

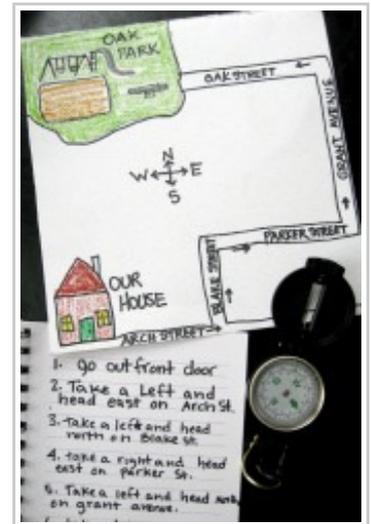
Going to the Park? Make a Map!

The next time you've got an out-of-town visitor coming to stay with you, give your child a chance to show that friend or relative around the neighborhood by making a map of directions to nearest park.

Help your child build happy anticipation for your guests arrival—along with core first grade math and social studies skills—with this activity and while she's at it, she can dazzle your guest with her amazing tour guide abilities!

What You Need:

- Compass
- Plain paper
- Ruler
- Pencil or pen



What to Do:

1. First, pick a park that's not too far from home. (First grade social studies curriculum typically emphasizes getting to know your neighborhood and town!) Then help your child make a simple "birds eye" picture of the area: start with your home, and then help your child draw the roads or paths that your child and your visitor will need to take to get to the park. At the end, be sure to mark the destination clearly, too.
2. Help your child write each road's name as needed for the map.
3. Now, using either a separate sheet of paper or working on the side of the map, help your first grader write step by step directions as to how to get to the park. For example, you might say something like, "turn left at the corner of Briar Street onto Bramble Drive. Go straight," and so on.
4. You can do this activity several days before your guest arrives, so that you and your child can take your homemade map with you on a clipboard and see if you can get to the park together. And as you go, help your child estimate distances (if you bike or drive, you may even have an actual odometer) for each step of the instructions. Then have your child write these distances next to each step of the directions.
5. Invite your child to color the route, and even make arrows along the map to show the way. When the masterpiece finished and ready, you can consider laminating the map, too.

When your out-of-towner finally arrives, you and your child will have the perfect way to welcome them - and your first grader will have gained some invaluable real-world social studies practice, as well. In case there's a shadow of a doubt about how important and relevant these skills are, invite her to check out a website like "Map Quest." Finding out how to get to places is always exciting and it also gives your child a chance to try out a "grown-up activity." First grade is a great time to start!