

Parent's Backpack Guide to The New Illinois Learning Standards



Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

In 2010 Illinois adopted the New Illinois Learning Standards (Common Core) to make sure all students succeed once they graduate from high school. These standards were written by educators and education experts, including teachers from our state, to provide a consistent, clear and challenging set of learning expectations for all students.

Why Are the New Illinois Learning Standards Important?

The New Illinois Learning Standards are important because they will help all children learn the skills and knowledge to help them become college and career ready when they graduate. The new standards set clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics.

These standards raise the bar for student expectations at each grade level and ensure classroom learning builds on the prior year's learning and prepares students for the next year. If you know what these expectations are, then you can work with the teacher and help your child prepare.

This guide is designed to help you understand how the standards affect your child, what changes you will see and what you can do at home to help your children succeed in the classroom.

What changes are occurring in your child's classroom?

The New Illinois Learning Standards make several important changes to previous 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. Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions about the shifts as they happen in the classroom.

K-2 English Language Arts

What's Shifting	What to Look for in the Backpack	What Can You Do
Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child learn about the world through reading.	Look for your children to bring home more fact-based books about the world.	Find non-fiction books that are appropriate and make sure your child has access to such books.
Your child will read and/or listen to texts very closely, so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions.	Your children will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book.	Provide non-fiction texts for your child to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult parts by helping them reread and talking with you about them.
When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say.	Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from that text that serve as evidences. Evidence means examples from the book that your child will use to support a response or conclusion.	Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements.
Your child will learn how to write from what they read.	Look for writing tasks that ask your child to state opinions in writing using evidence.	Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details.
Your child will have an increased academic vocabulary.	Look for reading and writing tasks that stretch your child's vocabulary.	Read often to and with your child(ren).

K-2 Math

What's Shifting	What to Look for in the Backpack	What Can You Do
Your child will work more deeply in fewer topics, which will ensure full understanding. (less is more!)	Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain in writing how they arrived at an answer.	Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.
Your child will keep building on learning year after year starting with a strong foundation.	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.	Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.
Your child will spend time practicing and memorizing math facts.	Your child might have assignments that focus on memorizing and mastering basic math facts, which are important for success in more advanced math problems.	Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas.
Your child will understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding.	Your child might have assignments that include demonstrations of the Standards for Mathematical Practice. These are the same for all grades and describe a set of skills and processes that all students should develop as part of their study of mathematics.	Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life.
Your child will now be asked to use math in real-world situations.	Look for math assignments that are based on real world.	Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.

The New Illinois Learning Standards

What Every K-2 Parent Needs to Know about the New Illinois Learning Standards

Be sure to ask your child’s teacher how you can help reinforce classroom learning when helping your child at home. While every classroom will learn skills and knowledge through different lessons, here’s a look at some of what you can expect your K-2 students to know and do by the end of the school year.

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming and printing letters, and matching them with sounds • Comparing character experiences in stories • Understanding how to use question words (who, what, when, where, why and how) in discussions • Using drawing, writing, and speaking to describe an event • Participating in classroom discussions and following the designated rules • Adding and subtracting small numbers quickly and correctly • Naming shapes accurately, regardless of their orientation • Using diagrams and word problems to practice addition and subtraction • Comparing groups of objects to determine which is greater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using phonics and word analysis skills to determine unfamiliar words in reading • Gathering facts from different sources • Practicing structure of writing short stories or essays • Participating in group discussions and responding to questions or comments from others • Identifying word meanings from context clues • Learning to make clearer distinctions between synonyms • Using addition and subtraction in comparison problems • Understanding place value with two-digit numbers • Measuring lengths of objects • Making composite shapes by joining other shapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying attention to details in stories to answer the 5 W’s and H questions • Determining morals or lessons of stories • Determining the meaning of a word through prefixes or suffixes • Writing stories with event sequences and clarity • Practicing sentence structure by expanding or arranging sentences • Expanding group discussion with new information • Solving challenging addition and subtraction word problems • Building and analyzing 2-D and 3-D objects to learn volume and area • Understanding place value with three-digit numbers • Solving lengthy addition and subtraction word problems

Adapted from National PTA’s Guide to Student Success, www.pta.org

Adapted from Engage New York and Achieve