



STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for kindergarten are not grounded in research.

The Common Core State Standards do not build on well-known, long-term studies about early child development. Decades of research show that young children learn skills and concepts at different times, rates, and paces. The CCSS “One Size Fits All” viewpoint fails to recognize that each child perceives and approaches the world differently, often taking varied routes to reach the same ends. As a result, with CCSS, the whole child is devalued, as is the importance of social-emotional development, play, art, music, science, and physical development. One size *does not* fit all in early education.

Early childhood experts were not well represented in the writing of the standards.

While the committee that wrote the standards includes a few polarized voices from the early education field, it isn’t representative of the early childhood community who would have brought decades of research verifying what we know about how young people learn. In fact, more than 500 early childhood professionals signed a joint statement *opposing* the standards on the grounds that they would lead to long hours of direct instruction, more standardized testing, and would crowd out highly important active, play-based learning. Notably, this important joint statement was not even reported in the “summary of public feedback” on the Common Core State Standards website.

While the CCSS do not dictate how to teach, the standards that kindergartners are required to achieve undermine essential play and contradict developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms.

Simply put, it is very difficult for teachers to provide active exploration and hands-on, play-based learning—the approaches they know are right for children—when they have to teach 90 specific skills to their kindergarten students. The very process of requiring young children to meet developmentally inappropriate standards has resulted in teacher-led, direct instruction and greatly reduced play in kindergarten. And the increased pressure to administer tests that young brains cannot grasp only adds to the stress and damaging effects.

What the writers of the Common Core fail to understand is that play **is** how young children learn. It’s not a luxury, but the primary vehicle in which learning occurs.

The Common Core is part of a larger, distinct agenda to privatize the nation's public schools.

Over the last decade, a national coalition made up of the Gates, Walton Family, and Broad Foundations, Democrats for Education Reform, hedge-fund leaders and business CEO's, and a bipartisan collection of politicians has come together to "reform" education. They have embraced a distinct agenda: expand the number of charter schools; increase "choice" and competition into the system; use high-stakes testing to evaluate teachers and schools; and embrace the Common Core State Standards. The ultimate goal is to dismantle the public education system and replace it with a market-based, privatized system. The Common Core standards are one piece of this larger agenda.

The Common Core is a distraction from the underlying issues of economic inequality.

The idea that the CCSS will close the achievement gap is not only a myth, but also a distraction from the underlying inequalities brought on by poverty. A recent study by JAMA Pediatrics finds that poverty can hinder the brain development of children. Under these circumstances, education is not the great equalizer corporate reformers would have us believe. In fact, the CCSS creates another layer of stress in the lives of children who are already growing up with toxic stress. In order to level the playing field, we must *first* focus on meeting certain basic needs including safety, food security, healthcare, and a stable and nurturing environment.

Corporate "reformers" have made a mammoth financial investment in the Common Core.

The Gates Foundation has spent **\$200 million dollars** creating and promoting the CCSS. And corporations such as Pearson are reaping the benefits. Yet even as support for the standards has waned and turned into a growing opposition across the country, financial support by the Gates Foundation continues. In fact, in October, 2015, Bill Gates said that he plans to "stay the course" on his brand of education reform. Student Achievement Partners—the non-profit founded by the lead writers of the Common Core—received \$6.5 million in Gates money to promote the standards.

DEY has a tiny fraction (.006%) of the budget that the CCSS promoters have, but what we DO have is early childhood expertise, experience, and decades of research on our side. Our mission is simple: **We advocate for young children.** The only thing we want to "promote" is appropriate practices for optimal learning and development.

Defending the Early Years is *not* against standards.

DEY calls for the withdrawal of the current CCSS kindergarten standards so they can be rethought along developmental lines.

DEY proposes convening a task force of early childhood educators to recommend developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive guidelines for supporting young children's optimal learning from birth to age eight.



References available on the DEY website: [Six Reasons to Reject the Common Core State Standards for Grades K-3](#) & [Six Principles to Guide Policy](#)

Defending the Early Years

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Defending the Early Years is a project of the Survival Education Fund, Inc.