

Parent Spotlight on Common Core State Standards and Students with Disabilities



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This booklet was written to provide information to parents and others about Common Core State Standards for students with disabilities.

Why are standards important?

Standards are an agreed-upon set of expectations for what students should be able to know and do in each grade level. Standards help educators sequence learning for students in ways that have been shown to work. Standards ensure that every student in a grade will have access to the same general content for that grade.

With standards, teachers have a lot of flexibility in how they teach, so every classroom won't look the same. Still, as a parent, you can know that what your child is learning in his or her classroom is similar to what other students in the same grade are learning in other classrooms.

This emphasis on standards may be different from the way that you were taught. The standards movement is relatively new.

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards are a shared set of standards in English language arts and mathematics that have been adopted by most states. One important feature of the Common Core State Standards is that they focus on making sure that students will be able to graduate from high school with the skills they need to transition to college and careers.

How are the Common Core State Standards different from the standards my state already had?

Before the Common Core State Standards, each state was responsible for deciding what their standards would be. With the Common Core, states share the same standards. Sharing standards means that if a student moves from one state to another, what is taught in the new school will be more similar than in the past. Also, we will be more able to make comparisons of student performance across states.

Why are standards important for my child with a disability?

Standards are important for all children because the standards for each grade level tell us what students in that grade are expected to know and do. All children, including students with disabilities, should be instructed on the standards for the grade in which they are enrolled.

Knowing the grade level standards for your child with a disability may help you better understand your child's academic areas of strengths and the challenges your child may have. If your child has an IEP, it is important that IEP goals address the standards for which your child needs additional supports and services.

What if my child is not performing at grade level?

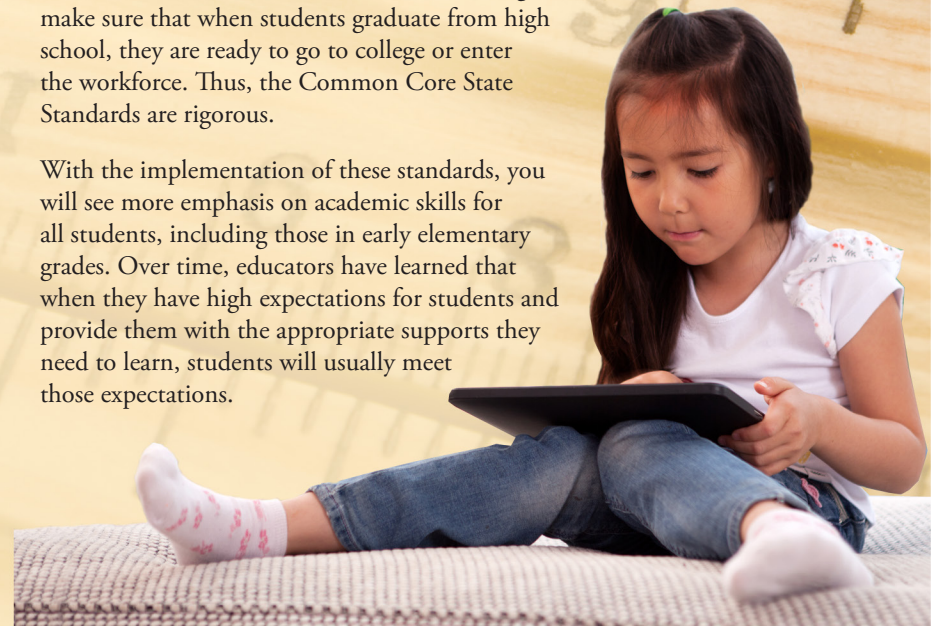
Looking at your child's performance in comparison to the grade-level standards can help you, your child, and your child's teacher know whether your child is falling behind. Having information about which standards your child is not meeting can help teachers know how to select appropriate interventions to help your child meet grade-level expectations.

If your child is not performing at grade level, it can sometimes be helpful to look at the standards in both the previous grade level as well as the one above your child's current enrolled grade. Seeing how standards are sequenced across multiple grades can give insights into the best interventions for your child. It is important, though, that your child's instruction be at, and not below, grade level.

How do standards change my child's instruction?

Common Core State Standards have been designed to make sure that when students graduate from high school, they are ready to go to college or enter the workforce. Thus, the Common Core State Standards are rigorous.

With the implementation of these standards, you will see more emphasis on academic skills for all students, including those in early elementary grades. Over time, educators have learned that when they have high expectations for students and provide them with the appropriate supports they need to learn, students will usually meet those expectations.



What should I ask my child's teacher about standards?

You should ask your child's teacher about the standards that are currently being taught in the classroom. Often, teachers post information about the standards in their classrooms. Telling students what standards are being taught helps students understand the purpose of each lesson and can contribute to student motivation.

If your child has an IEP, you should ask your child's teacher what standards are being addressed through goals on the IEP.

Where can I get more information about Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards were developed through a partnership of two national organizations, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors' Association. You can learn more about the standards, as well as read them online, by visiting the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org/.

If you are interested in how your state has been implementing Common Core State Standards, visit your state's department of education website.

For information that is specific to grade-level Common Core State Standards, visit the Council of Great City Schools' resources for parents at www.cgcs.org/Domain/36.

