



Parent's Backpack Guide to Math Common Core State Standards

Why Are the Common Core State Standards Important?

The Common Core State Standards are important because they will help all children learn the same skills. They create clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas of mathematics. If you know what these expectations are, then you can work alongside the teacher and help your child prepare.



To improve student learning, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are different from the old Massachusetts Frameworks. 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 assignments?	What Can You Do?
Your child will work more deeply in fewer topics, which will ensure full understanding.	Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer.	Know what concepts are important for your kids based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.
Your child will keep building on learning year after year, starting with a strong foundation.	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.	Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward.
Your child will spend time practicing math facts.	Look for assignments that ask your child to master facts such as addition groupings up to 20 or multiplication tables.	Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life.
Your child will understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding.	Your child might have assignments that ask them to show or explain their mathematical thinking-to SAY why they think their answer is the right one.	Talk to your child about their math homework and ask them to teach you new concepts. Help them figure out ways to explain their thinking.
Your child will now be asked to use math in real-world situations.	Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For example, homework for fifth graders might include adding fractions as part of a dessert recipe or determining how much pizza friends ate based on fractions.	Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.



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Mathematics: Expectations for Students & Ideas for Parents

What's the Shift?	What will students have to do?	What can parents do to help?
Build skills across grade levels	Keep building on learning year after year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware of what your child struggled with last year and how that will affect ongoing learning.• Ensure that support is given for "gap" skills, such as negative numbers, fractions, math fact, etc.
Learn more about less	Spend more time on fewer topics.	Know what the priority work is for your child at their grade level.
Use math facts easily	Go more in-depth on each concept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spend time with your child on priority work.• Ask your child's teacher for reports on your child's progress on priority work.
Think fast AND solve problems	Spend time practicing by doing lots of problems on the same idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Push children to know and understand basic math facts.• Know all the fluencies your child should have.• Prioritize learning the fluencies your child finds most difficult.
Really know it, really do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make the math work, and understand why it does.• Talk about why the math works.• Prove that they know why and how the math works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions and review homework to see whether your child understands why as well as what the answer is.• Provide time for your child to work on math skills at home.
Use math in the real world	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply math in real world situations.• Know which math skills to use for which situation.	Ask your child to do the math that comes up in daily life.