K-3 Foundational Skills Checklist

A 20-minute home check of your child's reading and math foundations

SparkCubs
ONLINE ACADEMY

How to use this. Set aside about 20 minutes on a quiet day. You will need one short book your child has *never* read before. Keep it light — this is not a test, and your child should not feel graded. Tick the box only if your child can do it comfortably, without help.

Part 1: Reading

1 Reads an unfamiliar page aloud

Try this: Open the new book to any page and ask your child to read it out loud.

Watch for: Long pauses, guessing at words from the first letter, or skipping words entirely.

2 Retells what they just read

Try this: Close the book. Ask: "What happened in that part?" Let them answer in their own words, in any language.

Watch for: Smooth reading followed by a blank stare is the most common warning sign. It means the words are being sounded out but not understood.

3 Answers a question that is not written down

Try this: Ask something the page implies but does not state, such as "Why do you think he did that?"

Watch for: Being able to find an answer only by pointing at the exact line in the book.

4 Knows what a new word means from context

Try this: Pick one word they likely do not know and ask what they think it means, based on the sentence.

Watch for: No attempt at all. A wrong-but-reasonable guess is actually a good sign.

Part 2: Numeracy

5 Handles real money without a worksheet

Try this: "We have 200 pesos, this costs 65 pesos. How much change should we get?"

Watch for: Being able to compute 200 minus 65 on paper but freezing when the same problem is spoken aloud.

6 Explains why, not just how

Try this: After they solve something, ask why that step works. Rough, everyday wording is fine.

Watch for: Repeating the procedure back to you instead of explaining it, then going quiet when you ask again.

7 Solves a two-step problem

Try this: "You buy two breads at 12 pesos each and pay with 50 pesos. How much change?"

Watch for: Solving the first step and stopping, or adding all the numbers together at once.

8 Works without an adult beside them

Try this: Give one short task and step away. Come back in five minutes.

Watch for: Needing someone present every single night is worth noticing, even when the work gets done.

Reading your results.
7-8 ticks. Strong foundations. Keep reading together daily — this is how you protect the lead.
4-6 ticks. Some gaps, and they are very fixable at this age. Focus on the specific items you could not tick.
3 or fewer. Your child likely needs teaching aimed at where they actually are, not at their grade level. This is common, it is not your fault, and the earlier it is addressed the smaller the work.

What to do next

Whatever your score, three habits help every child: **fifteen minutes of reading aloud daily** (short and daily beats long and occasional), **math during errands** rather than on worksheets, and **praising the thinking** instead of the score.

If several boxes stayed empty, one-on-one attention closes these gaps faster than anything else. SparkCubs Online Academy offers live one-on-one sessions with licensed Filipino teachers, paced entirely to your child. **Your first assessment session is free** — your child works with a teacher for one session, and you get an honest account of where they stand.

This checklist is a guide for parents at home, not a formal diagnostic assessment. If you have ongoing concerns about your child's learning, speak with their classroom teacher as well.