

Parents: How You Can Help Your Child

Test-Taking Tips



Many parents feel that their children's peers may be having a greater impact on them than their own families. However, families *do* have an enormous impact on the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of children. One very important way to influence the future and life paths of your children is to demonstrate that you value education. When children observe that their families appreciate the importance of education, they often respond by thinking more seriously about their own goals and aspirations. There are many ways to promote the importance of education, both indirectly and directly, in your own home.

- ◆ Share your own educational experiences with your children.
- ◆ Read newspapers, books, or trade journals in front of your children so that they can witness what life-long learning looks like.
- ◆ Encourage your children to always do their personal best.
- ◆ Help your children set short-term and long-term goals. Discuss whether education is an important element in their ability to attain them.
- ◆ Try to volunteer in your children's classrooms when you can. This will allow you the opportunity to interact with them in their academic environment.
- ◆ Remind them that doing well in school will allow them more options and opportunities for their future. Lack of education may limit their opportunities.
- ◆ Depending on the ages of your children, either read to them frequently or read the same books that they are reading so that you can share and discuss your thoughts about them.
- ◆ Turn your children's piggy banks into college funds and deposit any extra change or monetary gifts they may receive. It will subtly remind your children that you have high aspirations for their achievement and that you expect them to succeed.



Standardized Tests

A standardized test is an objective test that is given and scored under uniform conditions. High-stakes testing is standardized testing that may be associated with educational decisions, such as whether your children may advance a grade, enter a school program, or receive a high school diploma. Such tests may also be associated with district or school funding. Because of the important consequences of standardized test results, it is critical that your children receive all the assistance and guidance they need to perform their best. This pamphlet is intended to provide you with information to help your children achieve to their greatest potential.



Do's and Don'ts

DO

- ◆ Make sure your children have eaten well on test days. Studies suggest that good nutrition is related to improved attention and concentration.
- ◆ Help your children by encouraging a good night's rest before exams. Children who are tired will have difficulty focusing on their work.
- ◆ Make the morning of test days pleasant. Stress will impair your children's ability to perform their best.
- ◆ Remind your children to dress comfortably, perhaps in layers, so that they are able to adjust to the temperature in the room.
- ◆ Ensure that your children make it to school on-time so that they do not miss any instructions and are allowed ample time to settle in and relax before the test begins.

DON'T

- ◆ Don't schedule dental or doctor appointments for testing days.
- ◆ Don't be too anxious about your children's test scores. Although it is important to let them know that the tests should be taken seriously, it is also important not to increase test-taking anxiety.
- ◆ Don't underestimate your influence on your children. Taking an interest in what they are doing at school and helping them prepare for tests, will certainly have a positive impact on them.

Test-Taking Strategies

Please read the following test-taking strategies with your children...

- ◆ Review the whole test before you begin to determine how many questions there are on each section. Then budget your time accordingly so that you have enough time on the questions that might require more time to complete.
- ◆ Listen closely to the teacher's instructions.
- ◆ Read any written instructions very carefully. Never assume that you know what they say.
- ◆ Answer every question. Unless there is a penalty for wrong answers, it can't hurt to guess.
- ◆ Identify key words and underline them. This will help you focus on the most important aspects of the question.
- ◆ Rephrase difficult questions. It may help you to understand a question if you rewrite it in your own words, but be careful not to change the meaning of the question.
- ◆ Use all of the time that you are given. If you finish early, use that time to go over your answers.
- ◆ Read each question carefully. Many wrong responses occur because students fail to read the entire question. Often, wrong responses are written with that in mind.
- ◆ Try to come up with the answer on your own before reading the possible answers. Then check to see if your response is among the possible answers.
- ◆ Eliminate any answers that you know are wrong.
- ◆ Read all choices before choosing your final answer.
- ◆ Don't change your initial answer unless you have a very good reason. Studies suggest that most of the time, your first choice is correct.
- ◆ Don't get stuck on one question. Skip the question, mark it with an "X," and come back to it later. Be sure to leave that line un-bubbled on your answer sheet until you come back to it.
- ◆ Use a ruler or folded piece of colored paper to guide you as you bubble in your responses. Students often miss questions because they did not bubble their response on the correct line.
- ◆ Keep a positive attitude throughout the whole test, and try to stay calm. If you start to feel nervous, take a few deep breaths to relax.



Websites / References

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Think of testing as an opportunity to *show what you know*.