

GET to the **CORE**

Parent Education Kit

Leading a Common Core discussion in your home or community



**Thank you for inviting your friends to learn about
and discuss the Common Core State Standards!**

As a parent, you know that big changes at your child's school result in big changes for you at home. This toolkit is meant to arm you with the knowledge to ensure you can support your child at home, in the classroom, and make sure that leaders in the school district and state are following the necessary steps to help your child succeed with the new standards.

We'll be walking you through what Common Core Standards mean for you and your child through a house party or community discussion format. Included in this toolkit you will find guided activities, discussions

- 1. WHAT TO EXPECT: NORMS AND OBJECTIVES**
- 2. INTRODUCTIONS**
- 3. WHAT IS COMMON CORE?**
- 4. HOW IS COMMON CORE NEW AND DIFFERENT?**
- 5. HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD WITH THE NEW COMMON CORE AT HOME?**
- 6. HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT WHAT'S CHANGING AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?**
- 7. ATTACHMENTS: SIGN-IN SHEET, TRAINING PRE-READING, HOW TO PLAN YOUR MEETING GUIDE**

This training is a way for you to get talking with other parents about how you can help your children at school. Knowledge is power, and so is working together in your community to provide support and resources to each other.

Thank you for hosting a Get to the Core education night! For questions about this training and the work of Stand for Children, please contact us:

Stand for Children Leadership Center
www.get2core.org
www.stand.org

English:
Kelsey Pine
kpine@stand.org
971.271.5950

Spanish:
Luis Avila
lavila@stand.org
602.926.1705

HOST-LED DISCUSSION: NORMS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)

Norms: It's easy to get into a debate about politics, so let's remember why we're here... for our kids. Brainstorm your own list of norms. Examples: "Assume best intentions", "How does this change impact my child?", and "Don't interrupt".

Learning Objectives: After this conversation, you will know more about the basics of academic standards, the Common Core, and how you can support your child with the Common Core. Brainstorm specific learning objectives that you can review after the session.

INTRODUCTIONS (15 minutes)

- I. Introduce yourself and tell why you wanted to host this meeting. **Pass around the sign-in sheet while you introduce yourself.**
- II. Use "About Get to the Core" below to introduce this information.
- III. Guest Introductions - Take a few minutes to introduce yourselves and tell why you're interested in this training. Need some help? Use the following prompts.

GUEST INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY PROMPTS

Why are you here today?

What are you hoping to learn about Common Core?

What's your dream for your child's education?

Why do you think parents should be involved in their child's education?

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GROUP ACTIVITY: WHAT IS COMMON CORE? VIDEO (4 minutes)



<http://youtu.be/5s0rRk9sERO>



Video source: cgcs.org

GROUP ACTIVITY: COMMON CORE BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)

Break into groups of two to discuss. Pick one person to take notes.

Had you heard of “Common Core State Standards” before tonight? If so, what had you heard?

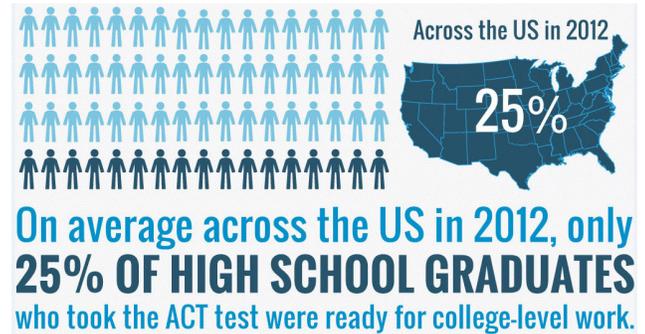
What’s your child’s experience with academic standards so far? Do you think they’re helping your child be successful?

Common Core Standards claim to help all students be successful in college and career by setting clear, consistent goals in every grade across the country. What types of skills will your child need to be successful in college and future jobs?

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HOST-LED DISCUSSION: WHY COMMON CORE MATTERS (5 minutes)

We live in a **different world**. Students no longer compete with just their neighbors for college entrance and careers – they compete with students from around the globe. The Common Core has been developed to give you and your child **honest expectations** around educational achievement.



With the group, discuss the following key points. Add to the list!

- It is important that parents, teachers and students have clear, consistent goals for learning in math and language arts at each grade level that prepare them for the future.
- Fewer standards mean that teachers will be able to go deeper into topics while they teach. This means that students that need more attention on a subject will have the time to get explanation.
- Standards that were collaboratively developed will make it easier for teachers, schools and states to share tips and resources with each other.
- Common standards mean that you can rest assured that your child is learning the same concept as a student their age in another state.

GROUP DISCUSSION: WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU ABOUT THE NEW STANDARDS? (5 minutes)

HOST SCRIPT: HOW COMMON CORE STANDARDS ARE DIFFERENT (10 minutes)

MATH: The main difference is now students should have **deep understanding of mathematical principles**. Each concept at each grade builds on one another. Like in the video, students have a platform to stop, explore and learn each concept deeply before moving onto the next.

Why? Previous standards required students to memorize math formulas without real understanding and application to the real world. Jobs in today's economy require that they be able to apply math to everyday equations.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: The main difference is that your child will be reading more **informational texts**. This doesn't mean that they won't be reading novels anymore - but teachers in a range of subjects will need to include non-fiction books in their lessons to help students learn how to read, interpret and explain information they've read.

Why? Your child needs to be able to read increasingly difficult texts and be able to summarize them. This means that they need to read equal non-fiction and fiction books to be able to understand varied writing and information styles.

NEW GOALS NEED NEW TEACHING - HOW LESSON PLANS MAY CHANGE FOR THE COMMON CORE

BEFORE

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = ?$$

AFTER

Marco brings $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pepperoni pizza to the birthday party. Next, Susie arrives and has another $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pepperoni pizza. How many pizzas do they have at the party?

FAST FACT: Standards are goals that students aim to achieve. Curriculum and lesson plans are the methods and routes teachers can take to get students to reach the goal of the standard. **The Common Core are a set of best practices**, collected from around the country, and teachers and schools still have the freedom to determine their own lesson plans and curriculum.

HOST SCRIPT: HOW YOU CAN HELP AT HOME (5 minutes)

MATH: As a parent, you aren't expected to know everything that your child is learning in school. However, you can help them learn by engaging them in discussion about their work. Here are a few ideas - as a group, brainstorm some more:

- Ask your child to show you their math homework and teach you what they're working on.
- When out shopping, ask your child to compute a sale item (for example: 40% off of a \$10 item) or to figure out how much change you should get back.
- Ask your child to help you make a budget or to keep a tally when you're grocery shopping

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: Same as with math, you may not have read what your child is reading. That's okay! As a group, discuss the following points and brainstorm more ways to work on English Language Arts at home:

- Ask your child to tell you about the novel they are reading in school and how they interpret the themes
- Find informational books at the library that relate to a book you're reading at home (for example: when reading "Charlotte's Web" you can find books to learn more about farm animals like those in the story)
- After watching a movie or reading a story together, ask your child to summarize the plot in their own words.

GROUP ACTIVITY: BRAINSTORM MORE WAYS TO HELP AT HOME (10 minutes)

MATH:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

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HOST SCRIPT: LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE DISTRICT (5 minutes)

IN THE CLASSROOM:

- Ask your child's teacher how they've changed their lesson plans to support Common Core.
- Ask your child's teacher if they will have time for training ("professional development") and collaboration with other teachers.

DISTRICT:

- Get involved with organizations like Stand for Children Leadership Center to learn about school districts and how you can be active in your community.

GROUP ACTIVITY: BRAINSTORM MORE WAYS TO LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE DISTRICT (5 minutes)

LEARN MORE Visit get2core.org to learn more about the Common Core. Your state Department of Education's website should also have resources on the shift to new standards.

Other resources:

Common Core Parent Roadmaps (English and Spanish): cgcs.org/Domain/36

Common Core State Standards: corestandards.org

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SIGN-IN SHEET

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

I am interested in hosting a Parent Education Meeting

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TRAINING PRE-READING: WHAT ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS?



WHAT ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS?

Let's use soccer as a comparison for thinking about academic standards. Let's say your child plays soccer for their school in Arizona, and they play on a field that has goals that are 30 feet wide. In the state, your child is ranked as the best player! That's great!

Now let's say that your child gets invited to a national competition in Massachusetts. When they play in Massachusetts, they're on a field with goals that are only 24 feet wide. Their whole life they've been training on a bigger goal, so all of a sudden, they're not as good as the kids in Massachusetts who have been training with harder goals.

Academic standards are goals for what every student should know and be able to do at every grade level, and up until 2010, they were set by each state with no coordination among states across the country. This means that, like in the soccer example above, some states have been setting students up for failure by not preparing them to compete with other students on a national level for college and jobs.

A QUICK HISTORY LESSON

1960s: Standards were raised for the first time in Science, Math and Foreign Languages

1998: Nearly all states had adopted their own set of standards

2010: First country-wide set of standards are developed and 45 states adopt them - "Common Core"

2013 - 2015: States, districts and schools determine how they will enact the new standards

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TIPS ON HOW TO PLAN YOUR MEETING

Create an invite list and determine location and logistics.

Perhaps you're already part of a parent group at your child's school so you already know who you're going to invite. If you're not as connected, figure out who you want to invite and how you'll get the word out. Is it in-person? Over the phone? Email? Many schools have parent contact lists by classroom.

Part of figuring out how many people you will invite is to figure out where you'll host this event. Will it be in your home or a friend's home? In a community space? Don't forget to think about things like childcare - do you have a friend or family member who can watch kids while you host the meeting?

Prep for your meeting.

Print this kit and prepare any technology or supplies you may need. Participants should have pages 4 - 10 printed so they can follow along in the discussion. Pages 1 - 3 are for your planning purposes. This training uses a suggested video that can be viewed on YouTube. Don't have access to internet or a way to show the video? Consider texting or emailing the link to the party participants to watch before the meeting.

Other things to consider are food and drinks. Maybe you'll host a potluck? Make a list of dishes/beverages you want guests to bring and have them sign-up before the meeting. And lastly, don't forget to schedule breaks during the training so parents can take bathroom breaks, check in with the baby-sitter, etc.

Lead the meeting.

Every good meeting needs a moderator. You'll be tasked with explaining why you're hosting the meeting, explaining why you're excited about learning more, and keeping everyone on track. On the following pages, you'll have a clear outline, activities and script to follow to make it easier to host a productive discussion on the Common Core. The training lasts approximately 1.5 hours.

Wrap up after the meeting.

Turn in the sign-in sheet by email to kpine@stand.org or you can mail it to:

Stand for Children

Kelsey Pine

1732 NW Quimby St, Suite 200

Portland, OR 97209

We may contact you after to see how it went and get your feedback.



ABOUT GET TO THE CORE AND STAND FOR CHILDREN

This training was created by the Get to the Core campaign. Get to the Core's mission is to equip parents with the knowledge they need to support their children during the transition to Common Core Standards. More information is available at get2core.org.

Get to the Core is a campaign of Stand for Children Leadership Center. Stand for Children Leadership Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit leadership development and training organization. We train ordinary people to be effective citizen leaders capable of solving problems facing children, both locally and statewide, by convincing elected officials and voters to invest in and reform vital children's programs. Our highly trained staff provide parents and others concerned about children's issues with tools to achieve long-lasting improvements for children by joining together in a unified, grassroots voice.

Stand for Children Leadership Center exists because children in communities across America have no power to influence our democratic system to meet their fundamental needs. Our mission is to teach everyday people how to join together in an effective grassroots voice in order to win concrete, long-lasting improvements for children, at both state and local levels.

Stand for Children believes that Common Core State Standards will benefit ALL children across the country. We want everyone to "Get to the Core" with us.