

# Pointers For Parents

## Academic Testing: A Life Lesson

(NAPSA)—Students of all ages take a variety of tests throughout the school year, and to ensure students are on the right track, experts agree, it is more important than ever for parents to work with teachers and extended family members to prepare their youngsters from both an academic and emotional perspective.

Consider these tips from Champions, a nationwide provider of before- and after-school programs, to help prepare your child for testing success.

### Months Before Testing:

- Start by sharing with your child that, as adults, we are also expected to learn new information, processes and skills and that we have to be able to demonstrate and are evaluated on what we have learned. Sharing your personal experiences might help reduce some of the pressure that many children feel. They'll know they're not alone.

- Establish regular study routines. Research shows that students who study in an environment that is similar to the actual testing environment (lighting, seating, time bound and so on) perform better on tests.

- Talk to your child's teachers about the test experience—what will be tested, the format of the test (multiple choice, essay)—to help better understand how to work with your child on similar homework assignments. Help make the connection to the testing experience.

- Monitor your child's progress throughout the year to understand what your child needs in the way of additional support or practice.



**Parents can encourage their children at testing time in many ways.**

### Days Prior to the Test:

- Ensure that your child eats a healthy breakfast and gets enough sleep to perform well.

- Avoid schedule disruptions the week of the test such as doctor/dentist appointments, etc.

- Provide tools needed for the test. It's amazing what a morale booster having new pencils and erasers can provide. Lay everything out the night prior.

- Dress for success. Having something that children feel good about wearing helps to provide another layer of security and a tangible component to help them feel prepared.

- Encourage your child to ask questions to get clarity on test directions.

- Practice easy stress management and relaxation techniques: deep breathing when their chest feels tight; "Squeeze Lemons" (tighten fists up and release); "Elephant Stomp" (envision that you are lying in a jungle and an

elephant steps on your stomach; tense up to support his weight and release when he steps off).

- Don't cause additional stress.

If you find yourself anxious, distance yourself from those emotions to help alleviate any stress your child might be feeling.

### After the Test:

- Debrief with your child about the test experience (i.e., what went well, what they think they could do next time, etc.) to help them prepare for future test experiences.

- Once results are in, go over what the scores are and what they mean.

- Relate lessons learned in a testing experience to homework and school assignments to help "connect the dots" on how regular school-day learning relates to test success.

- Celebrate your children's achievements regardless of their scores.

"Just as children were taught to read, ride a bike or navigate a computer, there are simple activities to perform, conversations to have and steps to take that can assist students in becoming more comfortable and confident when testing time rolls around," says Janeal Roberts, vice president of Education for Champions programs.

A good thing is for children and parents to realize that this is one of many important phases of their life that will challenge them. Working together to develop a supportive environment and proactive plan will most always bring a positive result.

For more information, visit [www.discoverchampions.com](http://www.discoverchampions.com).