

Testing Tips for Parents

By: Nicole Tufo – School Counselor

Do you know what the top 5 stressors are for children?

Top 6 Stressors for Children

1. Divorce or Separation from parents
2. Illness or death in family
- 3. Taking a test**
4. Moving to a new town
5. Going to a new school

What causes Test Anxiety in children?

1. Lack of preparation
2. Worrying about:
 - Performance on tests
 - How friends and other students are doing
 - Completing a test in a specific amount of time
 - The negative consequences of failure

Signs of Test Anxiety

Physical: Perspiration, sweaty palms, headache, upset stomach, rapid heartbeat, tense muscles, nausea

Behavioral: not sleeping or eating, getting easily annoyed, being avoidant

Cognitive: difficulty concentrating, worrying, negative thinking

Effects of Test Anxiety

1. Nervousness: Having difficulty reading and understanding questions, having difficulty organizing thoughts, having difficulty remembering concepts, doing poorly even though the child knows the material
2. Mental Blocking: Forgetting problem solving strategies, going blank on questions then remembering how to get the correct answer as soon as the exam is over, etc.

What can you do to help?

1. One Month Before the Test

Help your child become aware when he or she is experiencing test anxiety.

When the child can identify that he or she is having test anxiety, help your child to learn ways of relaxing.

Help your child learn how to take deep breaths.

Other techniques are listening to soft music or visualization.

Other activities that lower stress are exercise, engaging in hobbies, art, spending time with friends or family.

Communicating with your child: talk to them about how they are feeling, make time

for them, play games together.
Always encourage your child to try their best.

2. The Night Before the Test

1. Make sure your child goes to bed early – research shows that being well rested helps students perform better
2. Keep your routine as normal as possible

3. The Morning of the Test

1. Wake up early enough to avoid rushing. Be sure to have your child at school on time.
2. Have your child eat a good breakfast – research shows that students perform better on test when they eat breakfast
3. Have your child dress comfortably and make sure they have a jacket or sweater with them
4. Double check that you child has all the necessary supplies such as a #2 pencil and an eraser

4. After the Test

1. Talk to your child about his or her feelings on the test
2. Explain that their performance on the test is not a condition for you to love them. You love your child just for the person he or she is.