

Reducing Test Anxiety

Tips for Parents:

- Be informed. Know when your child is expected to take tests. Communicate importance without overreacting
- Ensure your child has studied the material and feels prepared. Some researchers have identified the root of test anxiety as poor preparation.
- Encourage problem-solving skills in general. Teach your child that they have increased control over their outcomes through hard work and preparation.
- If possible, support your child by helping him or her take a practice test under exam-like situations at home (e.g., FCAT strategies).
- If your child has taken a teacher-made test, review the results, find out why he or she made mistakes, and work on these skill areas.
- Emphasize the importance of trying his or her best rather than the test scores.
- Praise your child for effort rather than ability.
- Remind him/her to replace negative self-talk with positive messages. For example, replace “This is awful. I can’t do this” with “If I study hard, I can do my best.”
- Remember that too much pressure can increase test anxiety. There is a distinction between your child saying, “I must do well” and “I want to do well.”
- If appropriate, discuss worst-case scenarios.
- Make sure your child gets to bed on time and eats nutritious foods the night before and at breakfast. Avoid junk foods.
- Ensure your standards are rigorous but reasonable and realistic.
- Reassure your child that many students experience nervousness during tests and that you have confidence in them.