

# Ten things parents should know about the Common Core Standards

In recent months, there has been a lot of attention on the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As schools and communities begin to think about what the new standards will look like in the classroom, it's important to make sure that, as a parent, you are part of that conversation. Here are answers to questions you might have about the standards and what they might mean for your children. A list of recommended resources is included at the end of the article. This article is also available [in Spanish](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards are a set of expectations that outline what students should be learning in English/language arts and mathematics at each grade level (K-12).

### 2. What is the goal of the CCSS?

The goal of the CCSS is to make sure that all students are well prepared for college, technical education, or the workplace after high school graduation.

### 3. Do the standards tell teachers how to teach?

No. The CCSS do not tell teachers how to teach; they simply outline the skills that all students should master. For example, the CCSS do not tell teachers which books should be taught in fourth-grade English/language arts, but they do say that each fourth grader should learn how to identify "a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text" or "summarize the text."

### 4. Are there standards for science, social studies and other content areas?

No. At this time, the CCSS do not address content areas other than reading/language arts and mathematics; however, they do include standards related to content area reading in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects for Grades 6-12.

### 5. Why were the CCSS created?

Currently, each individual state has its own education standards, and there is little consistency from one state to another. The CCSS were designed to provide a single set of research-based standards that will ensure that all students nationwide have access to the same rigorous academic content. So far, 45 of the 50 states have adopted the CCSS, which are scheduled to go into effect in 2014.

### 6. Who wrote the standards?

The CCSS were not developed by the federal government, but by a group of educators and experts coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The federal government will not oversee the implementation of the CCSS.

### 7. How will student progress in meeting the standards be measured?

As of now, it is not clear how students' progress toward meeting the standards will be measured or assessed; however, because the U.S. Constitution gives individual states the right to oversee education, participating states will likely be in charge of any testing that is done for the purpose of monitoring student progress.

## 8. What are the benefits for parents?

A common set of standards ensures that all students, no matter where they live, will be focused on graduating from high school prepared for postsecondary education and careers. Additionally, in our mobile society, parents can be assured that students will receive instruction in the same standards if they move.

## 9. What can parents do to prepare for the Common Core State Standards?

Parents can talk to their children about the importance of graduating from high school ready for college and career success. Discuss how the standards will be used to guide their teaching and learning from Kindergarten through High School.

## 10. Where can I learn more?

Parents can access the **Common Core State Standards** in their entirety on the CCSS website. By reviewing the standards for their child's grade level, parents can be better equipped to provide support for their child's learning at home.

For more information about the standards, take a look at the following:

California Department of Education CCSS Web Page:  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/> (Select the Parent Tab)

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterbalanced.asp>

Common Core Implementation Video Series  
<http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/DigitalResources/CommonCoreImplementationVideoSeries.html>

*(Produced by the Hunt Institute and the Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], explains the standards in greater depth)*

National PTA Parents' Guide to Student Success,  
<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>

## Closing Thoughts

Parents can support their children's success by asking their children to talk about what they are learning, reading to and with their kids, and providing opportunities to learn new things at home or in the community. By being informed about the new standards, you will be better prepared to help your child make this important transition and understand what the new standards might look like in the classroom.

*(adapted from Ten things parents should know about the Common Core Standards, Colorin, Colorado)*