



DISCOVERY SCHOOL

A GUIDE TO FIRST GRADE

- ☑ Strong academics
- ☑ Certified teachers
- ☑ Hands on learning
- ☑ Screen-free
- ☑ Hybrid: with a focus on family time
- ☑ Project Based

REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 9TH

WWW.PROJECTPLAY.NET

FIRST GRADE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Choosing the right elementary program is a huge decision. For many families, this is the first time they are deciding between a traditional public school setting and a more personalized learning environment. At Project Play, we want families to feel informed, confident, and secure in their choice.

Project Play was founded by educators with experience in both public and private school systems. Our leadership and teaching team understand academic standards, classroom expectations, and the developmental needs of young children. We believe first grade should build a strong academic foundation while preserving curiosity, joy, and a love of learning.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

At Project Play, we believe children learn best through a balance of strong academics, purposeful play, and meaningful relationships. Our first grade program is intentionally designed to support the whole child academically, socially, and emotionally.

We do not rush children through content, nor do we rely on worksheets or rote memorization. Instead, learning happens through hands-on lessons, small group instruction, movement, exploration, and play. This approach allows children to engage deeply with content while building confidence and independence.

HYBRID LEARNING

Project Play first grade follows a hybrid learning model designed to balance in-person instruction with meaningful at-home learning. In-person class days are **Tuesday through Thursday, from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM.** With an optional Monday enrichment class. During these days, students engage in direct instruction, hands-on learning, small group work, collaborative projects and outdoor exploration. This is when new concepts are introduced, modeled, and practiced with teacher support.

At-home learning days are Monday and Friday. On these days, families are provided with simple, intentional activities that reinforce skills taught in class. At-home work is designed to be developmentally appropriate, manageable for families, and focused on practice rather than busywork. Activities may include reading together, light written practice, math games, or hands-on projects connected to classroom themes.

This structure allows children to:

- Benefit from focused, high-quality in-person instruction
- Practice independence and responsibility at home
- Avoid academic burnout while maintaining consistent learning routines
- Experience flexibility while still meeting academic expectations

Our hybrid model supports family schedules while ensuring children remain connected, challenged, and supported throughout the week.

TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ALIGNMENT

Our first grade program follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for First Grade. These standards outline what students across Texas should know and be able to do by the end of the school year.

While our instruction may look different from a traditional classroom, our learning goals remain aligned with state expectations. TEKS standards are taught through developmentally appropriate, hands-on instruction that meets children where they are.

Families may view the official first grade TEKS through the Texas Education Agency website below:

<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/curriculum-standards/teks/grade1-teks-062024.pdf>

LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

The first grade literacy curriculum follows TEKS Literacy standards and focuses on building strong foundational reading and writing skills.

Instruction is developmentally appropriate and designed to support students at varying levels of readiness.

Students develop:

- Phonemic awareness and phonics skills, including decoding and encoding
- Reading fluency and comprehension across a variety of texts
- Vocabulary development and oral language skills
- Handwriting
- Writing skills,

Instruction is delivered through phonics instruction, guided reading, independent writing, and small group instruction based on student readiness and progress.

MATH CURRICULUM

Math instruction emphasizes number sense, mathematical reasoning, and real world application. Instruction follows TEKS Math standards and supports students in developing strong foundational skills through meaningful, hands on learning.

Students develop:

- Number sense and place value
- Addition and subtraction strategies
- Measurement concepts, including length, time, and comparison
- Problem solving skills and mathematical thinking
- Data analysis through graphing, and interpreting information
- Logical reasoning and mathematical communication
- Perseverance and confidence in solving multi step problems

Lessons are taught through manipulatives, games, math centers, movement based activities, guided practice, and hands on exploration.

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Science and social studies are integrated into thematic units that promote curiosity, inquiry, and critical thinking. Instruction aligns with TEKS standards and supports students in making connections between the natural world, their community, and their role as learners and citizens.

Students explore:

- Life, earth, and physical science concepts, including weather, plants, animals, and the natural world
- Observation, questioning, and basic scientific investigation skills
- Community roles, responsibilities, and civic awareness
- Rules, cooperation, and responsible citizenship
- Basic geography, maps, and time concepts, including past, present, and future
- Cultural awareness

Learning occurs through hands on experiments, outdoor exploration, guided discussions, collaborative projects, and thematic studies that integrate reading, writing, and inquiry.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Social and emotional development is a foundational component of the first grade program. Students are supported in strengthening independence, communication skills, emotional regulation, and collaboration within a structured, supportive environment.

Small class sizes allow teachers to build strong relationships with each student and intentionally support growth in confidence, resilience, responsibility, and problem solving skills.

FIRST GRADE BENCHMARKS

Student progress is monitored through ongoing teacher observation, formal and informal assessments, and review of student work samples. Instruction and expectations are aligned with TEKS and adjusted to support both mastery and growth.

Beginning of Year

- Solid phonemic awareness and foundational phonics skills, including decoding simple words
- Strong number sense, counting fluency, and quantity comparison
- Understanding classroom routines, expectations, and independent work habits
- Developing fine motor control and handwriting accuracy

Middle of Year

- Reading with increased fluency and comprehension across fiction and nonfiction texts
- Writing multiple complete sentences with appropriate grammar, capitalization, and punctuation

FIRST GRADE BENCHMARKS

- Application of addition and subtraction strategies to solve word problems
- Increased academic stamina, independence, and self regulation

End of Year

- Reading grade level and above grade level texts with comprehension and accuracy
- Writing organized paragraphs that clearly express ideas and details
- Confident use of number sense, operations, and problem solving strategies
- Demonstrated readiness for second grade academically, socially, and emotionally

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30–9:00 AM Arrival and Soft Start

Independent work, journals, morning tubs, and teacher check ins

9:00–9:20 AM Morning Meeting

Community building, goal setting, and social emotional learning

9:20–10:20 AM Literacy Block

Phonics, guided reading, read alouds, and writing

10:20–10:50 AM Museum Play

Open ended, child led play connected to classroom learning

10:50–11:30 AM Math Block

Hands on instruction using manipulatives, games, and problem solving strategies

11:30 AM–12:00 PM Lunch

12:00–1:00 PM Outdoor Play

1:00–2:15 PM Project Based Studies

Interdisciplinary, project based learning block integrating science, social studies, design, collaboration, and problem solving through extended thematic units

2:15–2:45 PM Small Groups

Targeted support, extension activities, and individualized instruction

2:45–3:00 PM Closing Circle and Dismissal Prep

Reflection, sharing, and end of day routines

HOW PROJECT PLAY COMPARES TO PUBLIC SCHOOL

Public school classrooms often serve larger groups of students and follow a more standardized instructional model. While many public schools offer wonderful opportunities, they may have limited flexibility due to class size and pacing requirements.

At Project Play, small class sizes allow for individualized instruction, flexible pacing, and deeper teacher-student relationships. Children are still meeting TEKS standards, but through hands-on learning, movement, play, and small group instruction rather than primarily worksheet-based learning.

Our goal is not to replace public education, but to offer a thoughtful alternative for families seeking a more personalized, developmentally appropriate experience.

IS PROJECT PLAY THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR FAMILY?

Project Play first grade may be a great fit if you are looking for:

- Small class sizes and individualized attention
- A balance of academics and play
- Hands-on, movement-based learning
- Strong communication and relationships with teachers
- An environment where children feel seen, valued, and supported

Families who value flexibility, creativity, and a child-centered approach often find that Project Play provides a strong foundation for lifelong learning. We are honored to partner with families during this important year and are committed to supporting each child's growth with intention, care, and expertise.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is this program aligned with state standards?

Yes. Our first grade curriculum follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). While our instruction is hands-on and play-based, learning goals remain aligned with state expectations. Children are meeting standards in a way that is developmentally appropriate and engaging.

How do you assess student progress?

We use teacher observation, informal assessments, student work samples, and ongoing communication to monitor progress. Because of our small class sizes, teachers are able to track growth closely and adjust instruction to meet individual needs.

How does your first grade compare academically to public or private school?

Our first grade follows TEKS standards and meets or exceeds grade level expectations. We emphasize strong literacy and math foundations while allowing for deeper learning through small group instruction and integrated projects. Our small class sizes allow for more individualized instruction than most traditional settings.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does a typical day look like?

Each day includes a balance of academic instruction, hands-on learning, play, outdoor time, and community building. Children participate in literacy and math instruction, one hour of open-ended play, one hour of outdoor play, and project-based learning throughout the day.

How large are class sizes?

We intentionally keep class sizes small to allow for individualized instruction, meaningful relationships, and flexible pacing. This ensures each child is known, supported, and challenged appropriately.

How do you support students who are at different academic levels?

Instruction is differentiated through small group work, targeted support, and enrichment. Students are grouped flexibly based on readiness, and instruction is adjusted to support both skill development and appropriate challenge.

What does a typical day look like?

Mornings are academically focused, with extended literacy and math blocks. Afternoons shift to applied learning through projects, science, social studies, collaboration, and outdoor exploration.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are projects structured?

Projects are guided, teacher led, and connected to thematic units. Students work on projects over one to two weeks, applying skills from reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Projects emphasize thinking, collaboration, and problem solving.

Is there homework in first grade?

Homework is minimal and purposeful. Families can expect occasional reading practice or light reinforcement activities, but the majority of academic work is completed during the school day.

What kind of learner thrives in this program?

Students who are curious, capable of growing independence, and benefit from structure paired with flexibility tend to thrive. This program is a strong fit for families seeking academic rigor without a high pressure environment.

Will you be adding additional grade levels?

Yes. We plan to add additional grade levels over time as our program grows. Our goal is to intentionally expand one grade at a time, ensuring each new level is thoughtfully developed and aligned with our academic standards and values. Expansion is always based on enrollment, staffing, and maintaining the quality and integrity of the program.

NEXT STEPS

We believe first grade should be a magical place where children are challenged and supported, while still being given the time and space to simply be kids.

Our Commitment to Families

At Project Play, families can expect:

- Small class sizes and individualized attention
- Texas TEKS aligned instruction delivered through hands-on, meaningful learning
- A balance of academics, play, and social-emotional development
- Consistent communication and a strong home-school partnership
- A nurturing environment where children are known, supported, and encouraged

Next Steps

Families interested in Project Play First Grade are invited to begin with a tour and family interview.

Application opens February 9th

Contact Us:

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www.projectplay.net