

Parent's Backpack Guide to Common Core State Standards



FOR PREKINDERGARTEN–5TH GRADE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

In 2010, Connecticut adopted the Common Core State Standards, a progression of learning expectations in mathematics and English/Language Arts. These standards are designed to prepare students for success in college and a career. CREC has adjusted its curricula in an effort to improve teaching and learning so that all children will graduate high school with the skills they need to be successful. This guide is designed to help you understand how the standards will affect your child, what changes you will see and what you can do at home to help your children the classroom.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

The new Common Core State Standards make several important changes to current standards. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what these shifts change, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child.

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will now read more non-fiction in each grade level. Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child learn about the world through reading. Your child will read challenging texts very closely, so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions. When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say. Your child will learn how to write from what they read. Your child will have an increased academic vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for your kids to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories. Look for your kids to bring home more fact-based books about the world. For instance, your 1st Grader or Kindergartener might read Clyde Robert Bulla's <i>A Tree is a Plant</i>. This book lets students read and learn about science. Your kids will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book. For example, your 2nd or 3rd Grader might be asked to read aloud Faith D'Aluisio's non-fiction book titled <i>What the World Eats</i> and retell facts from the story. Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence. Evidence means examples from the book that your child will use to support a response or conclusion. This is different from the opinion questions that have been used in the past. Look for writing assignments that ask your child to make arguments in writing using evidence. For 4th and 5th graders, this might mean reading and writing about <i>The Kids Guide to Money</i>, a non-fictional book by Steve Otfinoski. Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary and teach them that "language is power." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read non-fiction books with your children. Find ways to make reading fun and exciting. Know what non-fiction books are grade-level appropriate and make sure your children have access to such books. Provide more challenging texts for your kids to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces. Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements. Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details. Read often to babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children.

MATHEMATICS

To improve student learning, the new Common Core State Standards are different from the old ones. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what is shifting, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child.

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>work more deeply in fewer topics</u>, which will ensure full understanding. (less is more!) Your child will <u>keep building on learning year after year</u>, starting with a strong foundation. Your child will <u>spend time practicing and memorizing math facts</u>. Your child will <u>understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding</u>. Your child will now be asked to <u>use math in real-world situations</u>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer. Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. Building on that, they will then focus on Algebra. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn. Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn. Your child might have assignments that focus on memorizing and mastering basic math facts, which are important for success in more advanced math problems. Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For instance, homework for 5th graders might include adding fractions as part of a dessert recipe or determining how much pizza friends ate based on fractions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts. Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts. Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life. Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

When talking to your child's teacher, try to keep the conversation focused on the most important topics that relate to your child. This means asking the teacher how your child is performing based on grade-level standards and expectations. Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Look for alignment between your child's work and Common Core Standards. Maintaining frequent communication with your child's teacher will enable you make important adjustments at home that can help your child achieve success in the classroom.