

## Culture Matters

Teachers must be able to *CONNECT* with their learners before they can share core content. Teachers teach learners, not subjects. To truly engage learners, we must reach out to them in ways that are culturally & linguistically responsive and appropriate, and we must examine the cultural assumptions and stereotypes we bring into the classroom that may hinder interconnectedness.



# Parents' Guide to Support Learner Success

## EMPOWERING PARENTS TO SUPPORT THE COMMON CORE CHALLENGE AT HOME

1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE

As practitioners in education and facilitators of cultural competency training, we know that in order for learners to be successful in today's schools, parents need to be knowledgeable of the most effective ways to support learning at home. Educators can work collaboratively to assist their learners to be more successful, by tapping into support from home. This guide, which provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of each grade level in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, prepares your child to be ready to succeed in the next grade level. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by 44 states (*at time of publication*). The Common Core State Standards are much more rigorous than the previously held standards amongst the states. In order to compete globally, our nation needs to increase critical thinking skills in our children.

This guide is designed to offer parents with creative ways to become involved in supporting their child's education as well as ways to communicate the expectations of the Common Core State Standards. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be prepared for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

## WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

The academic standards are important because they help ensure that all learners, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and in their chosen careers. Rigorous standards provide an important first step – a clear roadmap and process for learning – to be utilized by a collaborative team of facilitators of learning, parents, and learners. Having clearly defined goals helps families and facilitators of learning work together to ensure that learners succeed. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.



## A Snapshot of What Your Child Will Be Concentrating on in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

### English Language Arts & Literacy

In 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, learners build important reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Learners will continue to learn the letters and sounds that make up words. They will think, talk, and write about what they read in stories, articles, and other sources of information. In their writing, learners will work on putting together clear sentences on a range of topics using a growing vocabulary. Activities in these areas will embrace:

- Using phonics (matching letters and sounds) and word analysis skills to figure out unfamiliar words when reading and writing
- Reading stories and showing they understand the lesson or moral of the story
- Asking and answering questions about a story, including characters, settings, and major events
- Taking part in conversations about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others and asking questions to clear up any confusion
- Producing and expanding complete simple and compound statements, questions, commands, and exclamations
- Comparing and contrasting the experiences of different characters
- Identifying the reasons an author gives to support a point
- Explaining differences between texts that tell stories and texts that provide information
- Learning and using new words
- Identifying the correct meaning for a word with multiple meanings, based on the sentence or paragraph in which the word is used (i.e., deciding whether the word *bat* means a flying mammal or a club used in baseball)
- Participating in class discussions by listening, responding to what others are saying, and asking questions
- Describing people, places, things, and events, expressing feelings and ideas clearly
- Learning basic rules of spoken and written English
- Working with others to gather facts and information on a topic
- Writing to describe an event, provide information on a topic, or share an opinion



## Partner with your child's teacher to have a focused conversation about learning

When you talk with your child's teacher keep in mind that you and your child's teacher are partners; a part of a team which includes your child. You are an important part of your child's education. Time may be limited and you can't cover everything. Therefore, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 1<sup>st</sup> grade for literacy, these include:

- Reading grade-level text with understanding and fluency
- Learning from, enjoying, and getting facts from books he or she reads and listens to
- Be prepared to ask the teacher questions like:
  - Is my child at the level where he/she should be at this point of the school year?
  - In what areas is my child excelling?
  - How is my child doing in writing?
  - What do you suppose is giving my child the most trouble? How can I help my child improve in this area?
  - What can I do to help my child with upcoming work?
  - If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside of the classroom?

## Mathematics

In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, learners will focus on working with whole numbers and place value – including grouping numbers into tens and ones as they learn to add and subtract up through 20. Learners will also use charts, tables, and diagrams to solve problems. Activities in these areas will embrace:

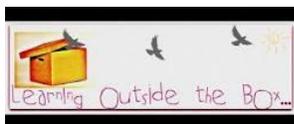
- Quickly and accurately adding numbers together that total up to 10 or less and subtracting from numbers up through 10
- Understanding the rules of addition and subtraction (such as,  $3+6=6+3$ )
- Solving word problems that involve adding or subtracting numbers up through 20 (such as, "Five apples were on the table. I ate some apples. Then there were three apples. How many apples did I eat?")
- Understanding what the different digits mean in two-digit numbers (place value)
- Using understanding of place value to add and subtract (i.e.,  $20+5$ ,  $39+10$ ,  $24+37$ ,  $70-60$ )
- Comparing two-digit numbers using the symbols  $>$  (more than),  $=$  (equal to), and  $<$  (less than)
- Understanding the meaning of the equal sign ( $=$ ) and determining if statements involving addition and subtraction are true or false (such as, which of the following statements are true?  $2+4=6$ ,  $4+1=5+2$ )
- Adding one- and two-digit numbers together
- Measuring the lengths of objects using a shorter object as a unit of length
- Putting objects in order from longest to shortest or shortest to longest
- Organizing objects into categories and comparing the number of objects in different categories
- Making composite shapes by joining shapes together, and dividing circles and rectangles into halves and quarters



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- Adding with a sum of 20 or less and subtracting from a number 20 or less (this will not be written work; ask the teacher for his or her observations of your child's progress in this area)
- Using understanding of place value to add and subtract
- Solving addition and subtraction word problems
- Be prepared to ask the teacher questions like:
  - Is my child at the level where he/she should be at this point of the school year?
  - In what areas is my child excelling?
  - What do you suppose is giving my child the most trouble? How can I help my child improve in this area?
  - What can I do to help my child with upcoming work?
  - If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside of the classroom?



All learning does not take place in the classroom, nor should it. Learning must continue at home, encouraging learners to "think outside the box." Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and set aside time *every day* when your child can concentrate. You should also set aside 15 to 30 minutes each week to sit down with your child, while he or she completes homework. This will help you to stay in tuned with what your child is working on, and it will help you to be the first to know if your child needs assistance with specific topics. Furthermore, here are some activities you can do with your child to support successful learning at home:

## English Language Arts & Literacy

- Provide time and space for your child to read independently. This reading time should be free from distractions such as television, gaming, etc.
- Pick a “word of the day” each day starting with a different letter.
- Ask your child what topics, events, or activities he or she likes. Follow up by looking for books, magazines, or other materials about those topics that would motivate your child to read.
- Model reading for your child. It is helpful if children see other people reading at home. You could share what you have read.
- Establish a family book club. Let different members of the family pick the book. This could be a good way to enjoy quality family time while experiencing the joy of reading together!
- Make sure your child has a library card. Take him or her to the library on a weekly basis. Children should select books in which they are interested to develop a love for reading. Many community libraries have book clubs and family activities that make reading fun for the entire family.
- Use technology to help strengthen your child’s interest in reading. Ask your child’s teacher for suggestions of websites where learners can read books or articles on line. The computer will help with words the learner cannot read independently. Libraries also have computers learners can use to access those sites.

## Mathematics

- Keep your eye out for everyday opportunities to have your child do mathematics. For example, if you are in the kitchen, open a carton of eggs and take out six, ask “How many are left in the carton?”
- Math can be so much fun if you make it a game. For example, “*I’m thinking of a number. When I add six to it, I get 12. What is the number?*”
- Encourage your child to read and write numbers in different ways. For example, what are some ways you can make the number 12? 12 can be  $10+2$ ,  $8+4$ ,  $15-3$ , or  $4+4+4$ .
- Have your child create story problems to represent addition and subtraction, and comparisons. For example, “*I have six pennies. My sister has three pennies. How many pennies does she need to have the same number as I have? She needs three more pennies.*”
- Encourage your child to persevere, “sticking to it” whenever a problem seems difficult. This will help your child see that **everyone** can learn math.
- Praise for your child’s efforts in solving problems or understanding something for the first time.



For more information go to [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)  
*the official online home of the Common Core State Standards*