

The International Community School of Addis Ababa
Elementary School Standards-based Instruction & Assessment

ICS uses a standards-based approach for guiding instruction and for assessing students' progress. ICS teachers use a variety of means of assessing students in all areas of the curriculum. In 2004 ICS teachers began the process of identifying standards to guide their teaching. Multiple assessments, including direct observation of a child, are used to determine the progress a child has made toward a standard. The evaluation reflects where the child is at that point in time, not an average of his/her work over the course of the trimester. Mastering any skill takes time. ICS defines mastery as demonstrating consistent application of the skill in a variety of contexts. Therefore succeeding on one test or in one assignment does not constitute mastery. Teachers design multiple opportunities for students to apply a skill. Over time teachers will evaluate if a student is *meeting or exceeding the standard* (rated a 3 on the report card), *progressing toward the standard* (rated a 2 on the standard), or an *area of concern* (rated a 1 on the report card).

In grades Kindergarten, First and Second grades, teachers have set end of trimester expectations since students at those grade levels develop and acquire skills so rapidly. In grades Three through Five, teachers use end-of-grade-level expectations since the skills become more complex and take longer to develop. If a student has a 2 on the report card, this is not an area of concern. This indicates that the child is practicing a skill, but has not yet demonstrated consistent proficiency in a variety of settings.

The **Reading and Writing Continuum**, which is included, was developed about 15 years ago in Washington State by Bonnie Campbell Hill. Since then this continuum has been used both in the United States and internationally. At ICS all elementary students have a folder with this continuum printed on it. Teachers refer to these indicators to evaluate a student's development in reading and writing. Students normally do not complete all the indicators in one column before completing indicators in another column. Usually a student will demonstrate mastery in at least 2 different columns. Teachers use these reading and writing standards to help them determine if a student is meeting or exceeding the standard.

In addition ICS elementary teachers have developed guidelines for **end-of-the-year expectations** in all content areas. This chart is also included so parents are better informed about the standards at ICS and how they are used. The complete set of standards and benchmarks is available on the website (www.icsaddis.edu.et). Please feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss any of these standards and your child's progress toward them.

READING CONTINUUM

WRITING CONTINUUM

Preconventional Ages 3-5	Emerging Ages 4-6	Developing Ages 5-7	Preconventional Ages 3-5	Emerging Ages 4-6	Developing Ages 5-7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ Begins to choose reading materials (e.g., books, magazines and charts) and has favorites. θ Shows interest in reading signs, labels and logos (environmental print). θ Recognizes own name in print. θ Holds book and turns pages correctly. θ Shows beginning/end of book or story. θ Knows some letter names. θ Listens and responds to literature. θ Comments on illustrations in books. θ Participates in group reading (books, rhymes, poems and songs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ Memorizes pattern books, poems and familiar books. θ Begins to read signs, labels and logos (environmental print). θ Demonstrates eagerness to read. θ Pretends to read. θ Uses illustrations to tell stories. θ Reads top to bottom, left to right and front to back with guidance. θ Knows most letter names and some letter sounds. θ Recognizes some names and words in context. θ Begins to make meaningful predictions. θ Rhymes and plays with words. θ Participates in reading of familiar books and poems. θ Connects books read aloud to own experiences with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ Reads books with simple patterns. θ Begins to read own writing. θ Begins to read independently for short periods (5-10 minutes). θ Shares favorite reading material with others. θ Learns information from reading and shares with others. θ Relies on illustrations and print. θ Uses finger-print-voice matching. θ Knows most letter sounds. θ Recognizes simple words. θ Begins to make meaningful predictions. θ Identifies titles and authors in literature. θ Retells main event or idea in literature. θ Participates in guided literature discussions. θ Sees self as reader. θ Explains why literature is liked/disliked during class discussions with guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ Relies primarily on pictures to convey meaning. θ Begins to label and add "words" to pictures. θ Writes first name. θ Demonstrates awareness that print conveys meaning. θ Makes marks other than drawing on paper (scribbles). θ Writes random recognizable letters to represent words. θ Tells about own pictures and writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ Uses pictures and print to convey meaning. θ Writes words to describe or support pictures. θ Copies signs, labels, names, and words (environmental print). θ Demonstrates understanding of letter/sound relationship. θ Prints with upper case letters. θ Matches letters to sounds. θ Uses beginning consonants to make words. θ Uses beginning and ending consonants to make words. θ Pretends to read own writing. θ Sees self as writer. θ Takes risks with writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θ Writes 1-2 sentences about a topic. θ Writes names and familiar words. θ Generates own ideas for writing. θ Writes from top to bottom, left to right, and front to back. θ Intermixes upper and lower case letters. θ Experiments with capitals. θ Experiments with punctuation. θ Begins to use spacing between words. θ Uses growing awareness of sound segments (e.g., phonemes, syllables, rhymes) to write words. θ Spells words on the basis of sounds without regard for conventional spelling patterns. θ Uses beginning, middle, and ending sounds to make words. θ Begins to read own writing.