

Introducing the Common Core to Parents and Community Members

The Common Core State Standards are designed explicitly as a staircase in K-12 to college and career readiness. Many U.S. students—even those who pass their high school courses and their high school exit exams—still face remediation when they get to college because they are not prepared for entry-level coursework. A 2008 study by ACT showed that only 1 in 10 8th graders are on target to be ready for college-level work by the time they graduate from high school, and only 35 percent of U.S. 12th graders scored at or above the “proficient” level on the NAEP reading test in 2005. Furthermore, research shows that remediation is a trap from which many students do not escape; the overwhelming majority of students who take remedial courses never complete college. The Common Core State Standards form a staircase to prepare students to be successful in college and their chosen career. If students successfully climb the staircase from kindergarten to 12th grade, they will then be truly ready for the demands that follow.

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards set grade-by-grade learning expectations for students in grades K-12 for Mathematics and for English Language Arts and Literacy.

While states have had standards for more than 15 years, this set of standards is more focused on preparing students for success in college and career. They set clear, consistent and high learning goals.

The Shifts in ELA/Literacy

1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language

How can you help your child in literacy?

- Ask your child specific questions about what they read.
- Encourage children to read, then write and speak about, nonfiction text such as newspapers, magazines, and biographies.
- Encourage children to research topics of interest and read series that relate to a central topic.
- Have your child follow step by step instructions or a set of directions in order to accomplish a task, such as building a sandcastle or operating a game

The Shifts in Mathematics

1. Focus: Focus strongly where the standards focus
2. Coherence: Think across grades, and link to major topics

3. Rigor: In major topics, pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with equal intensity

How can you help your child in math?

- Help children practice their addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts.
- Encourage children not to give up while solving problems, to build stamina and develop their critical thinking skills. Don't give them the answers - ask them to think of different ways they can solve problems.
- Have children illustrate the math they were thinking in their head and discuss it out loud.
- Have children apply their math knowledge to a real-world scenario at home, such as doubling a recipe or calculating the area of a room.

Resources for further information:

“Three Minute Video Explaining the Common Core Standards”: <http://vimeo.com/51933492>