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Standardized Test Preparation

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How Can I Help My Children Prepare for a Standardized Test?

Standardized testing can be stressful for both students and parents. Being prepared for the test can help to ease some of the stress and anxiety. Here are some tips you can use to help your children prepare for a standardized test:



- **Keep up with schoolwork throughout the year** – Most standardized tests cover information that is taught all through the year in the basic curriculum areas (for example, math, reading, and science). Check with your children’s teachers throughout the year to make sure they are learning the material and also to find out what activities you can do at home to enhance their learning.



- **Find out if your children are eligible to receive testing accommodations** – Many students who have been identified as having a disability and who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 plan are eligible to receive testing accommodations. Accommodations are given to students with disabilities in order to allow them to demonstrate what they have learned by removing barriers caused by their disabilities. Accommodations

can include changes to the way a test is given (e.g., having the questions read aloud), the way the student responds (e.g., speaking the answers and having an adult transcribe, or write, them down), or the environment in which the student takes the test. Talk to your children’s teachers to find out if they are receiving accommodations in the classroom that they might be able to use on a standardized test.



- **Familiarize your children with the test format** – Many standardized tests have sample questions or practice tests that are available for students to review prior to testing. Taking the practice tests can help your children become familiar with

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the test format, which can relieve some of their anxiety when faced with taking the actual test. Contact your school or the Department of Education in your state to find out if sample tests are available for the standardized test(s) your children will be taking.



- **Encourage your children to practice test-taking strategies while working on their homework** – While working on their homework, children can practice skills for reading and understanding directions, skimming through questions and answering the easiest ones first, narrowing down their choices on multiple-choice questions, and skipping over difficult questions and returning to them at the end. Also, since many standardized tests are timed, practice setting a time limit for homework assignments so that your children can sharpen their time-management skills.



- **Make sure your children are physically ready** – Help ease your children's stress in the days leading up to a test by engaging in activities such as going on bike rides, playing games, or listening to music. In order to do their best work during every school day and especially on test days, children should be well-rested and should eat a healthy breakfast before school. Being tired and hungry makes it difficult for children to focus and do their best.



- **Review expectations for the test** – Don't just focus on the score. Instead, encourage your children to take the test seriously and give it their best effort. Let your children know that they should listen carefully to all test directions and if any of the directions are unclear, they should ask questions.



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