

# HOW PARENTS CAN HELP IMPROVE THEIR CHILD'S TEST PERFORMANCE

## General Information

- Many children already feel nervous before a test. Try not to do or say anything that will make your child feel any more nervous.
- Remind your child that the test is only a test. It does not measure how special or important your child is.
- Remind your child that your love does not depend on how well he or she scores on the test.
- Ask your child's teacher about the test. You may want to ask what the testing will be like. Will the testing take all day or part of the day? Will your child be able to ask questions if something does not make sense? The more you know, the more you can prepare your child.
- During the school year, show your child that you care about what is happening at school. Studies show that children with parents who take part in their learning do better in school.
- Praise your child. Remind your child that everything takes practice. Chances are your child didn't know how to ride a bike the first few times, either.

## The Night Before the Test

- Make sure your child doesn't go to bed angry or upset.
- Plan ahead to stay away from problems before the test. For example, it would help to avoid talking about a child's overuse of the phone or avoidance of chores. Your child could stay upset about the argument and not do as well on the test.
- Keep the rules of the house. Stopping normal discipline or upsetting the usual routine of the home may confuse your child. This may affect how well your child can perform the next day.
- Consider talking about the test to reassure and encourage your child. At the same time, don't dwell on the subject, as you may cause your child to worry unnecessarily.
- Let your child know that you know tests can be hard, but that taking them provides a chance to show how well he or she can do. Tell your child that the main purpose of the test is to help teachers find out how to best teach them.
- Be encouraging. If you say, "you'll probably blow this one," your child will expect failure.
- Consider playing an educational game like Scrabble or Twenty Questions to help a child get into the testing spirit.

### **The Morning of the Test**

- On the morning of the test, make sure your child wakes up in plenty of time. You don't want your child to feel rushed.
- Have your child eat a good breakfast – but not a heavy one. Studies show that students who have eaten a good breakfast do much better on tests. *Don't force a child to eat, though. If he or she is very nervous, too much food could cause illness.*
- Don't appear unconcerned about testing. While your child needn't be afraid of tests, he or she needs to understand the importance of testing.
- Be positive when you send your child to school. Let the child know that you understand that tests can be hard, but that they are not designed to "punish" him or her. Tests are very much for showing what your child needs to know as well as what he or she already knows.

### **After the Test**

- Reward your child for trying hard on the test. You might treat him or her to a special dinner, or allow an extra half hour of TV. Punishment for doing poorly will only hurt because the test itself was punishing enough if he or she had a hard time.
- Talk with your child about what was learned from the test. What would he or she do differently if the test could be taken over?
- Talk with your child about what can be done between now and the next time a test is given, such as trying harder with homework or listening more closely in class.
- When you get the test results for your child, don't compare his or her performance with that of your friend's or neighbor's children. Saying something like, "Why aren't you as smart as Billy next door?" can only hurt.
- When you receive a copy of your child's test scores from the school, please don't hesitate to discuss with the teacher any questions that you or your child have about testing. Test results can be hard for anyone to understand.
- Think about how you can help your child do better next time! Keep these "tips" handy for future use.