fine motor development. Encourage drawing and ask questions about your child's artwork. Pay attention to and support your child's artistic interests. Design a space for creativity and encourage art activities and imaginative play. Visit local art museums and galleries during family outings.

Music**What your child will learn:**

The elementary school general music curriculum is built on 12 themes. Each curriculum theme is tailored to match the cognitive development of the students in each of the grade levels. Each lesson addresses specific goals outlined in national standards. The thematic threads in elementary music include:

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| • Singing/Movement | • Evaluating Music | • Music |
| • Playing Instruments | • Theory/Notation | • History/Famous |
| • Composing/Improvising | • Instrument/Ensembles | • Composers |
| • Listening/Analyzing/Describing | • Musical Styles | • World Music/Cultures |
| | • Life Connections | • Cross Curriculum |
| | | • Connections |

What you can do at home:

Expand and support your child's musical experiences and background knowledge by exposing them to a wide variety of musical genres. Attend the opera, symphony, or other musical events. Listen to a variety of types of music in your home or car. Urge your child to explain and discuss what they like and dislike about various types of music. Encourage and foster your child's interest in both vocal and instrumental music.

Health and Physical Education (P.E.)

What your child will learn:

In KG2, students begin to learn the proper technique for locomotor and non-locomotor movements and how to manipulate (e.g., strike, toss, kick, bounce) objects, such as lightweight balls and beanbags. They learn the names of body parts and can describe locomotor and non-locomotor skills. By the end of KG2, students can demonstrate the proper form for jumping, hopping, sliding, walking, running, leaping, and skipping. Throughout the kindergarten year, students practice non-locomotor movements—including bending, stretching, swaying, and twisting—and learn stretching exercises. They also learn that muscles move bones; the heart is a muscle; and the lungs and the heart work together to send oxygen to the other muscles.

What you can do at home:

Strong and healthy children become strong and healthy learners. Many studies have shown a compelling correlation between physical activity and student achievement. At home, provide opportunities for physical activities (e.g., after-school sports and classes). Expose your child to a wide variety of physical activities, and keep in mind that this may also include limiting television and/or computer screen time. Offer healthy snacks and plan healthy meals. Be a role model for your child and engage in healthy activities together. Whether you are preparing nutritious meals or enjoying a walk, make an effort to integrate wellness into your family's daily practices.

Talking to your child's teacher:

Parental involvement in a child's education is crucial, so it's important to build a solid relationship between home and school by establishing good communication with your child's teacher. We encourage you to reach out to the teacher early in the year. Learn about the academic standards your child will be aiming for and discover ways you can support them in their studies. The first step in being able to follow the academic road map is to begin with a solid understanding of what your child will be expected to know by the end of the school year and keep the goal in sight.

Teachers monitor and evaluate student academic progress and achievement on an ongoing basis in many different ways, so parents are encouraged to stay in regular contact with their child's teacher beyond parent-teacher conferences. As the school year progresses, ask to see samples of your child's work to determine, in concert with the teacher, your child's advancement toward grade-level standards. Discuss areas of strength your child exhibits in the classroom as well as areas that may be targeted for growth. Inquire about how you can best help your child at home, and ask the teacher for recommendations and resources. Find out details about specific classroom activities and discuss ways that you may be able to volunteer your time and talents to support classroom activities or units of study.

Growth and learning during the school year doesn't end in the classroom—parents and teachers must work together all year long for the success of each student. We ask that you partner with us in creating an optimal learning experience for your child.