



# ELA Benchmarks For Pre-Kindergarten Students

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For the past three to five years, you've been keeping track of your child's physical and cognitive milestones; their height, weight, food intake, when they first roll over, their first tooth, their first word, and countless other firsts. Now, they are about to embark on one of their biggest milestones: Pre-kindergarten. As a primary caregiver, you are the person best equipped to prepare and aid your child through this journey, but how do you ensure that their language skills are progressing in line with the adequate milestones?

## Pre-K Language Skills and Benchmarks

The most important language skills to reinforce at this stage are speaking and listening. Naturally, listening is the first skill a child acquires. Through constant, language-driven interaction between child and caregiver at home, a good base for listening is first established, followed by a foundation for the development of the speaking skill. In pre-k, the child is expected to be able to:

- Respond to their name
- Understand most of what is being said
- Follow at last 2-step directions
- Recognize rhyming words
- Speak full sentences of at least four words
- Be able to sing nursery rhymes
- Name colors, shapes, objects
- Use the correct pronouns and tenses
- Use most phonemes (speech sounds)
- Answer questions about a short story

Although listening and speaking are given primary importance at this stage, some basic pre-writing and pre-reading activities are incorporated to pave the way for future development of these two skills as well.

## Challenges

It is not uncommon for children at this age to face certain challenges with their language development. According to the Australian parenting website [Raising Children](#), some of the challenges preschoolers face with language development could include:

- Difficulty learning and remembering new words

- Forming incomplete sentences such as "I going home"
- Difficulty pronouncing certain sounds
- Not recognizing any letters
- Struggling with drawing shapes that resemble letters
- Can't distinguish between the front and back of a book or up and down.
- Can't tell the actions happening in a picture book like eating, walking, etc.

## Curriculum Overview

In order to ensure skill development that is in line with the child's expected language capabilities, our Pre-K curriculum covers four topics: early literacy, vocabulary, print awareness, and reading literature.

Early Literacy: This part includes learning the ABCs as well as the sound corresponding to each letter. The activities in this part are designed to strengthen your child's speaking as well as listening skills.

Vocabulary: Here, the child learns new words, with a focus on sight words. This part is designed not only to enrich your child's speech, but also to prepare them for the future development of their reading skills.

Print Awareness: This topic introduces your child to the different parts of a book (front cover, back cover, pages...) as well as the different types of texts, and signs and labels.

Reading literature: In this part of the curriculum, your child answers questions about stories and informational texts, in addition to retelling familiar stories.

An important thing to note is that learning starts from home. There are several activities that a parent can incorporate into a child's daily routine in order to improve language skills and minimize the challenges the child might face. One of the simplest ways to establish better communication skills is to engage in as much meaningful conversation as possible. Other fun ways to strengthen these skills are using games such as the classic "Simon Says" or "Broken Telephone", learning nursery rhymes together, or making up stories. Reading to your child regularly and from an early age can also be of great benefit. The website [Nemours KidsHealth](#) states that reading aloud: (1) teaches a baby about communication (2) introduces concepts such as numbers, letters, colors, and shapes in a fun way (3) builds listening, memory, and vocabulary skills (4) gives babies information about the world around them.

For a more in-depth look at our Pre-K English Language Arts curriculum, check out this interactive catalog.

