

# 10 Things Parents Need to Know The Common Core to Support Their Children with Disabilities



## What the New Standards Are

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) describe what all students are expected to learn in each grade (kindergarten through grade twelve). Forty-five states have adopted these standards. This creates consistency in instruction, which makes it easier for students to move to different states and still do well in school. Academic standards are not new in California. The CCSS simply improve the previous standards. They focus on the skills students need to succeed as life-long learners in the twenty-first century workplace.

## The Goal of the CCSS

The goal of the CCSS is to make sure that all students are prepared for college, technical education, or the workplace as

Parents will find additional resources and supports at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/cc/> under the “Parents and Students” tab.

well as for independent living and a quality life after high school.

## Where to Find the Standards

All of the CCSS are at <http://www.corestandards.org/>. Here you'll also find helpful resources.

## The Role of the Standards in an IEP Team Meeting

Academic goals in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be aligned to grade-level standards. This ensures that students with disabilities receive grade-level curriculum and instruction. When you know about the standards, you can better advocate for your child. You are in a better position to know whether teachers are holding your child to the same high level of expectations that they maintain for general education students. Knowing about the standards also makes it easier for you to ask questions about where your child's learning will occur—his or her “placement.”

## Which IEP Goals Will Be Aligned to CCSS

Functional goals do not have to be aligned to a CCSS. These goals focus on behavior, social-emotional challenges, and functional skills. They are still an important part of an IEP, and they support academic access and achievement. But only academic goals must be aligned to the CCSS.

## Questions to Ask an IEP Team

- What academic goal does each standard address?

- What are my child's behavioral goals that support his or her academic achievement?
- What does my child have in place to access the standards that are being taught? Will there be accommodations, modifications, or assistive technology?
- If the IEP calls for “Specially Designed Instruction,” what is special about it?

## How the Standards Will Affect a Child Who Is Below Grade Level in a Subject

Even if your child is performing below or even far below grade level, he or she should still be learning grade-level content. Your child should receive instruction that includes accommodations, modifications, assistive technology, and supports that allow him or her to participate with peers and make it possible to close the learning gap.

## How the New Assessments Will Align with the CCSS

There will be new assessments for the new standards. An IEP must include all appropriate accommodations for both classroom learning and for these assessments. This way, a child will use the accommodations in his or her daily academic program and be prepared to use the accommodations in testing. The CDE Web site offers a list of approved accommodations; go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ai/>

[acaasppmatrix1.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ai/acaasppmatrix1.asp). For a more detailed exploration of accommodations, you'll want to go to [http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced\\_Guidelines\\_091113.pdf](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines_091113.pdf). While these lists include the most common accommodations, they do not include all of the possible accommodations that a student may need. Any accommodation that a student legitimately needs must be included in his or her IEP.

## What Happens When a Student Is Not Familiar with Technology

All students must be given a chance to practice and get used to the technology they will be using when they are tested. If your child needs practice, you can address this need in an IEP meeting. Skill in using technology is an important part of your child's academic program, and developing that skill can be an important goal.

## What the New Standards Mean for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Each student with significant cognitive disabilities should be taught and tested in ways that align to CCSS grade-level standards, even if the student does not receive instruction in a general education classroom. The curriculum for these students may be significantly modified, but it still must be aligned to grade-level standards.