

AZ Merit testing - April 2021

Most of you know, that April brings the buzz word “testing” which can cause students to have anxiety.



Next Parent Workshop on TOOLBOX - Tools to help children manage their emotions:
April 22, 2021 available on Counselor's Corner link on the school's website.

Tools: Garbage Can Tool; Taking Time Tool; & Apology and ForgivenessTool.



Tips for how to help your child to handle taking tests to lower their stress level and anxiety. Go to next 3 pages for suggestions for parents and guardians.

How to prepare for testing and some basic strategies to reinforce at home.

Prepare for Standardized Tests

Well before the test:

- Find out when the tests will be given. Plan ahead to avoid scheduling appointments, extra activities or trips during those times.
- Ask her teacher for samples or find some at your local library if your child has never taken a standardized test before. Seeing a few tests in advance will make the real thing less intimidating.
- Encourage your child to read. Reading builds comprehension skills as well as vocabulary, and both will help her do well on any standardized test.

Just before the test:

- Make sure your child follows the same routine she would adhere to before any important test—getting a good night's sleep, eating a nutritious breakfast, etc.
- Share a message of confidence. Tell your child that the test is important and you know she will work hard and do her very best.
- Remind her to check her answers carefully to be sure she has marked the space on the answer sheet that corresponds to the number of the question.



Know the General Strategies Your Child Can Use During Any Test

While there are specific ways to approach specific kinds of tests (standardized tests, true-false tests and essay tests, for example) there are some general strategies that will help your child do her best on any test. Make sure your child knows them and is able to use them. They include:

- **Reading the instructions carefully.** Then she should read them again to make sure she knows exactly what she is supposed to do.
- **Looking for direction words that tell her what she is supposed to do.** Direction words are words like *compare*, *list*, *describe*, *define* and *summarize*.
- **Reading through all the questions quickly before she starts.** She should think about how much time she has and decide how much time she can spend on each question.
 - **Reading each question carefully as she begins the test.** She should understand exactly what the statement or question says. Then she should determine what she thinks the answer is before she reads any choices provided.
 - **Skipping a question if she isn't sure of the answer.** She should answer all the questions she knows first. Then she can come back to the others.
 - **Allowing time to go back and check her answers.** Do they make sense? Are sentences complete? Did she leave out any key words, such as *not*, that might change her intended meaning?



How to help your child with test anxiety and learn to stay calm.

How to Help Children Do Their Best on Tests

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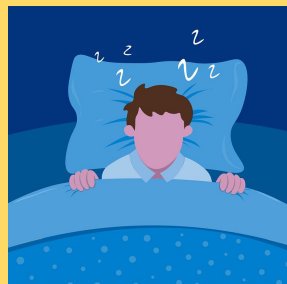
Overcoming Test Anxiety

It's normal to get a little nervous before a big test, but many children suffer from excessive test anxiety. They worry so much about taking the test that their performance suffers. While it may be helpful to simply *tell* your child to relax or stop worrying, there are other things you can *do* to help him diffuse those pre-test jitters. For example:

- **Make sure your child spreads study time out** over time. True learning requires time to study, review and think about the content. And knowing the material is the best way to reduce anxiety and stress.
- **Discourage your child from cramming** the night before a test. Cramming does little but increase the level of anxiety, which can interfere with clear thinking. The most important things your child can do the day before a test are to review and then get a good night's sleep.
- **Show your child how to relax.** Some children find it helpful to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths before starting a test. Others like to visualize a relaxing place, such as a peaceful river. Encourage your child to keep a positive outlook. Have him envision himself doing well on the test.
- **Remind your child that test scores aren't everything.** There are other things that are important, too—things such as having a good attendance record, a good attitude and completing homework assignments, for example. Test scores are just one part of the total grade.
- **Help your child keep things in perspective.** Make sure he knows that, while you want him to *do* his best, he doesn't have to *be* the best. Assure him that your love for him is not dependent on his test grades.



**Eat healthy meals
or snacks.**



**Get a good
night sleep.**

**Practice taking
deep breaths.**



Share Tips for Different Types of Tests

Here are some strategies that will help your child do his best on several specific kinds of tests. Review them with him as he prepares for each new test.

True-False Tests

During the test:

- Have your child look for key words such as *always* or *never*—they often indicate that the statement is false. Words such as *often*, *usually* or *sometimes* can indicate that an answer is true.
- Tell your child to stick with his first choice for an answer. Studies have shown that the first answer that comes to mind is generally the correct one, so he should think carefully before changing an answer.
- Avoid getting caught up worrying about patterns. If he's pretty sure that the first five answers are true, he shouldn't second-guess himself because he thinks there are too many *True* answers in a row.
- If he isn't sure of the answer, it might be better to guess. After all, he has a 50 percent chance that his guess will be correct!



Multiple-Choice Tests

During the test:

- Have your child read all the answers before he makes his choice. He may think the first option is correct but there may be another one that is even better.
- Have him eliminate the obviously incorrect answers. Then he can evaluate the remaining choices to determine which is the best fit.
- Be sure he checks the wording of the question carefully for qualifying statements such as "which of the following are *not*"

Essay Tests

Essay tests are designed to do more than make sure your child knows the facts. Essay tests measure not only how well your child understands the material, but also how well he can make connections to what he already knows. Making charts and graphs can be good ways to prepare for an essay test.

During the test:

- Have your child take a few minutes to organize his thoughts before he begins to write. He can make a rough outline on a piece of scrap paper. Or he can write down the words or ideas that come to mind.
- Have him write neatly. Even the best response won't be worth much if it is illegible.
- Encourage him to pay attention to spelling and grammar.
- Have him begin his answer by restating the question, just as it appears on the test. It can help to get him started and keep him focused.



Don't forget to help your child develop good study habits all year long. Testing is not so scary when your child has a daily routine established throughout the school year. Below are some helpful hints on how to develop a routine at home and stay involved with your child's education and academic success.

On a Daily Basis

In addition to these strategies, there are a number of ways that you can maximize your child's learning capabilities throughout the school year, which can lead to confident test-taking. Some of these strategies include:

- Assisting your child with homework and ensuring that your child is completing all homework assignments
- Helping her to develop good study habits, thinking skills, and a positive attitude towards education from an early age
- Ensuring that your child has good attendance at school
- Staying in communication with your child's teacher
- Encouraging your child to read as much as possible, and to increase her vocabulary - even reading magazines, newspapers, and comic books regularly will help improve her reading skills
- Looking for educational games and programs that engage your child
- Helping your child learn how to follow directions carefully (Dietel, 2008; IRA (2002); Narang, 2008).

Finally, remember that standardized tests and grading systems are not perfect; each format has its own limitations. As you help your child do her best on the tests she takes and in all of her schoolwork, also remind her that testing is just one part of her education. With your support and involvement, she will be well on her way to her own bright future.