



STANDARDIZED TEST STRESS DOING WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR CHILD

Within a few short weeks, the time will come for all children to return to school for another academic year. Some of these students will be preparing for their first PSAT/SAT/ACT/HSA, and others may be retaking a test after receiving disappointing scores. Odds are, for any 14 year old child or older, standardized testing is something students will be scheduling, preparing for, thinking about, with one or both parents lecturing, discussing, or advising from time to time.

Standardized tests, especially "high stakes tests" needed for high school graduation in many states, have created so much stress and anxiety for our children. Although standardized tests are designed to assess information in an objective, consistent manner ---and that is why we can "prep" students for them--- standardized tests are **not** intelligence tests. These tests only reflect what a student can show *on a given day at a given time*, on specific information presented and graded in a specific manner.

To reduce the stress, we should teach our children that, despite their importance in determining a school placement or class rack, **these tests do not determine an individual's worth and value in the family or in the community**. We all know people who scored poorly on a standardized test yet became successful and productive members of society, or the opposite, those who scored perfectly on a standardized test, yet never accomplished much more than that perfect mark.

Much anxiety surrounding the test is a result of fear of the unknown. By identifying the cause of the stress caused by a test, families and teachers can collectively counteract the anxiety. Visualizing success on a test helps many children overcome their fears about a testing situation. For example, a student may worry about not knowing enough vocabulary for an upcoming college entrance exam. By asking them to describe what they would do in this situation, you can quickly determine a plan of action. For most children, this means devoting a portion of their time to preparing for the test; for others it is simply coming up with a set of behaviors to rely upon.

If a student "blanks out" during a test, it is usually helpful to have the child temporarily focus on something not associated with the test, such as focusing on the pattern in the carpet or counting the number of ceiling tiles, or laughing quietly at a silly joke they have rehearsed in their mind. By teaching children to "think about their thinking," not only will the anxiety dissipate, their brains will be ready for that higher order thinking!

See page 2 for 2008-2009 SAT & ACT Testing Dates

INSPIRATION CORNER

"Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions."

OLIVER WENDALL HOLMES, JR

--US SUPREME COURT JUSTICE--

2008 -2009 IMPORTANT TESTING DATES*

SAT:

October 4, 2008
November 1, 2008
December 6, 2008
January 24, 2009
March 14, 2009
May 2, 2009
June 6, 2009

ACT:

September 13, 2008
October 25, 2008
December 13, 2008
February 7, 2009
April 4, 2009
June 13, 2009

*As of July, 2008

BEST METHODS TO EFFECTIVELY PARENT CHILDREN

Confident Student founder Mary Turos offers these five key points to most effectively influence your children:

1. Set boundaries and limits for your child. Give 2 – 3 choices, rather than unlimited possibilities. Their brains can't handle too many choices.
2. Give your child opportunities to experience "safe" risks and to experience accountability. Allow the child to experience natural and logical consequences --- good and bad. They will grow and learn lessons from the "failures" (i.e. a lost book or late assignment)
3. Give your child time to experience and ponder the world. Look for that four-leaf clover, play hopscotch or flashlight tag. Allow them to create their own games and rules!
4. Set expectations for daily household accountabilities (chores). This improves self-esteem and allows kids to develop independent behaviors (laundry, waking self up, etc) Even little kids can help around the home.
5. Model the behaviors you desire!

BRAIN BYTE



DID YOU KNOW?

BRAIN POWER DEVELOPMENT ACTUALLY BEGINS IN THE WOMB.

Throughout pregnancy, the brain grows extremely quickly. In fact at one stage of prenatal brain development, the fetus brain is producing roughly a quarter of a million new neurons every single minute!

MATH STUDY FINDS GIRLS AS SUCCESSFUL AS BOYS

According to a July 25th article published by the Washington Post, research is now supporting that girls do equal boys in math capability. Libby Quaid authored the article sitting the study -- the largest of its kind -- measuring girls' and boys' math performance in grades two through eleven. University of Wisconsin-Madison researcher Janet Hyde led the study, commenting that most girls grow up adopting attitudes that they are not as capable in the math arena as boys, and therefore avoid the more complicated math courses. "It keeps girls and women out of a lot of careers," observes Hyde.

HERE ARE SOME INTERESTING FACTS:

- Women earn 48% of undergraduate college math degrees, but far less in the physics and engineering specialties.
- Based on 10 states' standardized public school test scores (representing over 7 million children), girls and boys perform equally well, even in high school. As compared to research from 20 years ago, a sharp divide between the genders occurred once in high school.
- Interestingly, more girls than boys take the SAT test, supporting statistics that more women are attending college overall than men. Because this test is still largely demanded by the application process by most colleges, the highest – performing students of both genders take the test, but more girls lower on the achievement scale take it, skewing the average. In 2007 this affect is a difference, with boys on the average achieving a math score of 533 compared with the girls' average of 499.
- When looking at the ACT, girls overall still lag, but the gender gap disappeared in Colorado and Illinois when state officials required all students to take the test.

WALK NOW FOR AUTISM BALTIMORE – OCTOBER 4, 2008 BURDICK FIELD, TOWSON UNIVERSITY

Join Autism Speaks tackle autism! Experience the power of thousands united by a single cause by joining Walk Now for Autism. Start a corporate, school or family team today! Walk Now for Autism offers everyone a fun-filled experience with entertainment, refreshments, an autism community resource fair, and much, much more.

2008 KICK-OFF RECEPTION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14TH AT 6:30PM AT THE SHERATON HOTEL - BALTIMORE NORTH, TOWSON

Come learn more about the successes of Autism Speaks and the Baltimore Community, how Autism Speaks is using the funds raised to further Family Services, Research and Advocacy and how **YOU** can be involved in making a difference. This important event, which officially Kicks-off the Baltimore Walk, will be a night not to miss. For more information, contact baltimore@autismspeaks.org or 888.777.6227, ext 7338.

BEST RESOURCES FOR BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

According to ADDitude magazine's October/November 2007 "ADDITUDE PICKS," here are the best books for parents dealing with challenging behavior and discipline:

1. **EMPATHETIC APPROACH FOR THE SENSITIVE/ENERGETIC CHILD.**
Raising Your Spirited Child, by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka (parentchildhelp.com)
A classic guide that offers a positive four-step program for handling behavior from mealtime to bedtime.
2. **BASIC DISCIPLINE FOR ANY CHILD.**
1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2 – 12, by Thomas W. Phelan (parentmagic.com)
A simple approach to control obnoxious behavior, encourage good behavior, strengthen the bond with your child. A must for any parents' toolbox.
3. **REWARD AND PUNISHMENT FOR OUT-OF-CONTROL CHILDREN.**
Your Defiant Child, by Russell A. Barkley (russellbarkley.org)
A comprehensive 8 step program that stresses consistency and cooperation when teaching tools to establish clear patterns of discipline, communicate with children so they can understand, and reduce the overall family stress.
4. **NO – SHOUT DISCIPLINE FOR ALL KIDS.**
Parenting with Love and Logic, by Foster W Cline (loveandlogic.com)
Shows parents how to introduce practical consequences to children's behavior while teaching them to solve their own problems.
5. **COGNITIVE APPROACH FOR EASILY FRUSTRATED/INFLEXIBLE CHILDREN.**
The Explosive Child, by Ross W. Greene (explosivechild.com)
Empowers parents to teach their child the cognitive skills needed to manage behavior.

READY FOR THE 2008-2009 SCHOOL YEAR?!

Confident Student, LLC hopes everyone has had a wonderful summer, lots of fun in the sun, and enjoyed vacations near and abroad. With the new school year right around the corner, the time has come if you haven't yet scheduled coaching sessions for your child(ren) to prepare for the upcoming academic year, to do so soon. Coaches are ready to resume services with their learners and get busy.

LET'S REVIEW AND STRENGTHEN STRATEGIES TO START THIS YEAR CONFIDENT AND STRONG!



CREATING LIFELONG LEARNERS

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