

# WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COMMON CORE

Recently, there has been significant buzz around the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As teachers learn more about the instructional strategies necessary to implement them in their classrooms, it is important to make sure that, as a parent, you are equipped to reinforce those key shifts at home. CCSS was launched in 2009 through a partnership of The Chief State School Officers and The National Governor's Association. Although most states already have ELA and math standards in place, they vary in coverage

and level of rigor. The CCSS were developed to provide a single set of research-based standards that will ensure that all students nationwide have access to the same rigorous academic content. Informed by national and international research, evidence and standards including those standards from countries recognized for high achievement, the overarching goal of the CCSS is to ensure that all students are college and/or career ready.

## Key shifts in instruction:

Engage students in high-level discussions that require students to support their thinking with evidence from the text

Focus on process; the "how" and "why" not just the "what"

Provide assignments for real audiences with real purpose beyond the grade

Write logical arguments based on sound reasoning, and relevant evidence extending down into the earliest grades

Increase text complexity and literacy across disciplines

CCSS do not tell teachers how to teach, nor are they a curriculum. Rather, they outline the ELA and math *skills* that every student should master at each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 so that our students will advance academically and compete globally after they graduate.

Review the complete standards for your child's grade level at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

# HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT ACADEMIC SUCCESS

**The most effective way to provide a rich learning environment and support your child's academic achievement is to demonstrate that learning is not confined to the classroom.**

Perhaps the most fundamental way you can support your children's success is through conversation. Ask them what they are doing and learning in school and don't accept "nothing" as a response. Engage in discussions with them so they may articulate, reflect upon, reinforce, and extend that learning.

By providing many opportunities for them to make connections between classroom instruction and real-world experiences, they will be able to find relevance and purpose in their learning. Identify your child's grade level expectations as well as those for the following year.

By being informed about the new standards, you will be better prepared to help your child make this important transition.

## Reinforce English/language Arts Skills

Good readers achieve higher across the curriculum as they progress through their academic career. Good readers read a variety of texts for both purpose and pleasure.

- ✓ Expose children to a variety of literature and nonfiction texts such as newspapers, recipes, instruction guides, and other informational texts.
- ✓ Engage in rich dialogue about what they read, and encourage them to provide evidence from the text to support their thoughts.
- ✓ Challenge children to research topics of interest to help them develop an ownership of their own learning.
- ✓ Encourage them to write with purpose and authenticity about relevant topics.

## Reinforce Math Skills

Mathematically proficient students start by explaining to themselves the meaning of a problem and looking for entry points to its solution.

- ✓ Challenge children to solve problems and develop their critical thinking skills.
- ✓ Reinforce the process by which students solve problems rather than the answers.
- ✓ Don't give them the answers – ask them to think of different ways they can solve the problems.
- ✓ Talk about math and the real-world applications of mathematical concepts. Point out examples of the way you use math in your familial routine.
- ✓ Have children apply their math knowledge to everyday activities such as doubling a recipe, calculating the area of a room, computing discounts or tips, or calculating gas mileage.
- ✓ Have children illustrate the math they were thinking in their head and discuss it out loud.

