

Preparing Your Child for Standardized Tests

Standardized tests currently play a major role in The United States public schools. Your child may take one or more standardized tests during the school year that are mandated by the state or federal government. Your child's teacher will likely spend class time on test preparation throughout the year. The goal of these tests is to measure student progress toward Minnesota's academic standards. As a parent, there are a number of ways that you can support your child before and after taking a standardized test. It is also very important for you to support your child's learning habits on a daily basis in order for your child to achieve desired annual progress.

Before the test

Your child's school and/or teacher will send information home about testing schedules and class preparation plans. Information that you should be made aware of:

- Test dates and times
- What is the test and what will it measure?
- How will the test results affect your child, school, or both?

Help your child in areas that are difficult for him or her

If your child has struggled with a particular area or subject in the past, you may be able to help him/her overcome some of that difficulty by providing some extra practice. Many workbooks target test preparation by offering practice exercises and questions like the ones students will see on the test. Intentionally focus your practice on your child's weaknesses rather than strengths so that they are getting the extra practice needed.

Trouble taking tests

If your child has trouble taking tests, try practicing test questions and studying new words. Your child's school or the library may have some samples to use. Keep the sessions short, and set small, manageable goals so that the extra practice boosts your child's confidence.

Discuss your concerns with the teacher and/or school administrator

If you believe that your child's difficulty with standardized tests may be the symptom of a problem such as a language or learning difficulty, speak with your child's teacher to learn if your child qualifies for any assessment accommodations.

Test day

Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and eats a healthy breakfast. Many teachers report that students who don't do well on tests haven't gotten enough sleep, and haven't eaten breakfast on the morning of the test. Doing both of these things will ensure that your child is working at full capacity.

Make sure your child is prepared

The school will supply the tools your child needs for the test, such as pencils, an eraser, paper, and a calculator. You may want to provide your child with a snack or water bottle on the days of testing, check with your child's teacher about what is permitted during the test.

Remain positive

Give positive encouragement and remind your child you are proud of the hard work they have done. Also, staying calm will help your child stay calm. If he/she gets nervous about the test or is likely to experience anxiety during the test, help him/her practice some relaxation techniques that he/she can try once she's taking the test.