



U N I V E R S I T Y
P A R K

PARENT PASSPORT
A GUIDE TO THE CURRICULUM



Welcome to the Parent Academic Passport Your guide to the curriculum at University Park Elementary School

This handbook was created as part of the University Park (UPark) Collaborative School Committee (CSC) initiative to improve communication between home and school. It represents a collaborative effort among teachers, administration, parents and the CSC.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide parents with highlights of the curriculum at UPark, both generally, and by grade level. The following pages are intended to be a guide to what your children do in the classroom, but it is not comprehensive or fixed. Classroom projects, field trips and other aspects of the curriculum, or how it is taught, may change during the year.

The UPark website also contains a great deal of information. There are links to Everyday Math goals, suggested reading lists (by reading ability), and the Writing Rubrics used by UPark teachers. You can access the website at: www.uparkelementary.org

It is our hope that this Passport will empower you to be involved in your children's education, and to be able to anticipate field trips, projects, and areas of content that you may wish to volunteer for. As always, if you have specific questions, please ask your child's teacher.

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Reading

Reading at home: All students are expected to read (or be read to) 20-30 minutes each day.



Reading to your child and listening to them read is important throughout elementary school. While it seems obvious that early readers need this support, even 5th graders can be enriched by listening to you read. It builds vocabulary, fluency, and can expose them to a variety of literature that they might not read by themselves. So, please, continue to read, read, read!

Make the most out of reading aloud: ask comprehension questions, such as, “what happened?” “why did the character do that?”; “what do you think will happen next?”.

5 Components of Reading:

- **Phonics:** The relationship of the letters in written language, and the actual sounds those letters make. Learning these sounds (phonemes) allows children to “decode” unfamiliar words.
- **Phonemic Awareness:** The ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds we hear in spoken words. Your child may demonstrate this by identifying words with the same beginning sound, or rhyming.
- **Vocabulary:** Listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabulary are all important.
- **Comprehension:** Good comprehension includes being able to understand, remember and communicate to others what a student has read. Simply understanding each individual word, while missing the underlying meaning is not achieving reading comprehension.
- **Fluency:** The ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluency helps to bridge word recognition and comprehension.

DRA Reading Levels: The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is an individually administered assessment of a child’s reading abilities. The DRA test is administered twice during the school year. Tasks measured by the DRA test are divided into several skill sets--**Phonemic awareness:** rhyming, alliteration, segmentation, and phonemic awareness; **Alphabetic principle/phonics:** letter naming, word-list reading, spelling, decoding, analogies, structural analysis, and syllabication are tested in the portions; **Fluency:** oral reading fluency or words per minute for contextual reading. Vocabulary, comprehension, and reading engagement skills are also measured in the test. After the test is evaluated and scored, your child is assigned a numeric (or alphanumeric for very early readers) DRA level A1 through 80. Teachers are then able to give children books they can read by choosing a text with the corresponding DRA level.

There are several other formats to “level” readers. The most common of those is the Alphabet Level system. It can be helpful to know your both your child’s DRA and alphabet reading level to help you find books for them that are at their ability level. See the UPark website for a chart that converts DRA to Alphabet reading levels.

If at anytime you have a concern with your child’s reading progress talk to your child’s teacher. Reading levels are available on each progress report.

Writing

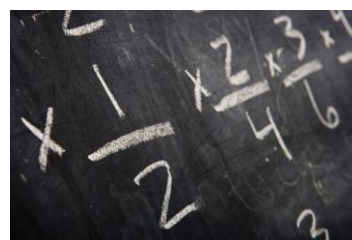
Writing, like reading, has several components. UPark uses grade-specific writing rubrics to guide you in helping your child write. These rubrics are on the University Park website.



- Specifically, the components of writing are:
- Ideas: Details and elaboration
- Organization: Introduction (interesting topic sentence), body, and conclusion
- Conventions: correct grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Word Choice: interesting vocabulary and descriptors
- Sentence Fluency: flow, length, and structure of sentences
- Voice: the way the writer brings the piece to life

Math

University Park staff use the University of Chicago “Everyday Math (EM)” curriculum. The philosophy of this program emphasizes an understanding of math concepts, while mastering basic math skills. To accomplish this, the curriculum “spirals” through the grade levels. Students will have multiple opportunities to practice the concepts and skills they learned previously, adding more challenging material as they “spiral upward.”



Students are exposed to all the major areas of math content--number sense, algebra, measurement, geometry, data analysis, and probability—beginning in Kindergarten. Grade specific goals are established for each of these content areas. You can find these on the EM and UPark websites. Your child will be given “home links” pages to take home at the beginning of new topics. Copies of these, and additional information can be found at everydaymath.uchicago.edu

Science

DPS uses the “BSCS Science Tracks: Connecting Science and Literacy” curriculum. Grade levels determine the timing of each unit during the school year.

Grade Level	Physical Science	Earth & Space Science	Life Science
Kindergarten	Investigating My Senses	Investigating Here, There & Everywhere	Investigating Myself and My Family
1 st Grade	Investigating Properties	Investigating Weather	Investigating Animals and Their Needs
2 nd Grade	Designing Sound Systems	Investigating Earth Materials	Investigating Plants
3 rd Grade	Investigating Electrical Systems	Investigating Objects in the Sky	Investigating Life Cycles
4 th Grade	Investigating Physical and Chemical Properties	Investigating the Changing Earth	Investigating Ecosystems
5 th Grade	Investigating Heat and Changes in Materials	Investigating Weather Systems	Investigating Human Systems

Technology

The computer lab is up and running at UPark! Mrs. Foster, our new tech teacher, will be teaming with K-5 classrooms to master national technology standards while enabling UPark students to work with many varieties of Web 2.0 tools. Each classroom will be doing a project each trimester, plus different projects of a longer duration will be developed as Mrs. Foster works with individual staff members and grade level teams.

Music

All full day students participate in music for 40 minutes once a week. They are given an opportunity to read, notate and create music according to their respective grade level, using a variety of instruments with an emphasis on the Orff experience. Students acquire an understanding of the relationship of music and other subjects outside of music. The opportunity to perform is essential to the UPark arts experience, with planned music performances in grades one and two. *Exposure to community outreach programs: Colorado Symphony and "Opera in a Trunk"* allow students to evaluate performances and develop an appreciation for the history and culture of music. All of these experiences are designed to create a lasting appreciation for the arts.

Drama

All full-day students at University Park have the opportunity to participate in drama classes once a week for 40 minutes. During this time, the students focus on movement, creation, and dramatic expression. Students are taught that the dramatic process is achieved through cooperation. They focus on working together to create a quality outcome. Throughout the year, students will participate in performances to share their learning with the community.

Art

All full-day students come to art once a week for 40 minutes. In the art room they explore clay, paint, chalk, pastels, and so much more. The emphasis of each art lesson is on the process not the product. These art lessons stimulate learning, creativity, and analytical capabilities that help our students achieve their full potential. *Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain one as an adult.* – Pablo Picasso

Physical Education and Dance

All full-day students come to the gym twice a week for 40 minutes of physical education and dance. We focus on moving and being active in a safe environment for most of those 80 minutes. A variety of physical activities are offered with opportunities for students of all abilities to be successful. We facilitate the development of physical fitness, assist students in achieving personal goals, provide both competitive and cooperative situations, and promote good sportsmanship as we encourage students to practice skills that will enable them to be active for a lifetime.

Library

The UPark library serves the students, staff and parents of our community. It's a living space—filled with exotic plants and replica animals—decorated so that children will become more curious about the world around them. Students visit the library at fixed times each week, but there is sufficient flexibility in the daily schedule for children to drop by the library before, during and after

school. Primary students (grades K-2) may check out up to *three* items each week. Intermediate students (3-5) may check out up to *four* books per visit. There's a tremendous emphasis placed on putting books in children's hands and connecting young people to great literature through read-aloud sessions and storytelling. Special nooks have been created within the library to encourage children to read in tandem or by themselves for enjoyment. Children learn basic concepts, such as how to use LION, the Online Public Access Catalog, so that they can find what they're looking for independently. There are multiple computers available for small groups of students to use the library's online databases or to research topics via the Internet.

Challenge Program

At University Park we have a half time Gifted and Talented teacher who works with classroom teachers and small groups of students to ensure our gifted and high achieving students continue to be challenged. In cooperation with classroom teachers, the Gifted and Talented teacher develops an individualized Advanced Learning Plan for each identified gifted student. Gifted and high achieving students have the opportunity to participate in four unique cross-school challenges throughout the year. We also have several teams of students participate in Destination Imagination each year.

Assessments

Assessment	Grade	Frequency	When	Assessment measures
DRA	K-5 th	2 X year	Fall and Spring	Identifies a student's reading level, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension
CELA	ELL students	1	Winter	Oral Proficiency in English
Interim (Benchmark)				Measures students' achievement of curriculum at regular intervals through the school year, and informs instruction through a sampling of important learning goals throughout a grade level.
Writing	2-5	3 X year	Throughout the school year	
Math	K-5	4 X year		
TCAP (previously CSAP)	3rd-4th Reading, Math and Writing 5 th – Reading, Writing, Math and Science	Yearly	February and March	Will use assessment items that are common to both the previous Colorado Model Content Standards and the new Colorado Academic Standards
STAR Reading	K-5	4 X a year	Throughout the school year.	Student reading skills (Word Knowledge and Skills, Analyzing Literary Text, Understanding Author's Craft, Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning, and Analyzing

Homework Philosophy

At UPark homework is viewed as a tool to reinforce classroom learning, teach good work habits and teach responsibility. We have established the following weekly guidelines:

- Kindergarten and 1st Grade: 10-15 minutes 4 days per week
- Grade 2: 20 minutes, four days per week
- Grade 3: 30 minutes, four days per week
- Grade 4: 40 minutes, four days per week
- Grade 5: 50 minutes, five days per week.

How much should parents help?

Different teachers have different attitudes regarding parental assistance with homework and special projects. Some prefer to see what the child can do independently; others encourage parents to ask questions and point out problems. Ask for clarification if you don't know.

Feedback About Homework

We encourage you to talk to your child's teacher if you or your child has difficulty understanding or completing any homework assignment.

Absences and Homework

If your child is away from school due to illness or travel, the classroom teacher may assign makeup work. Whenever possible, let the teacher know in advance about an absence so that lessons or homework can be provided.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

- *University Park Elementary*: www.uparkelementary.org
- *Everyday Math*: everydaymath.uchicago.edu
- *Denver Public Schools Library link*: lion.dpsk12.org
 - This allows you to view what books your child has checked out of the library, view book reviews and DPS library catalogue, and have access to numerous "safe" research sites. You need your student's ID number (which the office can provide if your child has not memorized it)

Grade Level: Kindergarten

See UPark Website for DRA level reading lists, Everyday Math Goals, and Writing Rubrics

Reading

Kindergarten DRA Instructional Targets		
End of 1 st Trimester	End of 2nd Trimester	End of school year
1	2-3	4

The characteristics of DRA Level 4: Decode beginning & ending sounds, simple compound words, able to re-tell the story, make connections to text, recognize and correct own mistakes, identify rhyming words, predict from pictures

Suggested reading: Picture books; Eric Carle; Step Up to Reading Series; store signs, cereal boxes, etc;

In the classroom: Eric Carle Author study; Poetry; Nonfiction “All About” information books in spring

Writing

First trimester	Second trimester	Third trimester
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spell first and last name• Draw pictures & tell story verbally• Try to write words & labels pictures• Exact spelling is not expected• Choose ideas to write about from their own lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing with pictures and words that match• Spells some words from “no excuse words” correctly• Drawings represent beginning, middle and end of story	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses upper and lower case letters appropriately• Appropriate spacing between letters and words• Writing includes phrases and sentences• Can read their own writing

See writing rubric on the UPark website.

Math

Use the four everyday math home link books. These reflect the work being done in the classroom.

Concepts mastered by end of grade level:

- Count and read numbers to 100
- Write 2 digit numbers
- Skip count by 2 to 30, by 5 & 10’s to 100
- Count backward from 20
- Identify which numbers are larger and smaller
- Identify shapes: square, rectangle, triangle, circle, sphere, cube
- Identify: penny, nickel, dime and quarter & know names and values
- Create & recognize patterns with 2 & 3 colors and shapes
- Know the use of measuring tools – ie clock, calendar, ruler, scale

K i n d e r g a r t e n

Social Studies Units/Themes

Getting along; making friends
Respecting differences in individuals and families
Problem solving
Needs versus wants
Resources and scarcity

Science Unit/Themes

Fall - Five senses
Spring – Movement: people, animals and objects

Classroom Projects:

Presentation of Letters of the alphabet (needs support from home)
BrainWise critical thinking skill and vocabulary:
 Brain hats, Support, Red Flags, Emotions Elevator
Cross-age Reading Buddies (kindergarten students read with 3rd graders)
February Friendship Celebration
February: 100th day of school
March 2- Dr.Seuss' Birthday
Parent and Me Celebration

Field Trips (one that you take every year)

Full day will go on 2 field trips—To be determined

Homework Expectation:

Read with someone 15-20 minutes
Everyday Math Home Links
Individual classrooms will communicate some simple projects to connect learning to home

Grade Level: 1st

See UPark Website for DRA level reading lists, Everyday Math Goals, and Writing Rubrics

Reading

1st Grade DRA Instructional Targets		
End of 1st Trimester	End of 2nd Trimester	End of school year
6	12	16
Focus: phonological awareness and decoding; story elements	Focus: reading fluency and non-fiction “re-tells”	Focus: author’s purpose; Mem Fox author study; mentor text
Suggested books: <i>The Cat that Sat</i> , by School Zone Publishing <i>It Looked Like Spilt Milk</i> by George Shaw	<i>The Hungry Giant</i> <i>On Top of Spaghetti</i> <i>Biscuit</i> series by Alyssa Capucilli	<i>The Jacket I Wear in the Snow</i> <i>Frog & Toad</i> series by Arnold Lobel

**Continue to read aloud to them; give them “just right” books to read to you, and reread challenge books to them;

Writing

Grade Level Focus: Developing the idea:

- 1st Trimester: Small moments and poetry
- 2nd Trimester: “How to” and “All about” research unit
- 3rd Trimester: Author study

See writing rubric on the UPark website

Math Goals (expected to be mastered by the end of grade level):

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Kindergarten skills • Count, read, write to 1,000 • Place value, sequencing, count by 2s, 3s, 5s, 10s to 100 • Symmetry • 3-dimensional shapes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money – making change, combining coins • Variety of ways to name a number • Charts and tables – tally marks • 100s chart – count forward and back – recognize patterns of numbers |
|--|--|

Social Studies Units

Citizenship—rules, civic concepts, making friends, being a leader

Economics

Choices, scarcity, needs and wants

Geography map skills—understanding maps, globes, cultures & family traditions; timelines

Science Units

Investigating weather and tools

Properties and attributes of different materials

Animals—research unit on the characteristics that differentiate them

Classroom Projects:

Friendship Soup

Family winter traditions

Scrap books

Home Projects:

Animal Report

Field Trips

Zoo,

Butterfly Pavilion

Fall Nature walk

Homework Expectation

Read or read to 10-20 minutes a night – great for children to see you reading , Math Home Links sent weekly

1st Grade

Grade Level: 2nd Grade

See UPark Website for DRA level reading lists, Everyday Math Goals, and Writing Rubrics

Reading

2nd Grade DRA Instructional Targets		
End of 1st Trimester	End of 2nd Trimester	End of school year
16-18	18-24	24-28
Focus: characters, vocabulary, story organization	Focus: author purpose; reading fluency	Focus: reflection about content; key facts; writing about reading material; recognize how to use maps, captions, table of contents

**Note to parents: As children advance in their reading ability, it is important to ensure their reading material has developmentally appropriate content for their age. Please also note that just because your child *can* read the words in a more difficult book, doesn't mean they understand the content or are building vocabulary & fluency from those books. It is still very important to read with your child to model and discuss, "why did the character do that?" "What would you have done?", etc.

Suggested reading:

DRA 16-18: *Henry and Mudge*, *Mr. Poppleton*, and *Mr. Putter* series, all by Cynthia Rylant;

DRA 20-24: *Nate the Great* series by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat; *Commander Toad* series by Jane Yolen

DRA 24-28: *Magic Tree House* series by Mary Pope Osborne; *Cam Jansen* series by David Adler

Writing

Grade Level Focus: The structure of sentence, paragraph, and story.

1st trimester students write a narrative story;

2nd trimester they do research project and write "All About" and "How To" books;

3rd trimester they do an Author study and poetry.

See writing rubric on website for specific details of components of writing.

Math:

Concepts mastered by end of grade level:

- Addition & subtraction facts (single digits – simple double digits)
- Beginning multiplication and division
- Reading a clock
- Identify language of probability – more likely, less likely
- Recognize patterns in numbers, place value
- Estimate to nearest ten
- Count by 5s, 10s up and down
- Mean, median, mode
- Names for equivalent numbers
- Graphing
- Making change
- Measure to nearest inch/centimeter

Social Studies Units

Community, Economics – good shopper
Geography—land/water forms and beginning map reading
Authority & government/rules

Science Units

Plants
Sound systems—how sound works
Soil

Classroom Projects:

Non-Fiction Report --*fall*
Cultural heritage presentation – *fall*
Author study presentation (optional) - *spring*

Home Projects:

Cultural Heritage and Author Study

Field Trips:

Ice skating
Arts Day at Arvada Center

Community Service Project:

Teddy Bear Project

Homework Expectation:

Nightly math and a weekly literacy packet

2nd G r a d e

Grade Level: 3rd grade

See UPark Website for DRA level reading lists, Everyday Math Goals, and Writing Rubrics

The use of Daily Planners begins in 3rd grade

Reading

3rd Grade DRA Instructional Targets		
End of 1 st Trimester	End of 2nd Trimester	End of school year
30	34	38
Focus: creating “scaffolded” summaries of reading, both fiction and non-fiction. This includes paraphrasing important facts from the text, determining importance of content; Reflection and analytical questions (most important and why); making inferences and identifying character motivation and changes.		

“Read alouds” are still very important to discuss the story and to identify rich language to support writing.

Suggested reading:

Tri 1--*Magic Tree House* by Mary Pope Osborne; *Geronimo Stilton* series

Tri 2-- *A-Z Mysteries* by Ron Roy; *Marvin Redpost* series by Louis Sachar; books by Clyde Robert Bulla

Tri 3-- *Wayside School* – Louis Sachar; *Boxcar Children*; *Nancy Drew* series; books by Andrew Clements; Beverly Cleary; Roald Dahl

Writing

Grade Level Focus: Content and organization--gathering seed ideas in a writer’s notebook to generate topics; Use of specific and appropriate verbs & adjectives; Development of the writer’s voice; re-reading, editing, publishing in many genre; cursive writing formal instruction.

In 3rd grade students will be taught through daily “Quick Writes” with the following components: 1—Topic; 2—Make a plan (details & examples); 3—first and last sentences; 4—Writing a 5 sentence paragraph to a prompt.

See writing rubric on website for specific details of components of writing

Math:

Concepts expected to be mastered by end of grade level:

- Place value
- Adding / subtracting large numbers
- Measuring
- Multiplication / Division
- Fractions and decimals
- Geometry
- Data, chance, & probability

Social Studies Units:

Justice – responsibility, civil rights, consequences
Denver & Colorado: history & geography

Science Units:

Electricity—Motors in Motion
Objects in the sky
Life cycles

Classroom Projects:

Published writing in different genres
Research project relating to Colorado History

Home Projects:

Research project noted above

Field Trips:

Balarat
Planetarium
LoDo Tour

Homework Expectation

Read 20+ minutes, math each night
Class specific for writing

Avoid using the Wikipedia website for research projects

**3rd
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Grade Level: 4th Grade

See UPark Website for DRA level reading lists, Everyday Math Goals, and Writing Rubrics

Reading

4 th Grade DRA Instructional Targets		
End of 1 st Trimester	End of 2nd Trimester	End of school year
38	40	40
Focus: learning to read between the lines; understanding character & plot development, and making predictions and inferences, identifying main idea and themes; drawing conclusions		

Suggested reading: *39 Clues* by multiple authors; *Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordin; *Bunnicula* series by James Howe; Louis Sachar books; EB White books

Writing

Grade Level Focus: Content and organization, style and sentence fluency, word choice. The students reread their writing aloud to ensure proficiency level, and to edit grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Students will use the computer lab to perform research and to publish their work in a variety of formats (Word documents, PowerPoint, etc).

See the UPark website for writing rubrics.

Math:

Concepts expected to be mastered by end of grade level:

- Multiplication & division
- Fractions – decimals – percent
- Metric system
- Measurement to 1/8th of an inch
- Reading graphs – range, maximum, minimum

Social Studies Units:

Regional study of the United States - political, cultural, geography, and economy
Citizenship – work collaboratively in groups
Foundations of democracy – privacy (constitution)

Science Unit/Themes

Physical and chemical properties
Use observations to make predictions
Changing earth – weathering and erosion
Ecosystems – food chains and food webs
Electricity

Classroom Projects:

Science Fair – Winter (need support and research from home)

Young Ameritowne – February

Egg Drop—spring (need support and research from home)

Field Trips

Young Ameritowne

Homework Expectation

40 minutes/night

Read 20-30 minutes

Students should read out loud at home, at least once a week—for fluency, expression, and discussing the content of the book.

One page math

**4th
G r a d e**

Grade Level: 5th

See UPark Website for DRA level reading lists, Everyday Math Goals, and Writing Rubrics

Reading

5 th Grade DRA Instructional Targets		
End of 1 st Trimester	End of 2nd Trimester	End of school year
40	44	50

Suggested reading:

Books: *Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Stewart; *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg; *Charlotte's Web*, E. B. White; *Call of the Wild*, by Jack London; *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling, *Guardians of Ga'Hoole* by Kathryn Lasky, *Percy Jackson* series by Rick Riordin, *Charlie Bone* series by Jenny Nimmo, *Warriors* series by Erin Hunter, books by authors Blue Balliett, Carl Hiaasen, Mike Lupica; the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series.

Magazines: *National Geographic*, *Games*, *Sports Illustrated*

Recommended References: Students should have access to an Adult Dictionary; Almanac, Atlas, and Synonym finder

Writing

Grade Level Focus: preparation for middle school. Students work on note-taking strategies while reading. They also have several writing assignments:

- Book Reports: 1 per trimester
- Personal Narratives
- Essays
- Poetry book
- Realistic Fiction
- Research – persuasive as to why it is significant

Math:

Concepts expected to be mastered by end of year:

- Facts – multiplication and division
- Produce graphs and interpret information from graphs
- Basic Algebra
- Probability
- Measure angles, identify types of angles
- Characteristics of polygons
- Area, perimeter, volume
- Partial products / partial quotients
- Prime, composite, factors
- Fractions/percent/decimal

Social Studies Units/Themes

Exploration, early migration, colonization
We the People & Project Citizen
American History & the Constitution

Science Unit/Themes

Family Life—occurs in November
Weather
Human Body systems (respiratory, skeletal, digestive)
Heat and Change

Classroom Projects:

Making & sharing a Board Game
Science Fair
Shakespeare

Home Projects:

Science Fair
University Park Pursuit

Field Trips

Balarat
Shakespeare
Planetarium
Young Ameritowne
Symphony
APEX
Museum of Nature and Science

Community Service Project

Project Citizen—in classroom

2 hours per week for reading
Everyday Math nightly, and math packets once a week
Language Arts packets once a week
Spelling lists
Book Reports – one per trimester
UPark Pursuit – find answers and cite sources

****LATE HOMEWORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

5th
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