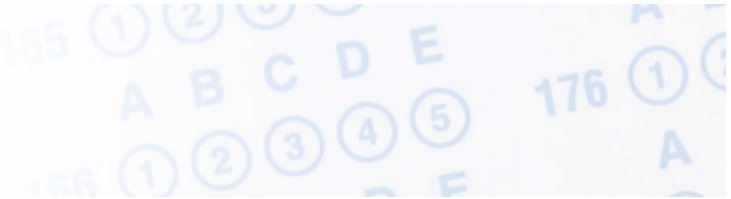


STAAR



Help Your Child Get Ready for Standardized Testing

It's STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) testing season, and for many students, the process brings significant worry and anxiety. Testing in middle and high school can be especially stressful when students begin taking STAAR end-of-course exams, which require passing grades as a requirement for high school graduation. Parents - you can give your kids some comfort, make testing a little easier, and help them do their absolute best by following the guidelines below.

Have conversations about the test.

Make sure to discuss the test openly and in a positive way with your child, and encourage your child to do the best work possible. However, don't pressure them. Your child should be relaxed about taking the test, not stressed out. Ask your child how they are preparing for the test, and how you can help them to prepare. Reassure them by telling them that you are proud of their effort.

Ask your kids if they experience test-taking anxiety, and tell them that it's normal.

Remind your child to stay positive during the test and to think positive thoughts like "I can do this!" Tell your child if he or she is feeling stressed or freezes up, to take a few deep breaths or to imagine a peaceful place like the beach or park. If you are anxious about your child's test, don't let them know it. Help your child learn how to relax.

Have realistic expectations about your child's performance while encouraging their best efforts.

Emphasize that the test is only one measure of academic performance, and does not determine a person's intelligence or worth. Tell your child that you will love them just the same, no matter how they do on their test, but that it is important to do their best.

Encourage your child to study, and make sure they have a well-lit and quiet area to do so.

Regular study time can help your child prepare for the test and develop a routine to feel comfortable on test-taking day.

Go over the following test-taking tips with your child:

- Follow all written/verbal instructions carefully.
- Read each question carefully.
- Identify key words and underline and highlight them.
- Rephrase difficult questions - rewrite it in words that are easier for you to understand.
- Eliminate answers you know are wrong. If you have to guess, the process of elimination increases your chances of guessing correctly.
- Don't change your first answer unless you are pretty sure it was wrong. Most studies show that the first answer is usually correct.
- Don't get stuck on one question. Skip it and come back to it later.
- Answer every question, even if you have to guess.
- Make sure all your answers have been transferred from your test booklet to your answer sheet correctly.
- Use all your time. If you have extra time, go over your answers.
- If you feel nervous, take a few moments to relax. Take some deep breaths and clear your mind.

On the day of the test, make sure your child is rested, eats a good breakfast, and arrives to school on time.

Know testing dates, and be sure to not schedule any sort of appointment for those days. The night before, make sure that your child gets to bed early enough and gets a good night sleep. Adequate rest does make a difference! If your child is a restless sleeper, take them to do something active earlier in the day. Nutrition also influences how well children do on a test -make sure your child gets a good meal, but not too heavy of a meal. Send them off to school wearing comfortable clothing for long test-taking periods.

Keep an eye out for test results and meet with your child's teacher to determine areas where your child can improve.

Keep an eye out for your child's test results and teach your child to learn from their mistakes. Meet with your child's teacher to determine what areas your child need to improve in, and what sort of activities you can do at home to help them do better next time.