

INSIGHTS

FOR FAMILIES



Parents' Guide to the Common Core



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Do you know what the Common Core is? Many parents, and even school staff, do not. Most students don't know about the Common Core either, but it is shaping curriculum in almost every state.

The Common Core State Standards are new, more difficult academic standards for language arts and math. Sponsored by the National Governors Association, they have been adopted by all but four states. The goal is to ensure that students receive a high-quality education regardless of where they live and if they change schools.

The Common Core is moving into classrooms across the country, but recent polls by Phi Delta Kappa and Gallup have found that a majority of the public do not know what it is. Sixty-two percent of the general public and 55 percent of K-12 parents had never heard of the Common Core (<http://bit.ly/184KljC>).

This will change as the standards are implemented and schools share more information about their educational programs. In the meantime, parents can start learning about these standards online.

There are many resources on the Web about the Common Core that provide tips to help parents support their children.

Check your state department of education's website for state-specific information about the Common Core State Standards.

A Parent's Guide to the Common Core Standards

www.education.com/magazine/article/parents-guide-to-common-core-standards/

This is a good overview for parents about the Common Core State Standards.

Parents' Guide to Student Success, National PTA

www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583

Available in both English and Spanish, these two- or four-page guides outline what children will learn in language arts and math by the end of each grade level. The guides also provide tips for helping your child learn at home.

Common Core State Standards Mission Statement:

"The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy."

—www.corestandards.org/

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Scholastic has a good website about the Common Core for educators called Common Sense for the Common Core. The classroom materials and instructional tools are too detailed to be useful to parents, but there are recommended book lists. Parents can get a good idea of appropriate nonfiction and literature for children at each grade level. Exposure to these books will aid comprehension on classroom assessments. www.scholastic.com/commoncore/common-core-book-list-nonfiction.htm

Scholastic has published specific information for parents:

Five tips to help you support the Common Core at home

www.scholastic.com/commoncore/common-core-for-parents.htm

1. Talk about books, especially the great ones.

The Common Core says that children need to read “books worth reading.” This is where the focus on nonfiction comes in, but high-quality literature is also important. The main point, however, is to motivate kids to read.

2. Ask your children questions about what they’re reading.

Reading skills are important, but demonstrating reading skills is a Common Core requirement. Students must be able to cite evidence from their reading to show comprehension. Ask questions about kids’ books and have them give reasons for their answers.

3. Push your kids to read nonfiction.

Children’s books typically engage young imaginations. Bedtime stories and early reading texts are generally fiction. As mentioned earlier, nonfiction, or “informational text” is a key part of the standards. Students will be exposed to more nonfiction in class. To support this transition, help your student find books about his or her favorite sports, hobbies, public figures, etc.

4. Encourage your kids to write, write, write.

A greater emphasis will be placed on the link between reading and writing, especially persuasive writing. Introduce new opportunities for your children to write through journaling, letter writing, blogging and email.

5. Talk math with your kids.

Math skills are a big part of the Common Core standards, but students need to learn more than the multiplication factors and how to add, subtract and divide. At each level, they do lessons that support the following Mathematical Practices:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

<http://bit.ly/lV4m4q>