

GRADE 3 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Third graders are expanding into the world around them. There is a new vein of active curiosity, mounting energy, and intellectual growth in the eight-year-old.

Generally, they are much more serious about themselves and like to take responsibility. They are becoming more aware of belonging to a group at school yet are still tied strongly to their families.

They are building up an ethical sense which sometimes leads them to be highly critical of their own behavior as well as that of others. Though they are developing a strong sense of justice ("That's not fair!"), there will be times when third graders fight with siblings and best friends.

Third graders can be sensitive to ridicule, failure, or loss of prestige. Consequently, eight-year-olds need adult approval on a regular basis. They also need an activity which makes them feel important.

Though they have new energy and strength, third graders need lots of sleep and a well organized day. They enjoy being involved in family and school planning.

Curriculum

In the language arts curriculum, third graders will analyze increasingly complex word patterns and vocabulary concepts and then apply this knowledge to achieve fluent reading

They will develop comprehension skills and demonstrate knowledge by responding to essential questions from a variety of literature.

Third grade students will write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that describe and explain familiar objects, events and experiences. They will use cursive or joined italic writing.

The third grade student will also use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation appropriate for the third grade level.

Finally, students demonstrate a command of the English language through speaking strategies such as retelling, paraphrasing, questioning, and predicting.

In the third grade social science curriculum, students plan and write paragraphs to clarify ideas for oral discussion. Students draw from historical and community resources to organize the events of local history. In their study of history and geography, third graders will learn to read charts and tables, as well as bar, line, and circle graphs. Students will also describe the American Indian nations in their local region from long ago and in the recent past. Students demonstrate an understanding of the basic economy of the local region.

The third graders' intellectual development is reflected in the increasing sophistication of math concepts they study. By third grade they will not only demonstrate an understanding of place value, but they will also learn multiplication facts up to 10, adding and subtracting using decimals in money, and rounding off to the nearest ten. They will also begin to solve problems involving area and perimeter and recognize whether figures are congruent or similar.

They will be asked to find patterns in sequences and identify and plot ordered pairs on a coordinate plane. Other skills developed in third grade math include using manipulatives to solve for an unknown; predicting and recording results of probability experiences; and collecting, organizing and interpreting data using charts and tables.

The science curriculum also takes a significant step up in third grade. Students gain a basic understanding of matter, force, work, and energy in physical science and understand concepts behind forces that change the earth

and the significance of rocks and fossils in earth science. Third graders are immersed in a science experience that has them learning by hypothesizing, making predictions, researching answers, investigating and inventing. As they study life science, they will come to understand the roles organisms play in the environment and the interdependency that is needed.

In the visual and performing arts, a third-grade lesson may include using a variety of media in an artwork; classifying variations of lines, shapes, textures and colors; the singing of rounds; expanding art vocabulary; attending planned docent programs; and identifying like and unlike melodic patterns.

Through such diverse lessons, third graders will develop skills and craftsmanship for doing and appreciating art. At the same time, they will expand their capacity for enjoying all of the arts as well as their appreciation for the contribution the arts have made in all cultures, past and present.

In health and physical education the third grade curriculum teaches the relationship of living things, the benefits of exercise and teamwork. Third graders also learn the effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs on health, and they are introduced to the concept of properly used medicines versus substance abuse.

Third graders are taught knowledge of games, while developing motor skills and a positive attitude of lifelong good health.

Perspective

Through varied and appropriate activities, third graders will begin to develop a sense of where they are in their world. They will have a surer sense of themselves and their abilities because they will have reached out and explored many new aspects of the world at a much deeper level than before. They will have grown intellectually and socially as much as they have physically.

As they leave third grade, they will have developed a base of knowledge and skills necessary for the move to the upper grades of elementary school. In the ensuing years, the base of knowledge will expand and those skills will be enhanced and refined to make them more informed and able individuals and give them a strong sense of confidence in themselves.