



## 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 2nd 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 3rd 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.



### 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 such as 9th-12th grade. In all cases, the standards set appropriate expectations for what students need to learn, but not how to teach.

**Read the complete standards at:**

**[www.iowacore.gov](http://www.iowacore.gov)**

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



## Mathematics

One of the most important outcomes for the year is to add and subtract two-digit numbers efficiently and accurately (e.g.,  $77 - 28$ ). Another important goal is to understand what the digits mean in a three-digit number such as 463 (namely, 463 is four hundreds, six tens and three ones). Your child will continue to build expertise in, and master, solving addition and subtraction word problems. This is important for the next year, when the study of multiplication, division and fractions begins.

### Examples of Your Child's Work at School:

- Solve challenging addition and subtraction word problems with one or two steps that involve adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart and comparing by using drawings and equations. (e.g., a “one-step” problem: “Lucy has 23 fewer apples than Julie. Julie has 47 apples. How many apples does Lucy have?”)
- Efficiently add with a sum of 20 or less (e.g.,  $11 + 8$ ); efficiently subtract from 20 or less (e.g.,  $16 - 9$ ); and memorize and recall all sums of one-digit numbers by the end of the year.
- Understand what the digits mean in three-digit numbers (place value).
- Show understanding of place value to add and subtract three-digit numbers (e.g.,  $811 - 367$ ); quickly add and subtract two-digit numbers (e.g.,  $77 - 28$ ).
- Measure and estimate length in standard units.
- Recognize, draw and analyze 2-D and 3-D shapes to develop foundations for area, volume and geometry in later grades.

### How to Help Your Child at Home:

- When saving for a purchase, compare the cost of the item to the amount of money you have; then ask your child to determine how much more money he or she needs to buy the item.
- When measuring your child's height, ask how many inches he or she has grown since the very first measurement.
- Play “draw the shape.” For example, ask your child to draw a square and ask him or her to shade in a quarter of the square.

## English Language Arts & Literacy

Students will gain more skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They continue to learn and practice rules for matching sounds to letters that make up words, and they learn new concepts, such as words that share the same root (e.g., add and additional) to help them figure out the meanings of new words. Your child will use writing as a way to demonstrate newly learned words and phrases to express ideas. As students write and speak, they will be more attentive to the formal and informal uses of English and will spell most words correctly in their writing.

### Examples of Your Child's Work at School:

- Pay close attention to details, including illustrations and graphics, in stories and books to answer who, what, where, when, why and how questions.
- Determine the lesson or moral of stories, fables and folktales.
- Write an opinion about a book he or she has read by using important details from the materials to support that opinion.
- Write stories that include a short sequence of events and a clear beginning, middle and ending.
- Participate in research projects (e.g., read books about a single topic to produce a report).
- Take part in conversations by connecting his or her comments to the remarks of others, and asking and answering questions to gather additional information or to deepen understanding of the topic.

### How to Help Your Child at Home:

- Read at home every day and assist your child by reading every other paragraph. Encourage your child to read to younger siblings, cousins, or other children you know.
- Have your child write a thank-you note or letter to family members or friends.
- Ask your librarian to suggest books about people or places that are important to your child or family that you can read together. Encourage your child to explain what he or she has just read.



## Science

Learners grow in their ability to understand about larger systems and the parts that make them up. They begin to formulate answers to questions such as “How are materials similar and different from one another? How do the properties of the materials relate to their use? What do plants need to grow?” Investigations of how parts relate to the whole provide a key basis for understanding systems in later grades. Second grade students will record observations and data, will use a variety of informational texts to gather information, and will engage in scientific thinking as they begin to understand larger systems and the parts that make up the systems.

### Examples of Your Child’s Work at School:

- Conduct investigations to classify materials based on similar properties and functions.
- Test different materials to collect and then analyze data for the purpose of determining which materials are the best for a specific function.
- Investigate how the environment in which the plants and animals live help provide the food, water, and shelter the organisms need to survive.
- Use information to model the features of Earth’s surface and begin to answer the questions “how does land change and what are things that cause it to change?”

### How to Help Your Child at Home:

- Encourage your child to use building blocks, construction sets, and other toys to create larger structures from smaller pieces.
- Do arts and craft projects to create something new from smaller pieces. Talk about why certain materials might be better for specific projects and why.
- When outdoors, spend time observing the plants and animals in the area. Discuss ways plants and animals interact with their environment to meet their needs (i.e. squirrels dig holes to hide food). Visit zoos, aquariums, nature centers, or botanical centers and spend time observing how the plants and animals interact with their environments.
- When traveling, look for and discuss various landforms and talk about how they may have formed.

## Social Studies

In second grade, students will learn about choices and consequences. They will engage in thinking and conversing about their own responsibility to take care of their community, focusing on cooperation and citizenship. They will also learn about how government plays a role in establishing and maintaining local community spaces.

### Examples of Your Child’s Work at School:

- Evaluate choices and consequences for spending and saving.
- Use maps, globes and photos to analyze how environmental characteristics impact the location of a particular place.
- Explain how people work through conflict when solving a community problem.
- Distinguish between a primary and secondary source.
- Determine the influence of individuals and groups who have shaped historical change.
- Discuss and take action to address local and/or regional problems.

### 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> for suggestions of books to read.
- Visit local museums and cultural institutions to examine how individuals and groups have shaped historical change. Look for statues and monuments in Iowa as a way of understanding who has shaped our state and nation.
- Point out civic institutions such as a school board or city council and how they must make choices to work together in order to solve community problems. Form an opinion about a community problem.
- Talk about making spending choices when financial resources are limited. If students are given an allowance, discuss the opportunity to make spending choices.
- Identify things people say or write as mostly fact or opinion.
- Explore a variety of parks. Notice the names of the parks as well as who takes care of the parks.



## 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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