DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 465 419 PS 030 198

TITLE	A Guide for Parents and Families about What Your 6th Grader Should Be Learning in School This Year. Don't Fail Your Children.
INSTITUTION	South Carolina State Education Oversight Committee, Columbia.; South Carolina State Dept. of Education, Columbia.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	8p.; For related documents in the "Don't Fail Your Children" series, see PS 030 192-204.
AVAILABLE FROM	South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 1105 Pendleton Street, Suite 227, Blatt Building, Columbia, SC 29201. Tel: 803-734-6148. For full text: http://www.state.sc.us/eoc.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary School Curriculum; English; *Grade 6; Intermediate Grades; Language Arts; Mathematics; Middle Schools; *Outcomes of Education; Parent Materials; Resource Materials; Sciences; Social Studies; State Curriculum Guides; *State Standards; World Wide Web
IDENTIFIERS	*Curriculum Standards; *South Carolina

ABSTRACT

This guide shares information about the South Carolina Curriculum Standards with parents. The standards outline state requirements for children's learning, and what students across the state should be able to do in certain subjects. The guide lists seven key reasons for parents to be aware of the new curriculum standards, and then presents a condensed version of the standards for sixth grade in mathematics (numbers and operation, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis and probability), English/language arts (reading/literature, listening, speaking, writing, research), science (inquiry and process skills, life science, earth science, physical science), and social studies (history: time, continuity, and change; government/political science: power, authority, and governance; geography: people, places, and environments; economics: production, distribution, and consumption). Listed after the standards for each subject area are sample assessment questions for parents to complete with their children, selected book titles for additional reading, and Web site addresses for extended learning. (EV)

A Guide for Parents and Families about What Your 6th Grader Should Be Learning in School This Year. Don't Fail Your Children.

South Carolina Department of Education,
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee

Fall 2001

DON'T FAIL YOUR CHILDREN

A Guide for Parents and Families About What Your 6th Grader Should Be Learning in School This Year

It's no longer a secret...

This guide shares important information about the South Carolina Curriculum Standards. These standards outline state requirements for your child's learning program and what students across the state should be able to do in certain subjects.

A good educational system provides many tools that help children learn. Curriculum standards are useful for making sure:

- teachers know what is to be taught;
- children know what is to be learned; and
- parents and the public can determine how well the standards are being learned at each grade level.

The student standards that follow are a condensed version of the South Carolina Curriculum Standards for Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies for **6th Grade**. They are provided to help you become familiar with what your child is expected to do at the end of **6th Grade** so that you can reinforce and support what your child is learning at school. Listed after the standards for each subject area are sample assessment questions for you to complete with your child, selected book titles for additional reading and website addresses for extended learning. This version does not include every standard taught in **6th Grade**. If you are interested in the complete South Carolina Curriculum Standards, check with your child's teacher.

Before moving on to the next grade, students in grades 3 to 8 will be expected to score at or above grade level on state-developed tests – Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) – that test student knowledge of the South Carolina Curriculum Standards.

South Carolina Curriculum Standards.

Here are seven key reasons parents should be in the **know** about the new curriculum standards:

1. Standards set clear, high expectations for student achievement. Standards tell what students need to do in order to progress through school on grade level.
2. Standards guide efforts to measure student achievement. Results of tests (PACT) on grade-level curriculum standards show if students have learned and teachers have taught for mastery.
3. Standards promote educational equity for all. Instruction in every school in the state will be based on the same curriculum standards.
4. Standards help parents to know if their child is being taught the same subject content as children across the nation. South Carolina Curriculum Standards have been matched and compared with standards of other states to make sure that they are challenging.
5. Standards help parents to know more about the academic progress of their child and provide assistance at home in areas where the children need help. Parents no longer have to guess the type of help their children need to do better in school. Standards give parents more specific information for helping their children at home.
6. Standards help parents to participate more actively in parent/teacher conferences. Knowledge of the curriculum standards helps parents understand more about what their children are learning and what they can do at each grade level. Parents are able to have conversations with teachers about student progress in specific areas and understand more completely the progress of their children.
7. Standards help parents to understand that what their children learn in school one year ties into what they will learn in the next year and in future years. Parents are able to see how their child's knowledge is growing from one year to the next.

MATHEMATICS

Students will be able to:

Numbers and Operation

- Show how fractions, decimals and percents are related.
- Use pictures, diagrams and numbers to develop an algorithm (method) for solving problems with fractions and decimals.
- Use pictures, diagrams and numbers to examine several methods of solving fraction and decimal problems in order to choose the best method.
- Add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions and decimals to solve real-world problems.

Algebra

- Describe and extend a wide variety of patterns.
- Write rules (equations and inequalities) that represent relationships determined by patterns.
- Use order of operations to compute the answer to numerical expressions.

Geometry

- Change a geometric figure's position and describe its new location in the coordinate system.
- Given the top, front and side views of a three-dimensional figure; make a model using cubes.

Measurement

- Estimate and then determine length, weight/mass, area and volume/capacity, using standard and nonstandard units of measure.
- Develop and use the formulas for the area of triangles and parallelograms.

Data Analysis and Probability

- Collect, organize, discuss, interpret, analyze and display data using tables and graphs.
- Determine and interpret the likelihood (probability) of an event.

Sample PACT Question

Read the following two statements. Then mark whether the statements are true or false, and give an example to support your choice. [2]

Statement 1: All numbers divisible by 4 are also divisible by 8.

Statement 2: All numbers divisible by 8 are also divisible by 4.

Statement 1 is TRUE / FALSE.

Example:_____

_____

Statement 2 is TRUE / FALSE.

Example:_____

_____

Activities:

Have your child:

- Use 100 pennies to discuss the relationship among decimals, fractions and percents.
- Record features of vehicles (such as red Jeep, yellow convertible, black truck). Create a table or graph to represent the collected data. Discuss why a table or a graph would be the best way to represent the data collected.
- Double or halve a recipe.
- Estimate large groups of objects such as the number of bricks in a building and determine a method to check the reasonableness of the estimate.
- Help balance a checkbook.
- Estimate and then compute the amount of carpet needed if you were to re-carpet a room in your home.
- Talk with your child's teacher about other activities that would support the mathematical skills and concepts he or she will be learning this year.

Books:

- *Algebra To Go* (published by Great Source Education Group; 1-800-289-4490).
- *Geometry To Go* (published by Great Source Education Group; 1-800-289-4490).
- *Math On Call: A Mathematics Handbook* (published by Great Source Education Group; 1-800-289-4490).
- *Math To Know: A Mathematics Handbook* (published by Great Source Education Group; 1-800-289-4490).

Websites:

- www.myscschools.com – Web site where parents can view all the curriculum standards
- www.illuminations.nctm.org – Click on "I-Math Investigations" for interactive learning.
- www.figurethis.org – This site has fun and engaging mathematics questions for children.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

Students will be able to:

Reading/Literature

- Figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words by using knowledge of word parts, word origins, phonetic rules and by using dictionaries and other word reference sources.
- Use clues in the meaning of a sentence to figure out unknown words.
- Make predictions and read further to see if they are correct.
- Know the difference between the main idea and details in a selection.
- Tell how a piece of literature fits into history and a culture.
- Connect literature read to personal experiences.
- Draw conclusions from information read and give reasons for the conclusions.
- Tell how information on a topic is alike and different in different pieces of literature.
- Read a variety of books and selections (realistic, fantasy, historical, biographies, etc.).
- Describe how the author creates the characters (people) and plot (what happens) of a story to make it interesting.
- Recognize plot, setting, characters, theme and author's purpose in a variety of literature read and analyze a variety of poetry.
- Select material and read independently for extended periods of time.

Listening

- Clarify, compare and contrast points of view from listening to oral presentations.
- Know the difference between fact and opinion in what is heard.
- Summarize main points after listening to a selection.
- Listen and follow oral directions that have several steps.
- Collect information through surveys and interviews.

Speaking

- Work effectively with group members.
- Use good speaking skills and develop a sense of what is appropriate for different audiences and purposes.
- Express opinions using evidence to support them when presenting material.
- Organize information and plan oral presentations in all subject areas.
- Prepare and present oral presentations, debates, panel discussions, demonstrations and multimedia presentations.

Writing

- Write to tell, describe, explain and persuade.
- Plan and organize ideas and information, write a rough draft and rewrite for clarity.
- Edit (correct) final copy for errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization and spelling.
- Write and publish a variety of stories, poems, plays and research projects.
- Use writing as a tool to help him/her learn in all subject areas.
- Write for different audiences and purposes.
- Write for extended periods of time.

Research

- Select the best sources for locating information needed for specific purposes (atlas, dictionary, encyclopedia, readers' guide, etc.).
- Decide whether or not the information is useful and if it is, where it fits into the research.
- Put information in his/her own words.
- Combine and organize information from various sources.

Sample PACT Question

Skateboards in the Streets

A local newspaper printed these two letters to the editor on the subject of skateboarding. Read the letters and answer the question which follows.

Letter 1

Dear Editor:

At its meeting next week, the town council will take up the subject of skateboards in the streets. I urge everybody to attend this meeting. The council must be made to realize the hazards of skateboarding. For too long, innocent citizens have been menaced on our streets by skateboarders. They whip around corners, race down sidewalks, scatter children and elderly people, and generally leave terror in their wake. It is time for us to stand up for our rights. We must take back the streets and sidewalks in our town.

The young people complain they have nothing else to do but skateboard. I wish I had been that lucky when I was young. When I was growing up, we didn't have time to ride around on skateboards. There were more important things to do. For example, I worked all day on my parents' farm when I wasn't in school.

The town council will discuss the issue this Friday at 6:00 p.m. Concerned citizens, please be there to make our streets safe again.

Nell Pérez

Letter 2

Dear Editor:

I am 12 years old and a sixth grader at Bowie Middle School. I study hard and get good grades in everything but music, and on the weekends I help my parents with their landscaping business. I don't get into fights or steal things. I have never committed any kind of crime. But some people think I am a delinquent because I am a skateboarder.

In other towns, there are many kids who join gangs and cause trouble. We don't have much of a crime problem in this town. But instead of being happy about that fact, the town council wants to turn skateboarding into a crime!

Skateboarding is a lot of fun and good exercise. Most of the time my friends and I skateboard in the empty parking lot of the supermarket that went out of business last year. But the police have told us to leave; they said it was private property. Where else can we go skateboarding?

If the town would work with the skateboarders instead of against us, I think we could find a solution to the problem. Maybe the town could let us use the middle school parking lot after school. I urge skateboarders and their parents to attend the town council meeting this Friday. Help us persuade the council to consider our side of this issue.

Dan Straneski

Adapted from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

(ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS CONTINUED ON BACK)

SCIENCE

Students will be able to:

Inquiry and Process Skills

- Make observations of objects and events, distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative observations.
- Arrange data in sequential order and use scientific and dichotomous keys for classification.
- Select and use appropriate tools, units of measurement and technology to collect data for an investigation.
- Make inferences and predictions based on prior knowledge and observable patterns, and discriminate among observations, inferences and predictions.
- Design and conduct scientific investigations, identifying the variables (independent, dependent and controlled), and collect, record, organize, analyze and interpret the data.
- Identify and implement the four stages of problem solving: identify the problem; design a solution or product; implement the design; and evaluate to see if the design meets the needs and conditions of the identified problem.
- Investigate and describe factors that affect product design, risk versus benefit factors and constraints on technological designs.

Life Science

- Identify and explain the function of plant cell parts and compare plant and animal cells.
- Investigate the structure and function of fungi (mushrooms, yeasts and molds), vascular and nonvascular plants, flowering and non-flowering plants, plant reproduction and deciduous and coniferous trees.
- Investigate and describe fungi and plant behavior in their environment.
- Describe how green plants absorb and use energy from the sun (photosynthesis), the process of transpiration and the importance of green plants in an ecosystem.
- Compare and contrast the major characteristics of land biomes and how plants adapt to survive and reproduce in different biomes.
- Investigate the human skeletal and muscular systems identifying major parts, functions and diseases.

Earth Science

- Investigate the water cycle and explain the formation and classification of clouds and related weather conditions.
- Identify and describe the composition of the Earth's atmosphere, the characteristics of the different layers of the atmosphere and the effect of air pressure at different elevations.
- Investigate water as a solvent explaining the formation of acid rain, weathering of the Earth's surface, and how minerals and salts accumulate in lakes and oceans.
- Identify global wind patterns and oceanic currents, and their influence on local weather.
- Describe the influence of technology in providing information about local and worldwide weather patterns and conditions.

Physical Science

- Investigate the properties of sinking and floating, and the relationship between the object's volume and the densities of substances.
- Investigate and classify characteristic properties of matter (density, boiling point, pH and solubility) and define the three states of matter (and plasma as the fourth state).
- Investigate and distinguish among elements, compounds and mixtures.
- Use the periodic table to identify elements, metals and non-metals.
- Investigate simple machines to analyze forces and distances.
- Investigate sources of heat, light, sound, electrical and chemical energy and mechanical motion, and identify them as forms of energy.

Sample PACT Question

The new moon is in the western sky during the early evening. Two weeks later the full moon is in the eastern sky during the early evening. Which inference is best supported by these observations?

A. The moon revolves around the Earth.
B. The Earth revolves around the moon.
C. The Earth rotates on its axis.
D. The moon rotates on its axis.
E. The same side of the moon always faces the Earth.

Answer A. The moon revolves around the Earth.

Activities:

Have your child:

- Grow mold on certain foods that are enclosed in a plastic bag such as bread and fruits. Observe the structure of the mold and changes that occur. Conduct Internet research or visit the local library and research how mold is used in certain medications.
- Read the labels of common household items. Identify the different elements and compounds.
- Simulate the effects of acid rain on metal structures. Place a paper towel in the bottom of a small plastic container. Place a penny, nickel, dime and a quarter on the paper towel. Cover the coins with vinegar. Observe the coins for several days. Record and discuss changes.

Books:

- Fritz, Jean. *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?*
- George, Jean C. *Who Really Killed Cock Robin?*
- Lampton, Christopher. *Bathtubs, Slides, Roller Coaster Rails.*
- Polacco, Patricia. *Boat Ride with Lillian Two Blossom.*
- Simon, Seymour. *Einstein Anderson Tells a Comet's Tale.*
- Smith, Roland. *Jaguar.*
- Southgate, Merrie. *No Place Like Periwinkle.*
- Weiner, Esther. *The Incredible Human Body.*
- Williams, Jay and Raymond Abrashkin. *Danny Dunn and the Universal Glue.*

Websites:

- Bill Nye.com – www.nyelabs.kcts.org/
- Learning Network Parent Channel – www.familyeducation.com
- National Geographic Kids Site – www.nationalgeographic.com/kids
- Physics for Kids – www.kapili.com/physics4kids/index.html
- Science Made Simple – www.sciencemadesimple.com
- South Carolina ETV's Resources for Teachers, Students and Parents – www.knowitall.org
- The Weather Channel – www.weather.com/

SOCIAL STUDIES

Early Cultures through 1500s

Students will be able to:

History: Time, Continuity and Change

- Trace the migration and emergence of agriculture of the early civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China.
- Describe the cultural contributions of the early civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China and the Americas.
- Describe life in ancient Greece and Rome, and their contributions to the modern world.
- Trace the origin and spread of the major world religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- Evaluate life in the European Middle Ages.
- Describe the major features of Japan's Classical Age, the Middle Empire in China and the Mongol Empire in medieval Russia.
- Summarize the contributions of Middle Eastern cultures and their effect upon the world.
- Trace the development of European nation states and the rise of monarchies.
- Identify the contributions of major African empires and their effect upon the world.
- Describe the contributions of the Italian Renaissance.
- Explain the impact of the Reformation and religious conflict on western Europe.

Government/Political Science: Power, Authority and Governance

- Summarize the purposes of government.
- Compare and contrast the governments and politics of the early civilizations.
- Identify and describe the emergence of various types of governments.

Geography: People, Places and Environments

- Make and use maps, globes, graphs, charts and models to study early civilizations.
- Describe physical characteristics of the early civilizations and their relationship to economic activities.
- Explain how early civilizations interacted with their environment to create regions.
- Describe the patterns of migration and how they affected the geography and resulted in a spread of religion, economics and governments.
- Describe how new technology affected early civilizations.

Economics: Production, Distribution and Consumption

- Explain the impact of scarcity and choice upon the distribution of goods and services.
- Compare and contrast the barter system and a monetary exchange.
- Illustrate how a work force can be organized to increase production.
- Describe the effect and change upon early civilizations caused by trade.

Sample PACT Questions

PACT questions are not available for distribution at this time.

Activities:

Have your child:

- Chart the similarities and differences of early civilizations in each of the four strands.
- Create a tour brochure of a place related to an early civilization.
- Create and keep a timeline of people and events from early civilizations.
- Identify items in the home which were used during or were invented by ancient civilizations.
- Label and keep a map of the locations of early civilizations.
- Make flashcards of important facts from early civilizations.
- Read the world section of the newspaper and discuss countries related to early civilizations.
- Visit museums when exhibits arrive about early civilizations.
- Watch programs on Public Television or History channels related to early civilizations.
- Write a newspaper article about an early civilization event from the perspective of someone living then.
- Write a poem about an important person of an early civilization.

Books:

- Caselli, Giovanni. *The Renaissance and the New World.*
- Corbishley, Mike. *What do we know about the Romans?*
- Gravett, Christopher. *World of the Medieval Knight.*
- Powell, Anton and Philip Steele. *The Greek News.*
- Series:
  The Ancient World.
  Cultural Atlas for Young People.
  Eyewitness Books.
  History of the World.
  The Kingdoms of Africa.

Websites:

- Ancient Egypt at British Museum – www.ancientegypt.co.uk
- Exploring Ancient World Cultures – eawc.evansville.edu
- Smithsonian National Museum and Natural History – www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices
- South Carolina Department of Education – www.myscschools.com
- The Knighthood, Chivalry and Tournament Resource Library – www.chronique.com

The word menaced in the first letter means
A. interested.
B. threatened.
C. neglected.
D. caught.

Answer B. threatened.

Activities:

- Encourage your child to keep a journal.
- Engage in written conversations with your child.
- Encourage your child to write letters or send e-mail to family and friends.
- Talk to your child. Answer questions and ask how and why questions.
- Tell stories to your child about your childhood and life experiences.
- Encourage your child to interview older relatives or neighbors.
- Have your child write or orally give directions to a younger sibling.
- Have your child present an oral argument to persuade you to do something.
- Reward your child with books or journals.
- Get your child a library card and regularly go to the library or bookstore.
- Have your child research a topic of interest to him/her using a variety of sources. Have him/her determine which information is most useful and relevant to the topic.
- When watching television or a video, discuss the conflict in the episode.
- Discuss the point of view of a character.
- Discuss how a problem in a show was solved.
- Read aloud to your child.
- Allow your child to read and write, JUST FOR FUN!

Books:

- Adler, C.S. *Always and Forever Friends.*
- Bawden, Nina. *Henry.*
- Bunting, Eve. *Our Sixth Grade Sugar Babies.*
- Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.*
- Hahn, Mary Downing. *Time For Andrew.*
- Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia.*
- Pitts, Paul. *Racing The Sun.*

Websites:

- Children's Literature Website – www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/bestbooks
- Georgia Department of Education – www.glc.k12.ga.us
- Learning Page.com – www.sitesforteachers.com
- Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site – www.carolhurst.com
- Salt Lake County Library – www.slco.lib.ut.us
- Surfing the Net with Kids – www.surfnetkids.com
- United States Department of Education – www.ed.gov.pubs/parents
- South Carolina Department of Education – www.myscschools.com
- National Association for the Education of Young Children – www.naeyc.org
- National Parent Teacher Association – www.pta.org
- National Parent Information Network – www.npin.org

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A collaborative project sponsored by: South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, Fall 2001

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

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EFF-089 (3/2000)

PS030198