



Ivy Waters International Standards

Early Years

Ages 3–5

The foundation stage. These standards describe the earliest capabilities: noticing, naming, counting, and wondering in everyday family life.

The Ivy Waters Way

Ivy Waters exists for families who educate in freedom: homeschoolers, worldschoolers, and internationally mobile families whose classrooms are kitchens, markets, trains, and shorelines. These Standards are written for that life, not adapted to it afterward. Six principles run through every page:

1 The world is the classroom

Learning is not confined to a desk or a schedule. Every standard can be met and noticed in ordinary life: a market stall, a border crossing, a tide pool, or a dinner table.

3 Capabilities, not curricula

A standard names something observable your child *can do*, never a textbook, a program, or a method. How your family gets there is entirely yours: any resource, any pace, any order.

5 Freedom is structural

A learning moment with no standard attached is a complete, valid family record. Alignment is an optional lens you may apply, never a gate, a grade, or a judgment. Gaps are simply what lies ahead.

2 Moments before metrics

The unit of learning is the real moment a guardian witnesses. Records and coverage views are projections of captured evidence, never the other way around.

4 The guardian is the first observer

Standards are addressed to you in plain language, because the person who sees the learning happen is the person best placed to recognize it.

6 Permanent meaning, open evolution

Every identifier keeps its meaning; records keep the meaning of the version they cite. The catalog itself evolves in the open, through versioned governance and a public changelog.

Ivy Waters International Standards are written and owned by Ivy Waters International, independent of any other framework, standing on their own educational judgment, and published for families.

How to read this guide

Ivy Waters International Standards describe what your child can **do**, not what they have been taught, tested on, or exposed to. Every standard is written to you, the guardian, in plain language, because you are the one who sees the learning happen.

Every standard has three parts

- A **permanent identifier**, like **G5.M-01**, that never changes meaning. Records aligned to a standard keep the meaning that standard had when the record was made.
- A **capability**: one clear sentence beginning “Your child can...” describing something observable.
- A **real-life example**: the capability as you might actually meet it at a market, on a train, at the kitchen table.

The five domains

Every grade covers the same five domains: **Mathematics**, **Science**, **English**, **Language Acquisition** (a second language), and **Good Citizenship/Humanities**. The domain names you see on section headings are the grade’s own pedagogical labels; the underlying five domains never change.

Learning moments come first

A recorded learning moment is a valid family record whether or not it is matched to a standard. Alignment is a lens you may choose to apply. It is never a gate, a grade, or a judgment. Coverage gaps are simply ahead.

This guide

This Benchmark Guide covers the **Early Years** stage (Ages 3–5). The full framework spans Early Years through Grade 8 across three stage guides and one Comprehensive Guide.

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The Early Years stage in one view

Standards per domain. Every grade covers the same five domains. The count is how many distinct capabilities this guide describes for that year, not a workload or a checklist.

	Mathematics	Science	English	Language Acquisition	Good Citizenship/ Humanities	Total
Early Years Ages 3–5	3	3	4	2	3	15

Early Years (Ages 3–5)

Mathematics & Early Quantitative Reasoning

EY-M-01 Visual Subitizing & Rote Counting

Your child can sing or speak the counting sequence from 1 to 10 (and beyond) and can instantly recognize small groups of items (up to 3 or 4) by sight without pointing and counting them one by one.

IN REAL LIFE

You put 3 toy cars on the rug. Your child looks at them and instantly says, “Three cars!” without needing to tap each one. They can count out loud while climbing steps or swinging.

EY-M-02 Spatial Sorting & Attribute Classification

Your child can look at a messy pile of items and group them together based on a single chosen rule, such as color, size, or shape.

IN REAL LIFE

While cleaning up or unpacking travel bags, your child automatically puts all the blue blocks in one pile and all the red blocks in another, or separates big sea shells from tiny sea shells.

EY-M-03 Positional Language & Real-World Geometry

Your child understands and uses words that describe where things are in space (under, on top of, inside, next to, behind) and can spot basic shapes in nature.

IN REAL LIFE

You ask your child to find their shoes, and they look under the bed, saying, “They are under here!” They point to a square window or a round slice of orange and recognize the shape pattern.

Exploration & Early Science Inquiry

EY-S-01 Sensory Auditing & Material Textures

Your child actively investigates the physical properties of their environment using sight, touch, and sound, identifying what is soft, hard, wet, dry, cold, or warm.

IN REAL LIFE

Hands deep in the mud, your child announces, “Squishy!” Then they find a stone, tap it, and say, “This one’s hard.”

EY-S-02 Cause-and-Effect Exploration

Your child experiments with objects to see how they move, fall, balance, or react when forces change.

IN REAL LIFE

Playing in a pool or bathtub, your child drops a plastic boat and a heavy stone to see which one floats and which one sinks. They love pushing buttons, stacking blocks until they fall, and seeing how wheels roll.

EY-S-03 Living World & Seasonal Awareness

Your child notices that animals and plants are alive, treats them with gentle curiosity, and identifies major shifts in daylight, temperature, and clothing needs.

IN REAL LIFE

Your child points at a bird poking at the grass and asks, "What's he doing?" Later, they see the bright sun and reach for their hat before going outside.

English & Pre-Literacy Foundations

EY-E-01 Expressive Vocabulary & Needs Communication

Your child can speak in full, simple sentences (3 to 5 words) to express their thoughts, ask questions, tell a simple story, and make their immediate physical needs known to adults.

IN REAL LIFE

Your child brings you an empty cup and says, "Want more water," or points out the window and calls, "Look, a big dog!"

EY-E-02 Phonological Awareness & Word Play

Your child is tuned into the sounds of spoken language. They can clap out syllables in their name, recognize familiar rhyming words in songs, and mimic animal sounds.

IN REAL LIFE

Singing a song like Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, your child notices that star and are sound the same. They love playing with words and making silly, rhyming nonsense sounds.

EY-E-03 Print Orientation & Book Engagement

Your child knows that books contain stories and pictures, holds a book right-side up, flips pages sequentially from front to back, and understands that the symbols on the page represent spoken words.

IN REAL LIFE

Your child climbs into your lap with their favorite picture book, hands it to you facing the right way, points to the pictures, and asks you to read what the characters are saying.

EY-E-04 Emergent Writing & Fine Motor Control

Your child is developing the physical hand strength and coordination required for writing. They can hold a thick crayon, make purposeful scribbles, draw loops or lines, and use tools like safety scissors or playdough.

IN REAL LIFE

Your child proudly hands you a piece of paper covered in loops and wavy lines and says, "I wrote you a letter!" They practice copying vertical or horizontal strokes in the sand or on paper.

Language Acquisition (Second Language Exposure)

EY-L-01 Phonetic Sound Mimicry

Your child listens to words spoken in a second language and can playfully mimic the unique accent, vocal rhythm, and inflections without hesitation.

IN REAL LIFE

While listening to a song or cartoon in the target language, your child enthusiastically sings along with the chorus, capturing the correct native pronunciation of basic words.

EY-L-02 Physical Response to Commands

Your child understands basic, repetitive commands or greetings in the second language and can respond with the correct physical action, even if they aren't talking back in that language yet.

IN REAL LIFE

A local friend or instructor says "Ven aquí" or "Asseyez-vous," and your child naturally walks over or sits down because they understand the verbal cue.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development (PSED)

EY-C-01 Emotional Regulation & Co-Regulation

Your child is learning to identify their own feelings (happy, sad, angry, scared), can use words to describe their emotional state, and can accept comfort from a trusted adult when overwhelmed.

IN REAL LIFE

When a toy will not fit together, your child scrunches up and says, "I'm mad!" Then they hold it out to you for help instead of throwing it.

EY-C-02 Sovereign Self-Care & Independence

Your child takes pride in taking care of their own physical body and belongings, practicing tasks like feeding themselves, washing their hands, and helping put away their toys.

IN REAL LIFE

Before dinner, your child goes to the sink, pumps soap, washes their hands independently, and dries them. They try to put on their own socks, shoes, or jacket when getting ready to go outside.

EY-C-03 Collaborative Play & Social Boundaries

Your child transitions from playing next to other children (parallel play) to actively playing with them, practicing basic sharing, taking turns on a playground, and recognizing when a friend is sad.

IN REAL LIFE

At a park, your child offers a bucket to another child in the sandbox, coordinates a simple game of chase, or pauses to ask, “Are you okay?” if another toddler trips and falls.

Next: Primary

From Kindergarten, the Primary Benchmark Guide (Kindergarten to Grade 5 · Ages 5–11) picks up exactly where these foundations leave off, with the same five domains and everyday recognition growing toward the Grade 5 Capstone.

FROM MOMENTS TO RECORDS

1 · Capture

Note the real moment as it happens in your words and photos. The original entry is always kept.

2 · Align

Optionally connect a moment to a standard from this guide. You approve every alignment or leave it unaligned. Both are complete records.

3 · Project

Journeys, portfolios, and records are built from what you captured and approved. The keepsake and the record are the same moment.

