



**Alignment of Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards with:**  
Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics and  
Common Core Essential Elements



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Wisconsin's adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provides an excellent opportunity for Wisconsin school districts and communities to define expectations from birth through preparation for college and work. By aligning the existing Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) with the CCSS, expectations can be set from birth through high school completion.

Since 2003, the WMELS have influenced all programs serving children under mandatory school age to identify what children from birth through entrance to first grade should know and be able to do. Schools across the state have worked with childcare, Head Start, and other community programs to incorporate the WMELS into their early childhood special education, four-year-old kindergarten, and five-year-old kindergarten programs. The adoption of CCSS provides opportunity for alignment between the WMELS and the CCSS in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. The WMELS provide developmental expectations for young children from **birth through entrance to first grade** that are foundational to the CCSS for **kindergarten through grade 12**.

## Overview of WMELS

The development of the WMELS was guided by research in the field of early education and supported by content experts from institutions of higher education in the state. The WMELS provide a framework for families, professionals, and policymakers to:



- Share a common language and responsibility for the well-being of children from birth to first grade;
- Know and understand developmental expectations of young children; and
- Understand the connection of early childhood with K-12 educational experiences and lifelong learning.

The WMELS specify developmental expectations for children birth through entrance to first grade and address all the domains of a child's learning and development including: Health and Physical Development; Social and Emotional Development; Language Development and Communication; Approaches to Learning; and Cognition and General Knowledge. The developmental domains are highly interrelated. Knowledge and skills developed in one area of development impact the acquisition of knowledge and skills in other areas of development. Each domain is divided into sub-domains, which include developmental expectations, program standards, performance standards, and a developmental continuum, along with samples of children's behavior and adult strategies.

The WMELS are intended to:

- Improve the quality of all early learning environments;
- Guide professional development activities and investments;
- Inform educators and caregivers in their decisions regarding approaches to curriculum development across all early learning environments; and
- Guide communities as they determine local benchmarks at the district level. The local benchmarks assist to make decisions regarding curriculum and assessment that will determine instruction, interactions, and activities.

## Overview of the CCSS

Teachers, content experts, parents, and community leaders collaborated to review the CCSS for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Literacy in All Subjects, and these standards have been adopted by 45 states. Wisconsin adopted the CCSS as Wisconsin's standards in 2010. The CCSS focus on core conceptual understandings and procedures starting in the early grades, enabling teachers to take the time needed to teach core concepts and procedures well—and to give students the opportunity to master them. With students, parents, and teachers working together for shared goals, we can ensure that students make progress each year and graduate from school prepared to succeed in college and in a 21st Century workforce.

Wisconsin's Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning inform the instructional design and implementation of all academic standards. All educational initiatives are guided and impacted by important and often unstated attitudes or principles for teaching and learning. For information about Wisconsin's Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning: see [http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn\\_guiding-principles](http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_guiding-principles).





## Wisconsin Foundations for English Language Arts

- English language arts is an integrated discipline.
- English language arts instruction builds an understanding of the human experience.
- Literacy is an evolving concept, and becoming literate is a lifelong learning process.
- Critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity (the 4 C's) are aspects of effective English education and skills of Wisconsin graduates.
- Literacy, language, and meaning are socially constructed and are enhanced by multiple perspectives.

## Wisconsin Foundations for Mathematics

- Every student must have access to and engage in meaningful, challenging, and rigorous mathematics.
- Mathematics should be experienced as coherent, connected, intrinsically interesting, and relevant.
- Problem solving, understanding, reasoning, and sense-making are at the heart of mathematics teaching and learning and are central to mathematical proficiency.
- Effective mathematics classroom practices include the use of collaboration, discourse, and reflection to engage students in the study of important mathematics.

## Connection between WMELS and CCSS

The WMELS address expectations for young children from **birth through entrance to first grade**. The CCSS address what students should know and be able to do from **kindergarten through grade 12**. Since the WMELS and the CCSS both address the five-year-old kindergarten level, school districts are encouraged to use both the WMELS and the CCSS as they move forward with their standards work in early childhood four-year-old kindergarten, five-year-old kindergarten programs, and the primary school years.



## Overview of Common Core Essential Elements

Except under rare circumstances, students with disabilities will access the general education curriculum through the CCSS.

However, some students with significant cognitive disabilities cannot meet the general education standards, even with accommodations and modifications. These students are instructed using alternate academic achievement standards, called the Common Core Essential Elements (CCEE). The CCEE are descriptions of what students with significant cognitive disabilities are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12. When considering the CCEE, it is important to note that they are based on the CCSS and align with the WMELS.

It is important to practice caution when making determinations about which set of standards a student will access. Except for the very few students with significant cognitive disabilities, kindergarten students with disabilities will access the general education curriculum through the CCSS. The decision to use the CCEE should be made only after careful consideration of potential long-term impacts such as limiting a student's opportunity to learn and reducing the access to general education curriculum.

### For more information on:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) contact Connie Ellingson at: [connie.ellingson@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:connie.ellingson@dpi.wi.gov)
- Common Core Essential Elements (CCEE) contact Erin Faasuamalie at: [erin.faasuamalie@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:erin.faasuamalie@dpi.wi.gov)
- Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) contact Jill Haglund at: [jill.haglund@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:jill.haglund@dpi.wi.gov)

### For more information about the WMELS:

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-documents.php>

### For more information regarding Wisconsin's academic standards:

[http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn\\_home](http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_home)

### For more information about teaching and learning English language arts in Wisconsin and to download and print the Wisconsin CCSS for English Language Arts:

[http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn\\_ela-tchingandlrng](http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_ela-tchingandlrng)

### For more information about teaching and learning mathematics in Wisconsin and to download and print the Wisconsin CCSS for Mathematics:

<http://dpi.wi.gov/standards/math-tchingandlrng.html>

### The CCEE webpage:

[http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped\\_assmt-ccee](http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_assmt-ccee)



## Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Comparison with Mathematics Strands of Wisconsin Common Core State Standards (Grade K Overview)

Common Core State Standards: Mathematics Domains					
	Counting and Cardinality	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Number and Operations in Base Ten	Measurement and Data	Geometry
Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Developmental Domain: V. Cognition and General Knowledge Sub-Domain: B. Mathematical Thinking	<b>Performance Standard B.EL.1</b> Demonstrates understanding of numbers and counting	<b>Performance Standard B.EL.2</b> Understands number operations and relationships	<b>Performance Standard B.EL.2</b> Understands number operations and relationships	<b>Performance Standard B.EL.5</b> Understands the concept of measurement  <b>Performance Standard B.EL.6</b> Collects, describes and records information using all senses	<b>Performance Standard B.EL.3</b> Explores, recognizes, and describes shapes and spatial relationships

### Standards for Mathematical Practice

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/cal/pdf/stds-math-practice.pdf>

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

For a summary of some of the characteristics exhibited by mathematically proficient students

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/cal/pdf/mathprof.pdf>

# Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Comparison with English Language Arts Strands of Wisconsin Common Core State Standards (Kindergarten)

Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts Strands				
	Reading: Literature	Reading: Informational Text	Reading: Foundational Skills	Writing
Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Developmental Domain: III. Language Development and Communication Sub-Domain: C. Early Literacy	<b>Performance Standard C.EL.3</b> Shows appreciation of books and understands how print works	<b>Performance Standard C.EL.3</b> Shows appreciation of books and understands how print works	<b>Performance Standard C.EL.1</b> Develops ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze auditory parts of spoken language  <b>Performance Standard C.EL.2</b> Understands concept that the alphabet represents the sounds of spoken language and letters of written language  <b>Performance Standard C.EL.3</b> Shows appreciation of books and understands how print works	<b>Performance Standard C.EL.4</b> Uses writing to represent thoughts or ideas

## Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Comparison with English Language Arts Strands of Wisconsin Common Core State Standards (Kindergarten)

Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts Strands		
	Speaking and Listening	Language
Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Developmental Domain: III. Language Development and Communication Sub-Domain: A. Listening and Understanding Sub-Domain: B. Speaking and Communicating Sub-Domain: C. Early Literacy	<p><b>Performance Standard A.EL.1</b> Derives meaning through listening to communication of others and sounds in the environment</p> <p><b>Performance Standard A.EL.2</b> Listens and responds to communications with others</p> <p><b>Performance Standard A.EL.3</b> Follows directions of increasing complexity</p> <p><b>Performance Standard B.EL.1</b> Uses gestures and movements (non-verbal) to communicate</p> <p><b>Performance Standard B.EL.2a</b> Uses vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Form-Syntax)</p> <p><b>Performance Standard B.EL.2b</b> Uses vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Content-Semantics)</p> <p><b>Performance Standard B.EL.2c</b> Uses vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Function-Pragmatics)</p>	<p><b>Performance Standard B.EL.2a</b> Uses vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Form-Syntax: rule system for combining words, phrases, and sentences, includes parts of speech, word order, and sentence structure)</p> <p><b>Performance Standard B.EL.2b</b> Uses vocalizations and spoken language to communicate (Language Form-Semantics: rule system for establishing meaning of words, individually and in combination)</p> <p><b>Performance Standard C.EL.4</b> Uses writing to represent thoughts or ideas</p>

### Portrait of a Literate Student

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/cal/pdf/portrait-literatestudent.pdf>

1. Demonstrate independence.
2. Build strong content and knowledge.
3. Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.
4. Comprehend as well as critique.
5. Value evidence.
6. Use technology and digital media strategically and capably.
7. Come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

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