

## Additional Parent Resources



### ***Expect More Arizona***

- [Academic Success Materials](#) for parents
- [Arizona Aims Higher](#)
- [Get to the Core](#)

### ***GreatKids.org***

- [Milestone Videos](#) from GreatKids.org are short videos for parents that show what children in grades K-5 should be able to do in each grade.

### ***Raise the Bar - Parents helping Parents***

- [These are the Facts](#)
- [Annotated Student Writing](#) (Scroll down)

### ***Planning a Parent Workshop – Toolkit for Parent Engagement***

- <https://www.engageny.org/resource/planning-a-parent-workshop-toolkit-for-parent-engagement>

### ***DayByDay Family Literacy Calendar***

- <http://daybydayny.org/>

### **Parent Questions and Answers**

#### **How are the standards different from previous standards?**

The AZCCRS standards were written in a new way: starting with evidence for what students need to know in order to be ready for college and careers, and then working through each grade, starting with kindergarten, to chart a clear path to that goal. The resulting changes can be summarized by six “shifts:” three in ELA/literacy and three in Mathematics:

ELA/Literacy:

- Regular practice with complex text and its academic language
- Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction

Mathematics:

- Focus strongly where the standards focus
- Coherence: think across grades and link to major topics within grades
- Rigor: In major topics, pursue with equal intensity: conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application

#### **What are standards? How are standards different from curriculum and the homework my children bring home?**

Standards are often confused with curriculum or tests. Arizona chose to adopt the AZCCRS to outline learning expectations in English Language Arts and Mathematics that prepare their students for college and careers.

Think of the standards as a blueprint that outlines what we want students to know and be able to do at each grade level. If you read the standards for your child's grade level, you'll see they are simply outcomes for reading and math. For example:

*AZCCRS Math Standard (2nd grade)*

Fluently add and subtract within 100 using strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.

*AZCCRS ELA-Literacy Standard (7th grade)*

Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text

Curriculum refers to the materials used in schools and the ways ideas are taught, both of which vary widely across the country – there is no single ELA or Math curriculum. Schools or districts are responsible for determining scope and sequence, textbooks and classroom resources. Then teachers choose and supplement lessons, activities, homework (yes even worksheets), and teaching strategies to match the needs of individuals in your child's classroom. Just as a contractor would decide which tools and strategies to use to turn a blueprint into a building, we as teachers determine the lessons, materials, and activities we should use to meet the standards.

### **How and why is math different with the AZCCRS?**

Math standards are nothing new. Most states have had math standards for many years. What has been missing is how those standards connect to each other and build on each other across grades. What is unique about the AZCCRS is this connection, which allows teachers to focus time in a more impactful way. Standards are laid out as important ideas, or building blocks, covering many grades. K-2 focusing on addition and subtraction with place value understanding, 3-5 building into multiplication and division with fractions, and so on.

Additionally, the AZCCRS includes expectations called Mathematical Practice Standards, or ways to think and talk about math. Students learn different ways to approach problems: when they can approach a math problem by asking questions, looking for patterns, and using different tools strategically, they find many paths to the right answer. Given the chance to compare and collaborate with their peers and teacher, they learn to not only solve problems correctly, but to also make sense of what they are learning and apply it in creative, real-world ways. With the AZCCRS, teachers ask for the correct answer and more, because preparing students for college and future careers requires being able to explain one's thinking, work well with others, and be resourceful when new or unknown problems arise. So, standards that previously felt like a checklist of rules or skills, leading kids to often prove their thinking with the statement, "Because my teacher told me to do it this way," now are replaced with expectations of understanding that have many kids replying, "Let me explain it to you in my own words."

### **How and why is English Language Arts different with the AZCCRS?**

The AZCCRS for ELA/Literacy have helped teachers focus on building the skills students need in order to learn from what they read and become lifelong readers. There is also a shift to more evidence-based, text-dependent writing. Rather than answering questions based solely on opinions or personal experiences which requires no understanding of what was read, students are expected to make points based on details in what they've read. This is a skill they'll use in college and their careers.

The AZCCRS asks teachers to include a balance of fiction and nonfiction texts, but it's important to understand that this does not mean that fiction, plays, or poetry are being replaced in the English classroom. Instead, it's asking us to think about literacy across subjects (including social studies, history, and science). Reading is a necessary component of these subjects both in college and in the real world, and our students need to be prepared.

Another one of the most profound changes is that the standards raise the bar for reading materials to encourage a stretch for readers. Allowing students to read only what is easy for them, instead of spending time with rich texts appropriate for their grade level, will cause them to fall behind— not only in literacy skills, but also in content knowledge. Students gain knowledge from reading texts appropriate to their age level, and all students should be given the support they need to access this knowledge. This means that students should read independently the books they're comfortable with, but, when working with their teacher and classmates, they should focus on grade-level material.

In the past, students learned rules for English: rules for writing, and rules for reading, but they seemed very disconnected. An additional change prompted by the AZCCRS is the emphasis on connecting all of the elements of literacy in the English classroom. Standards for reading, writing and speaking and listening form a staircase for learning instead of a stepstool for grasping a single concept. Grammar and vocabulary, for example, are taught in connection to what students read, instead of as an isolated set of rules to memorize.

### ***Three Take Away Messages for Parents***

- **The AZCCRS are not a federal mandate or curriculum.** In fact, these are Arizona standards which means the state Board of Education chose to adopt them.
- **The AZCCRS do not take away local control.** A lot of people are worried that because the standards are common that everything else (teaching, curriculums, materials etc.) will be common, too. Actually, the standards aren't a curriculum which means that states and local districts still get to decide how they'll meet the standards.
- **You will feel some shifts... and that's a good thing!** It's true that the AZCCRS should cause some shifting in what school looks and feels like. In other words, you'll see your children doing more than finding answers and completing tasks. Instead, you'll hear them reasoning, you'll see them working through more complex problems, and you'll enjoy watching them read both fiction and non-fiction.

### ***The Journal Article***

[9 Ideas to Help Explain Common Core to Parents](#)

### ***National PTA***

[Common Core Videos for advocacy](#)

### ***School Administrator Magazine (May 2014)***

[How to Talk Publicly About Common Core](#)