

GRADE 2 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Second Graders love the activity of learning.

Seven is an age for assimilating; second graders spend a good deal of time embedding accumulated experience and relating new experiences to the old.

It is a calmer age than six. The seven-year-old is a better listener, someone who likes to be read to, to hear twice-told tales. Second graders will also persist for longer periods of time at some activity they enjoy, e.g. drawing a favorite picture, kicking a soccer ball, or watching TV. With the latter they must often be told to stop.

Seven-year-olds may grow as much as two or three inches in the year. They enjoy dramatic play and demonstrate much improved manipulative skills.

Their competitive spirit runs in high gear. Not good losers, they will complain about unfairness. They are often boastful and emotional and decidedly sensitive to failure and ridicule. They need adult approval and praise for good work. Sometimes they need to be allowed to win.

Nevertheless, the second grader is increasingly social; indeed, personality development is perhaps most important at this age. That new-found sociability makes the seven-year-old a good helper, someone who enjoys running errands for mom or dad.

In the area of personal responsibilities, seven-year-olds want and expect to be reminded because they will forget. It will not be intentional, but forgetting is a by-product of their self-absorption. They need time to think.

Some may even be budding skeptics, addressing the hows and whys of ideas, concepts, and guidelines. These thinking, assimilating persons turn these newly developed traits on their school work.

Curriculum

By the end of second grade, students will be able to read and respond to a wide variety of children's literature. To become accurate and fluent readers, second graders will decode multi-syllable words and language patterns including spelling, abbreviations, and plural word endings. They will develop comprehension strategies by making predictions and comparing information from several sources. Both narrative (stories and chapter books) and expository (newspapers/magazines) texts will be analyzed for story elements and purpose.

Second graders will legibly write brief narratives and friendly letters that demonstrate their command of standard English conventions (i.e., complete sentences, proper grammar, accurate punctuation, and basic spelling). They consider audience and purpose as they successfully use the stages of the writing process to coherently develop a central idea. They continue to listen and respond critically to oral communication. Multi-step directions can be given and followed. Second graders learn to clearly present information orally by asking questions, retelling stories, paraphrasing information, and giving short reports.

In addition to recognizing and writing numerals to 1,000, the second grader's math experiences will also include investigation into strands like measurement (identifying the dates, days, weeks and months on a calendar), functions (detecting more complex picture and number patterns), logic and language (analyze data to make predictions or generalizations), algebra (use manipulatives to solve unknowns), and statistics (create and interpret bar graphs).

In science, second graders will be exploring, observing and experimenting in a number of hands-on activities that will explore the patterns of change. In life science, the life cycles and interdependence of other living things will be observed in trees and the annual cycle. This can be followed, for example, in apple trees and their part in the human food chain. In physical science the observations will incorporate heat and the changes that are created in matter which are measurable. In earth science, through thematic type units like space and dinosaurs, students will be exposed to the earth as part of an ever changing universe.

In the second grade social science curriculum, the students learn that all over the world people live in interdependent communities. They also study how people do jobs that help others fulfill their needs, with a special emphasis on those who supply food. They learn about the lives of those from the past and the impact the past has on American culture today. Students demonstrate map skills by learning grids, directions, and labeling simple maps. Students in second grade explain the practices of government in the United States and other countries in terms of making laws, and how nations interact with one another through diplomacy, laws and treaties.

In the visual and performing arts curriculum, a second-grade lesson may include simple theatrical activities, experiences with music and arts from various cultures, or discriminating among the characteristics of design elements. These lessons reinforce a capacity for enjoying and participating in all of the arts and respect for originality in one's own creativity.

The physical education program develops motor skills and knowledge of games and activities that promote team spirit and lifelong activity. Health instruction encompasses units that focus on positive family living, nutrition education, injury prevention and safety. Individual physical growth and development are part of the health and physical education program.

Perspective

Second grade is a time for reinforcing and strengthening the basic skills acquired in first grade. As they become more proficient readers, writers, and thinkers, second graders develop a growing sense of accomplishment and pride in what they are able to do.

It is a period when they love the activity of learning. Activities like reading and being read to, drawing, talking, and explaining help them connect what they are learning to their everyday experiences.