

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, visit MarylandPublicSchools.org.

The 12 Shifts

English/Language Arts and Literacy	Mathematics
• Read as much non-fiction as fiction	• Build skills across grade levels
• Learn about the world by reading	• Learn more about less
• Read more challenging material	• Use math facts easily
• Talk about reading using “evidence”	• Think fast AND solve problems
• Write about texts using “evidence”	• Really know it, really do it
• Know more vocab words	• Use math in the real world

English/Language Arts and Literacy: Expectations for Students & Ideas for Parents

What's the Shift?	What will students have to do?	What can parents do to help?
Read as much fiction as non-fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read more non-fiction • Understand how non-fiction is written and put together • Enjoy and discuss the details of non-fiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply more non-fiction texts • Read non-fiction books aloud or with your child • Have fun with non-fiction in front of your child
Learn about the world by reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about science and social studies through reading • Use "primary source" documents • Get smarter through the use of texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply series of texts on topics that interest your child • Find books that explain how things work and why • Discuss non-fiction texts and their ideas
Read more challenging material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-read until they understand • Read books both at and above their comfort level • Handle frustration • Keep pushing to improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what is grade-level appropriate • Provide challenging texts as well as books they can read easily • Read challenging books with your child • Show that challenging books are worth reading
Talk about reading using evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find evidence to support their arguments • Form judgments and opinions • Discuss what the author is thinking • Make predictions about what will happen next 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about texts • Demand evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements • Read aloud or read the same book as your child and discuss • Discuss predictions
Write about text using evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make arguments in writing using evidence • Compare multiple texts in writing • Learn to write well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage writing at home • Write "books" together using evidence and detail • Review samples of exemplar student writing
Know more vocabulary words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the words they will need to use in college and career • Get smarter at using the "language of power" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read often and constantly with young children • Read multiple books on the same topic • Talk to your children, read to them, listen to them, sing with them, make up silly rhymes and word games

Mathematics: Expectations for Students & Ideas for Parents

What's the Shift?	What will students have to do?	What can parents do to help?
Build skills across grade levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep building on learning year after year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of what your child struggled with last year and how that will affect ongoing learning Advocate for your child Ensure that the support is given for "gap" skills, such as negative numbers, fractions, etc.
Learn more about less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend more time on fewer concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what the priority work is for your child at their grade level
Use math facts easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go more in-depth on each concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend time with your child on priority work Ask your child's teacher for reports on your child's progress on priority work
Think fast AND solve problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend time practicing by doing lots of problems on the same idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push children to know, understand, and memorize basic math facts Know all the mathematics fluencies your child should have Prioritize learning the fluencies your child finds most difficult
Really know it, really do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the math work, and understand why it does Talk about why the math works Prove that they know why and how the math works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions and review homework to see whether your child understands <i>why</i> as well as <i>what</i> the answer is Advocate for the time your child needs to learn key math skills Provide time for your child to work on math skills at home
Use math in the real world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply math in real world situations Know which math skills to use in which situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask your child to do the math that comes up in daily life