

College and Career Ready Standards and Students with Disabilities: What Parents Need to Know



What Are College and Career Ready Standards?

College and Career Ready Standards* describe what all students grades K-12 are expected to know and do in language arts and math. No matter what your state calls its set of standards, the information in this document will be useful to help you ensure your child is learning the same information as other students in his or her grade. It is important to have high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities, to support students to be ready for college and employment after high school.

How Do I Help Make Sure My Child Learns the Information and Skills Outlined in the Standards?

Every student with a disability who has been found eligible for special education has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that describes the student's goals for the year. As a parent, you are part of the IEP team that writes the annual goals. Your child's IEP may also include short-term objectives.

Your child's language arts and math goals should be based on your state's grade-level Standards. The IEP team should look at how well your child is currently doing in school (called "Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance" — or "PLAAFP") and compare that to the Standards. If your child cannot do everything described in the Standards, the IEP should write goals that will help your child meet them.

You can ask that someone who knows about the Standards be at your child's IEP meeting to help write the goals.

**Many states have adopted the "Common Core State Standards," while others have developed their own state-specific standards. This document uses the general term "College and Career Ready Standards" to refer to either type of academic standards for students.*

What if My Child Needs Extra Help to Meet the Standards?

Students with disabilities have strengths and needs. In addition to listing the annual goals, the IEP should describe any help your child may need to achieve them. The IEP team should discuss how your child's disability impacts the way he or she learns and what services have been helpful in the past. These may include special instruction, accommodations, assistive technology, or other supports. A few examples of these supports include digital textbooks, an instructional aide, preferential seating, and a quiet place for tests.

Some children with significant cognitive disabilities may need more substantial supports or modifications. IEP teams should maintain high expectations for all students and work within the framework of the Standards when developing annual goals, even if the level of difficulty needs to be changed.

Will My Child Be Tested on the Standards?

All students, including those with disabilities, are required to participate in state assessments that measure their progress in meeting state Standards. Your child's IEP should also list any accommodations needed for the statewide test. These same accommodations should be used on other school tests.

You should also receive progress reports throughout the year updating you on how your child is doing so changes can be made in instruction or to the IEP if needed.

What About My Child's Needs that Aren't Related to the Language Arts and Math Standards?

IEPs should address all individual needs of each student, as determined by the team. In addition to language arts and math goals, your child's IEP may also include items related to behavior, extracurricular activities, social skills, communication, and other areas of the general curriculum.

What If I Want to Learn More About College and Career Ready Standards and IEP Planning?

The following resources are helpful for parents:

College and Career Ready Standards

- Parents' Guide to Student Success:
<http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>
- Spotlight on the Common Core Standards: What Do Parents Need to Know?: <http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/spotlight-common-core-state-standards-what-do-parents-need-know>

IEP Planning

- A Place to Start: Understanding the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance Statement:
www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c186.pdf
- Understanding the Special Education Process:
<http://www.pacer.org/publications/pdfs/ALL17.pdf>

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Contact Your local Parent Center:

For additional copies, contact:

PACER Center | 8161 Normandale Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

952.838.9000 | 952.838.0199 (Fax) | 888.248.0822 (Toll Free)

PACER@PACER.org | PACER.org

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