



MY CHILD'S LEARNING:

a Parent's Guide to the Iowa Core



This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 1st grade as directed by the Iowa Core, our statewide academic standards. The guide focuses on key concepts and skills in mathematics, literacy, science, social studies and 21st Century skills. In addition, the Iowa Core builds a strong foundation for success in other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. If your child meets the expectations outlined in the Iowa Core, he or she will be well prepared for 2nd grade.

Why are Academic Standards Important?

Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live or what school they attend, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for what students should know and be able to do from kindergarten through 12th grade. Standards are a set of goals, not a curriculum, so decisions about teaching remain with local schools.

High standards help teachers and parents work together to ensure students succeed. They guide parents and teachers to know when students need extra assistance or when they need more of a challenge in the classroom. They also help your child develop critical-thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.



Some content adapted from the National PTA's *Parent's Guide to Student Success*.

How are the standards organized?

Some of the Iowa Core standards are arranged grade-by-grade, while others are grouped into a span of grade levels. In all cases, the standards set appropriate expectations for what students need to learn, but not how to teach.

- Literacy and mathematics: These standards are arranged grade-by-grade for kindergarten through 8th grade. For high school, literacy standards are arranged by grade span (9-10 and 11-12) and math standards are arranged by subject, such as algebra and geometry.
- Science, social studies, and 21st century skills: These standards are arranged in grade spans of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.



Mathematics

Your child will build on previous work and gain important new skills. Outcomes for the year include improving efficiency and accuracy to add with a sum of 20 or less and subtract from 20 or less (e.g., $17 - 8$); and to add with a sum of 100 or less; this will rely on understanding what the digits mean in a number (63 is six tens and three ones).

Examples of Your Child's Work at School:

- Solve addition and subtraction word problems in situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing by using objects, drawings and equations (e.g., taking from situation: "Five apples were on the table. I ate some apples. Then there were three apples. How many apples did I eat?").
- Add with a sum of 20 or less, and subtract from 20 or less by using strategies based around the number 10 (e.g., to solve $13 - 4$, start with 13, subtract 3 to reach 10, and then subtract 1 more to reach 9).
- Quickly and accurately add with a sum of 10 or less, and subtract from 10 or less (e.g., $2 + 5$, $7 - 5$).
- Understand what the digits mean in two-digit numbers (place value).
- Show understanding of place value to add and subtract (e.g., $38 + 5$, $80 - 50$).
- Make composite shapes by joining shapes together, and divide circles and rectangles into halves or fourths.

How to Help Your Child at Home:

- Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 1st grade examples might include:
- If you open a new carton of a dozen eggs, and you use four eggs to cook dinner, close the carton and ask your child how many eggs are left.
- While putting away toys into bins, count the number of toys in two bins and ask your child how many more are in one bin compared to the other.
- Play the "I'm thinking of a number" game. For example, "I'm thinking of a number that makes 11 when added to 8. What is my number?"

English Language Arts & Literacy

Your child will become a more independent reader and writer. He or she will continue to learn and practice rules for recognizing the sounds that make up words and will be able to sound out more complex words. Students will learn to think about what they read and talk about the main ideas of simple stories. They will learn to use language appropriately, write in complete sentences and spell words with increasing accuracy.

Examples of Your Child's Work at School:

- Use phonics (matching letters and sounds) and word analysis skills to figure out unfamiliar words when reading and writing.
- Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., using "how-to" books to write a sequence of instructions).
- Take part in conversations about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others and asking questions when confused.
- Describe people, places, things and events with relevant details, and by clearly expressing ideas and feelings with complete sentences.
- Produce and expand complete simple and compound statements, questions, commands and exclamations.
- Identify the correct meaning for a word that can have multiple meanings, based on the sentence or paragraph in which the word is used (e.g., decide whether the word "bat" means a flying mammal or a club used in baseball).

How to Help Your Child at Home:

- Encourage your child to read to you books such as *Little Bear* by Else Holmelund Minarik. Help him or her sound out difficult words.
- Act out stories together from books, television, or your child's imagination.
- Pick a "word of the day" each day that starts with a different letter. Have your child write the word and look for other things that begin with the same letter.
- Visit the library with your child every week. Have your child sign up for a library card.



Science (K-2)

Your child has a natural interest in almost everything around him or her and often pushes, pulls and transforms objects to see what will happen. These inquiries allow children to guess and better understand how things work and behave in their world and to see the results of their actions.

Examples of Your Child's Work at School:

- Construct ideas and engage in activities that allow the student to understand how science works.
- Manipulate common objects and other materials to learn how they work.
- Study the life cycle and habitat of living things to build an understanding of biological concepts.
- Observe various changes that include cyclic changes (moon phases and the change of the seasons); predictable trends (growth and decay); and less consistent changes such as the weather.

How to Help Your Child at Home:

- Have your child sort objects into two or more categories. Introduce new objects and have the child explain which category it fits into and why. Set out a new object and have the child explain how he or she fit the object into the categories.
- Help your child notice and name plants and animals in his or her environment.
- Go on walks and encourage questions and close observations of nature. Talk about what organisms need to survive.
- Utilize programs offered by your county nature center. Visit parks and hiking, biking, and cross-country trails.
- Go to the following website: <http://www.myamericanfarm.org>.

Social Studies (K-2)

Your child will learn what a community is through the ideals of responsible citizenship and his or her place in a community. Children will become detectives of history by comparing life in communities from long ago to today. Your child will discover how his or her individual traits may be the same or different from others.

Examples of Your Child's Work at School:

- Construct class rules that embody fairness, leadership and responsibility while learning how to apply the ideals of citizenship.
- Compare and contrast life today to life in the past by using primary sources (artifacts, photographs and documents) and place them on a timeline.
- Use maps, globes and photos to analyze the geography of a community.
- Recognize that people have individual traits and can be alike and different in many ways.
- Evaluate the difference between needs and wants and make connections to the concept of goods and services.

How to Help Your Child at Home:

- Read with your child every day. Seek out social studies-related books, both fiction and non-fiction. Check your local library or the National Council for the Social Studies Notable Trade Book List at <http://www.socialstudies.org/notable>.
- Look at family photos and discuss the history of your family.
- Establish and discuss family rules to promote responsibility and leadership at home.
- Point out and discuss notable landmarks in your community such as the library, hospital, grocery store, police station, museums, parks, etc.
- Visit local museums and cultural institutions and compare life today to life in the past.



21st Century Skills (K-2)

Your child will participate in activities that teach how good hygiene, healthy food choices and adequate rest help him or her feel good and be ready to learn. Students will learn how to use technology in all curricular areas to communicate and appropriately work with others. They will practice work habits and social skills that will help them become successful students. Students will receive real-world experiences through visits from community members and parents who represent various professions, and then participate in age-appropriate activities that are related to the visits.

Examples of Your Child's Work at School:

- Compare positive and negative health and safety practices.
- Give examples of personal rights and responsibilities as members in a classroom.
- Use technology to illustrate and communicate ideas related to class projects.
- Follow steps or processes to complete increasingly complex tasks.
- Understand the concepts of spending and saving money and why both are important.

How to Help Your Child at Home:

- Visit <http://KidsHealthline.com> for videos, games and activities.
- Read with your child from books with 21st Century skills content. Examples: *Jobs People Do* series by DK publishing; *The Marvels of Money for Kids* series by Paul Nourigat.
- Help your child select physical activities to keep moving and have fun.
- Show your child how to appropriately use technology to find games, activities and information.



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