Report to PARENTS

HELPING YOUR CHILD

# Test Preparation

*Whether you've been out of school for five years or 15, the thought of taking a test probably still makes your heart race. Now imagine what its like for your child. As a parent, you can help.*

## THE PHYSICAL

**Get them fed.** The more nutritiously your children eat, the better they will do in school. Properly fueled and with stable blood sugar levels, their concentration is enhanced. Always give them a healthy breakfast while cutting back on high-sugar cereals, pastries, and undiluted juices (which can have the same sugar content as sodas.) Most kids are ravenous after school, so before they settle down to study, provide a healthful, non-junk food snack to carry them through to dinner.

**Get them moving.** Exams cause stress, but, sports, exercise, and dancing can relieve it. Physical activity that gets students completely away from academics for a few hours each day can actually help them perform better on tests.

**Get them breathing.** Teach your kids a simple breathing exercise that you'll do with them once or twice a day and in times of stress (as in right before a test): Take a deep breath, hold to the count of three, then exhale slowly through the nose to the count of 10.

**Get them to bed on time.** Elementary and middle school children need up to 10 hours of sleep each night to do their best in school. They also need to curtail the excitement from video games, television, movies, and texting for at least 30 minutes before sleep.

## THE MENTAL

**Practice their confidence.** Ask the teacher or principal if there are practice tests or worksheets your child can work on at home before the big day. These can help your children get used to how the questions are worded and how to properly fill in test sheet bubbles.

**Put piecework into action.** Pre-exam cramming does not work. In fact, four 15-minute periods of study are actually superior to one continuous hour when it comes to memory retention. Therefore, see to it that your child preps for tests in small bursts, in some small way, every day.

**Unplug already.** When it comes to distracting videos, television, telephones, or social media (basically anything with a screen or speakers that's not directly related to school work), study time is the time to turn the devices off.

## THE EMOTIONAL

**Offer super support.** As much as you value good exam grades, it's more important that kids understand that your love and respect for them is not dependent on their test scores.

**Review results together.** Once the graded exam comes back, sit with your child and review what went right, what didn't, and how to do better next time. This is not the time for you to lecture. Subtly prompted, your child should do most of the talking.

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