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Our Students. Their Moment.

# Engaging Parents in the Common Core



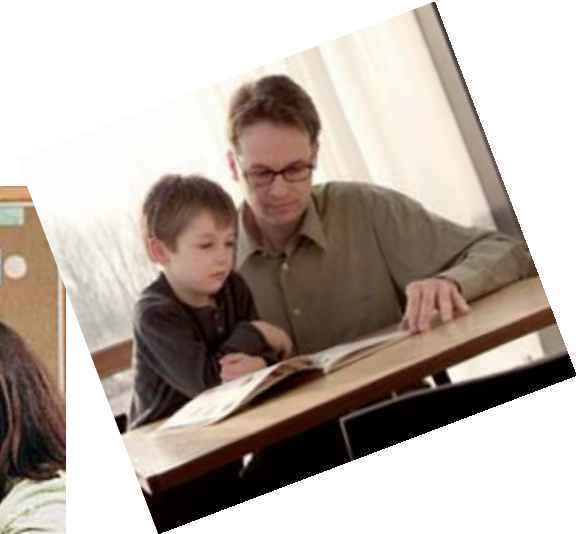
# Objectives

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- Participants will understand how to organize and run successful parent workshops.
- Participants will interact with tools to help parents to understand college readiness and the Common Core standards.
- Participants will practice talking to parents about the Common Core and college readiness

# What Works Best for Engaging Parents?

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# Toolkit for Parent Engagement



# Toolkit for Parent Engagement

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## *Planning Tools*

### •Event Checklist for Planning a Parent Night

#### Keeping Parents Informed and Involved Roadmap to Planning a Parent's Night

As schools shift to implement the Common Core standards, parents and guardians are critical partners for ensuring student success. A first step in this is helping parents to better understand the new standards and how what their children are learning and how it is taught will change. This checklist provides some useful tips to help plan an effective event that engages parents and follow-up that builds ongoing relationships.

##### PLANNING FOR THE EVENT

- Dedicate staff and resources to the event as soon as possible, including event coordinators, master teachers and community outreach specialists
- Set up regular planning sessions for the event
- Identify partners to play a key role in the planning and organization of the night (e.g. advocates, parents, teachers, etc.)
- Identify which formats will be most effective for engaging with parents (lectures, round table discussions, town hall meetings, etc.)
- Reach out to local community and parent groups to gauge opinions and identify what type of information and support local parents need most
- Work with partners, school leaders, teachers and local parent coordinators to develop objectives for the evening and draft an agenda that includes activities to engage parents in the material
- Identify speakers and facilitators who will be most relevant to parents; this can include local community leaders, principals, master teachers and others
- Share notice with community leaders and parent advocacy groups to distribute to their members
- Use multiple methods to notify parents directly, such as sending the notice home with students, posting on school website, announcing via social media, online registration, etc.

# Toolkit for Parent Engagement

## Planning Tools

### •Annotated Agendas for Parent Nights:

Two-Night Parent Sessions

OR

Consolidated One-Night Parent Session



**Annotated Agenda for Parent Session I**

What	Who	Details	Slides	Time
Welcome and video	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome everyone</li> <li>Thank them for coming</li> <li>Introduce key school leaders, new teachers</li> <li>Play video: "What are the Common Core Standards?"</li> </ul>	1-2	5
Objectives	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce objectives                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help parents understand what college readiness is and why it matters</li> <li>Introduce parents to the new standards and help them understand what to look for and how to help their children at home</li> </ul> </li> <li>Review agenda</li> </ul>	3-4	
Activity: What is college readiness?	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator introduces activity:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We're going to talk a lot today about college readiness, but I first want to give you a chance to tell me what it means to you</li> <li>Spend a couple of minutes comparing notes with the other parents at your table, considering the questions on the screen</li> <li>Pay particular attention to that last one - what gap parents do to help their kids become college ready?</li> </ul> </li> <li>After 2-3 minutes, call on a few people at different tables and ask them to share what was discussed</li> </ul>	5-6	
Explanation of college and career readiness	Main presenter; all participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quick review of the meaning behind college and career readiness                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important to note the difference between being "college ready" and "career ready."</li> <li>Ask if there are any questions to clarify the difference</li> </ul> </li> <li>Stress the urgency of the issue with slides 10 and 11 (click through)</li> </ul>		

**Annotated Agenda for Parent Session II**

What	Who	Details	Slides	Time
Welcome	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome everyone</li> <li>Thank them for coming</li> <li>Introduce key school leaders, new teachers</li> <li>Ask for a show of hands to see how many of the parents in attendance came to the first session</li> <li>Thank them for coming back, welcome new parents</li> </ul>	1-2	5
Objectives	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the objectives for the session                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help parents understand how the Common Core educational standards differ from traditional NY standards</li> <li>Help parents understand what the shift to the new standards will mean for their kids</li> <li>Help parents understand how they can help their kids at home</li> </ul> </li> <li>Pause for questions</li> </ul>	3	
Quick Review	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call on parents who were in attendance for the first session to answer questions about what they learned                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of the most important issues we discussed last time was college and career readiness, and what that really means. Who can tell me what that refers to?</li> <li>And what are the Common Core State Standards? How do they differ from the old ones?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Add additional context if necessary, briefly to let the participants lead the recap if they can</li> </ul>	4	
How Can Parents Really Help?	Main Presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remind everyone about the overview of the shifts done at the last session, and note that today the intent is to delve more deeply into each one to identify specific ways that parents can support their children                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last time we talked in broad terms about some of the "shifts" in instruction and learning that will come</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	5	



Annotated Agenda for Consolidated Parent Session

What	Who	Details	Slides	Time
Welcome and video	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome everyone</li> <li>Thank them for coming</li> <li>Introduce key school leaders, new teachers</li> <li>Play video: "What are the Common Core Standards?"</li> </ul>	1-2	5
Objectives	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce objectives                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help parents understand what college readiness is and why it matters</li> <li>Introduce parents to the new standards and help them to understand how they differ from traditional NY educational standards</li> <li>Help parents understand what to look for and how to help their children at home</li> </ul> </li> <li>Review agenda</li> </ul>	3-4	
Activity: What is college readiness?	Main presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator introduces activity:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We're going to talk a lot today about college readiness, but I first want to give you a chance to tell me what it means to you</li> <li>Spend a couple of minutes comparing notes with the other parents at your table, considering the questions on the screen</li> <li>Pay particular attention to that last one - what gap parents do to help their kids become college ready?</li> </ul> </li> <li>After 2-3 minutes, call on a few people at different tables and ask them to share what was discussed</li> </ul>	5-6	
Explanation of college and career readiness	Main presenter; all participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quick review of the meaning behind college and career readiness                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important to note the difference between being "college ready" and "career ready."</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	7-11	10

# Toolkit for Parent Engagement

## Planning Tools

- Sample slides from parent night presentations
  - *Full presentations are available for download on EngageNY.org*

### Backpacks: What you should see

Real-world examples that makes what students learn in English and math make more sense

Math homework that asks students to write out how they got their answer



Books that are both fiction and non-fiction

Writing assignments that require students to use evidence instead of opinion

Math homework that asks students to use different methods to solve the same problem

SAMPLE: FULL PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE ON ENGAGENY.ORG

### Some questions to ask your child

Did you talk about anything you read in class today? Did you use evidence when you talk about what you read?

Did you learn any new words in class today? What do they mean? How do you spell them?

What math problems did you do today? How did you get your answer?

Tell me something you learned in your reading. How did you learn it?

How did you use math today? Can you show me an example?



SAMPLE: FULL PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE ON ENGAGENY.ORG

# Toolkit for Parent Engagement

## Parent Handouts

### •Parent's Backpack Guide to the Common Core

#### Parent's Backpack Guide to Common Core State Standards



#### FOR PREKINDERGARTEN—5TH GRADE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

In 2011, New York adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to make sure that all children succeed once they graduate from high school. This guide is designed to help you understand how the standards will affect your child, what changes you will see and what you can do at home to help your children in the classroom.

#### Why Are the Common Core State Standards Important?

The Common Core State Standards are important because they will help all children – no matter who they are – learn the same skills. They create clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics. If you know what these expectations are, then you can work with the teacher and help your child prepare.

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

The new Common Core State Standards make several important changes to current standards. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what these shifts change, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child. *If your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.*

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will now <u>read more non-fiction</u> in each grade level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for your kids to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read non-fiction books with your children. Find ways to make reading fun and exciting.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child <u>learn about the world through reading</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for your kids to bring home more fact-based books about the world. For instance, your 1<sup>st</sup> Grader or Kindergartener might read Clyde Robert Bulla's <i>A Tree is a Plant</i>. This book lets students read and learn about science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know what non-fiction books are grade-level appropriate and make sure your children have access to such books.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will <u>read challenging texts very closely</u>, so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your kids will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book. For example, your 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader might be asked to read about Faith D'Aluisio's non-fiction book titled <i>What the World Eats</i> and retell facts from the story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide more challenging texts for your kids to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will <u>use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence. Evidence means examples from the book that your child will use to support a response or conclusion. This is different from the opinion questions that have been used in the past.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will <u>learn how to write from what they read</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for writing assignments that ask your child to make arguments in writing using evidence. For 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, this might mean reading and writing about <i>The Kids Guide to Money</i>, a non-fictional book by Steve Ottinosi.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will <u>have an increased academic vocabulary</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary and teach them that "language is power."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read often to babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children.</li> </ul>

#### MATHEMATICS

To improve student learning, the new Common Core State Standards are different from the old ones. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what is shifting, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child. *Again, if your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.*

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will <u>work more deeply in fewer topics</u>, which will ensure full understanding. (less is more)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will <u>keep building on learning year after year</u>, starting with a strong foundation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. Building on that, they will then focus on Algebra. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will <u>spend time practicing and memorizing math facts</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will <u>understand why the math works and be able to talk about and prove their understanding</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child might have assignments that focus on memorizing and mastering basic math facts, which are important for success in more advanced math problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child will now be asked to <u>use math in real-world situations</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For instance, homework for 5<sup>th</sup> graders might include adding fractions as part of a dessert recipe or determining how much pizza friends ate based on fractions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.</li> </ul>

#### TALKING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

When talking to your child's teacher, try to keep the conversation focused on the most important topics that relate to your child. This means asking the teacher how your child is performing based on grade-level standards and expectations.

Also, ask to see a sample of your child's work. Compare your child's samples to those found at <http://engage.nyc.gov/resource/new-york-state-common-core-sample-questions>. Also, feel free to bring those samples to your child's teacher and ask the teacher to explain how the samples are used in the classroom.

This information will enable you make important adjustments at home that can help your child achieve success in the classroom.

For more information, please visit: [www.engageNY.org](http://www.engageNY.org) or contact your local principal or superintendent.



# Toolkit for Parent Engagement

## Parent Handouts

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Common Core State Standards



#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Parents across New York want to know more about the Common Core State Standards. Below, you will find some frequently asked questions and answers about the standards. It will be updated over time. Please contact your child's teacher or principal to learn more about your school's work with the Common Core.

**Q: What are the Common Core State Standards?**

**A:** The Common Core State Standards show what students in Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade should know and be able to do in English Language Arts and mathematics. The standards will help all students – no matter who they are – learn the same skills. This will make sure that they are ready for college and careers. They also include changes, or "shifts", in how teachers teach to help children succeed in the topics and skills that matter most.

**Q: Does having common standards mean everyone will learn less?**

**A:** No. The Common Core State Standards have been built from some of the best standards gathered from States across the country. Plus, many teachers and parents worked to make sure that the standards are well-matched for our classrooms and will help our students learn more.

**Q: Do the standards tell teachers how to teach?**

**A:** No. They are a tool to help teachers prepare the best classroom lessons and activities. The standards also help students and parents by showing them what it takes to be successful in each grade level. They are an important roadmap for teachers, students and parents.

**Q: How were the Common Core State Standards developed?**

**A:** The National Governors Association brought together experts, teachers and researchers to write the Common Core State Standards. The standards were revised and improved upon based on almost 10,000 comments and suggestions. They were then finalized in June 2010. Please visit <http://corestandards.org/the-standards> to read the full set of standards.

**Q: Will this mean more tests?**

**A:** The Common Core State Standards do not mean more tests. But there will be different, and better, tests. Starting in April 2013, the New York State Assessments will test student's common core knowledge and skills for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade in English language arts and mathematics. These new tests will reflect the changes, or shifts, brought by the Common Core State Standards. The tests will make sure that students can meet expectations

will have more time to cover subjects in greater detail. This gives students an opportunity to really understand what is being taught.

In addition, there is a clear guide for applying the standards to English language learners and students with disabilities. Also, all 45 States will be working together to constantly improve upon these issues. This will result in a strong support system for all learners.

**Q: What will the Common Core State Standards mean for students across the country?**

**A:** The standards set clear expectations for student learning across the country. In the past, every State had its own set of different academic standards. This meant that U.S. students were learning different skills and concepts at different rates. The Common Core State Standards will help provide *all* students – including those in New York – with an equal opportunity for learning the same high standards. This leads to a greater chance of success in college, career and life.

**Q: If standards are raised, is it more likely that students will drop out of school?**

**A:** It is not more likely that students will drop out of school. Research points out that many factors come together to cause a student to drop out of school. Research also shows that students want to be challenged more in school. For example, in one study, seven in 10 dropouts said they were not motivated or inspired to work hard in high school. Two-thirds of the dropouts said they would have worked harder if more was demanded of them (higher academic standards and more studying and homework).<sup>1</sup>

**Q: Is the adoption of common core standards in English language arts and mathematics going to limit student access to other subject areas, such as the arts or career and technical education?**

**A:** No. New York understands the importance that all subjects have in preparing students for success beyond high school. Graduating well-rounded students is important for the State's future. The clearer standards of the Common Core will actually help teachers integrate subject areas. This means that students will be given lessons that bring together mathematics, science, social studies, English language arts and other subjects.

**Q: Do the Common Core State Standards penalize students in low-performing schools by creating unrealistically high expectations?**

**A:** No. All too often, students in low performing schools today are held to lower expectations. New York has adopted the Common Core State Standards so that *all* students receive an excellent education.

**Glossary:**

- Shift – A change in how teachers teach and how students learn
- Text – Any written work
- Non-fiction – Texts about real-life events or facts
- Evidence – Bits of proof from the text

# Toolkit for Parent Engagement

## Parent Handouts

### •What Parents Can Do to Help their Children Learn



#### Working with the "Shifts"

##### What Parents Can Do to Help their Children Learn

The Common Core State Standards ask teachers to make 12 major "shifts" or (changes) in their classrooms – six shifts in English language arts and six shifts in Mathematics. These changes may be tough at first as students and teachers adjust to higher expectations.

As a parent, you can help and learn more by talking with your child about what they are learning. Ask open-ended questions about what they learned in school each day, read their homework and attend school events to learn about what their teachers expect.

This document explains some of the ways that your child's classroom is changing and how you can help; for more information, check out [www.engageNY.org](http://www.engageNY.org).

#### THE 12 SHIFTS

English Language Arts/Literacy	Mathematics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read as much non-fiction as fiction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build skills across grade levels</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn about the world by reading</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn more about less</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read more challenging material</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use math facts easily</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk about reading using "evidence"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think fast AND solve problems</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write about texts using "evidence"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Really know it, really do it</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know more vocab words</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use math in the real world</li></ul>

# Toolkit for Parent Engagement

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## Parent Handouts

### •Common Core Resources for Parents to Learn More



#### Common Core Resources for Parents Where to Learn More and Get More

##### NATIONAL RESOURCES

###### National PTA Parent's Guides for Student Success

<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>

The site contains a suite of materials, including short guides explaining changes in standards in English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Guides are available for each grade K-8 and for high school by subject.

The guides are available in English and Spanish and include:

- What children should be learning in English language arts and mathematics in each grade with the new standards.
- Activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning.
- Methods for helping parents build stronger relationships with their child's teacher.
- Tips for planning for college and career readiness.

###### Council of Great City Schools Parent Roadmap

<http://www.cgcs.org/Domain/36>

The site provides individual road maps in English and Spanish for ELA and mathematics for each of grades K-8. These maps help guide parents through what their children will be learning and how they can support that learning. They also provide timelines showing how selected standards change from year to year so that students will be college- and career-ready upon their graduation from high school.

The Council of Great City Schools has also produced a parent-friendly three minute video explaining the Common Core, available at: <http://www.commoncoreworks.org>

# Scenario

*You have each just attended your school's Parent Session, and are having a 1:1 follow up conversation. The parent wants to know more about the Common Core State Standards and how s/he can help prepare her/his child and approaches the educator for help. This conversation should focus on ways in which parents and educators can work together effectively to ease the transition to the Common Core and ensure that students receive the support that they need.*

<i>Some questions parents might ask of educators and administrators:</i>	<i>Some questions that educators or administrators might ask of parents:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ What is different about what my child is learning at school?</li><li>→ What is different about the work my student is bringing home?</li><li>→ Who should I talk to if I don't see these changes?</li><li>→ What can I do to help my child achieve these new standards?</li><li>→ What can I expect with the upcoming spring Regents exams? (for 3-8 parents)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ What concerns do you have about the new standards and expectations for your child?</li><li>→ What other resources do you need to understand these changes and help your child succeed?</li><li>→ Have you seen any of these changes in your child's school work or homework so far in this school year?</li></ul>

- 
- Parent Panel
  - EngageNY.org

# Close

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