ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Helping Children Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

March 2022

There is more for your child to learn after the test is over

Elementary schoolers understand the idea of learning material *for* a test. But does your child know that he can learn a lot *from* the test after he takes it? Unless your student gets a perfect score every time, he will benefit from some after-the-test review.



When your child receives a graded test, have him:

- **Take note** of which answers he got right and which he got wrong. He should correct any wrong answers and make sure he understands the material.
- **Identify the types of errors** he made. Mistakes generally come in two forms: carelessness and lack of preparation. Did your child rush through the question, or should he have studied more before the test?
- **Plan adjustments** for future tests. Brainstorm together about how your child can reduce careless errors. For example, he could read each question twice and double-check his work before turning it in.

  For mistakes based on lack of preparation, the solution is more studying. Your child should start to review several days before the test. Then he'll have time to ask the teacher about anything he doesn't understand. The last day should be spent going over everything one final time, not learning new material.

Set an example to encourage reading

Your child learns by watching you that the things you regularly spend time doing are important. Show her that reading is one of those things!

To be a reading role model:

- **Sit down with a book,** newspaper or other reading material every day. Talk to your child about why reading is worth your time.
- **Look up a word** in the dictionary when you read one you are unsure of. Ask your child if she knows its meaning.
- **Read a tidbit aloud** when you come across something you think your child might find interesting. She may even be motivated to read the rest herself.
- **Join your child.** When you see her reading, pick up something to read yourself. Get comfortable and enjoy the time together.
- **Give books as gifts.** This shows your child that you think books are valuable. Encourage her to give books as gifts, too.

Instill the courage to try

It takes courage to speak up in class, to overcome fears and to do what's right. Explain to your child that courage doesn't require physical strength. He can build it by trying new things and learning from the results. Then be sure to praise his courage when he does!

Match tasks with time

Some students dawdle and never complete tasks. Others are perfectionists who never stop working. Time management is important for both types of children. To teach it:

- **Talk** with your child before she starts a task. Decide on a reasonable amount of working time.
- **Provide** a five-minute warning before time is up.
- **Evaluate** progress. If she still has work to do when the time is up, help her think of ways to work differently or get help.

A peaceful home promotes your child's well-being

Stress affects health and makes it harder for students to focus on schoolwork. To make your home a haven from life's stresses:

- **Practice stress-busters.** Teach your child to take deep breaths or play some relaxing music when she feels stressed.
- **Stay organized.** Avoid stressful hunting by keeping items in assigned places.
- **Prioritize sleep.** Your child needs nine to 12 hours a night.
- **Share good news.** Have everyone report on at least one good thing that happened every day.
- **Laugh.** Swap jokes and funny stories.



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Q&A Big projects defeat my child. How should I help?

Q: My fifth grader becomes forgetful and scattered when faced with a big project. I have to hold her hand to help her get the work done. How can I teach her to tackle projects responsibly?



A: Big projects seem overwhelming to lots of kids. And it's hard for students to handle them responsibly until they learn how.

To teach your child to manage, help her:

- **Break the project into pieces.** Explain that even massive projects can be divided into small, manageable tasks. For example, "Don't think of it as a huge report. Think of it as reading, making an outline, writing an introduction, etc." Remind your child that she knows how to do these things.
- **Set deadlines** for each part of the project. Have her write them on a calendar. Point out approaching deadlines, but let her do the work.
- **Make a supply list** right away. Of course, she'll need your help to get the supplies. But she can give some careful thought to what she needs. If she forgets something? She'll have to figure out how to do without it.
- **Face the consequences.** If your child delays and you scramble to help her finish on time, she'll learn to rely on you, rather than on herself. She may stumble the first few times she does a project on her own, but learning from the "bumps and bruises" she gets will help her in the long run.

Parent Quiz Are you ready when frustration strikes?

Students need to know how to cope with the minor snags and hassles that occur in everyone's life from time to time. Are you helping your child learn to deal with frustration? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

___**1. Do you understand** that it isn't your job to protect your child from all of life's ups and downs?

___**2. Do you encourage** your child to keep trying when he is stuck? Ask questions to help him think of solutions.

___**3. Do you help** your child name his feelings? "You're frustrated that this assignment is taking longer than you'd hoped. You'll get it done."

___**4. Do you emphasize** the link between effort and outcome?

___**5. Do you point out** real-life stories of people who have overcome challenges?

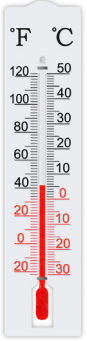
How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are teaching your child to work through frustration. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"Patience removes frustration. Practice restores confidence. Perseverance makes it happen."
—Charles F. Glassman

Investigate the weather

Wind, rain, freezing temperatures and warm sunshine—in many places, March can have it all. This month, help your child:



- **Track temperature.** Have your child record each day's temperature on a graph. She can also graph the number of days that are wintry, rainy and spring-like.
- **Build vocabulary.** Together, look up the meanings of weather words like *inclement*, *frigid*, *front* and *vortex*.
- **Go online** to find information and activities for kids. Try: Extreme Weather (*www.extremescience.com/weather.htm*); SciJinks (*https://scijinks.gov*); Web Weather for Kids (*https://eo.ucar.edu/webweather*).

Discover real wonder women

Celebrate Women's History Month by reading a biography together. If your child likes:

- **Science,** try a book about Mary Anning, whose seaside fossil discoveries advanced the field of paleontology.
- **Music,** learn more about country music superstar Dolly Parton, whose charitable efforts include distributing more than 165 million books to young children.
- **Sports,** read about Gertrude Ederle, who was the first woman to swim the English Channel—and set a speed record doing it.

Space out study sessions

True learning—the kind that your child will retain long-term—requires time to review and think about the material. Your child will get more out of multiple, short study sessions spread out over time than one long one. Discourage cramming the night before a test, which can increase anxiety and interfere with clear thinking.

Source: G. Dewar, Ph.D. "Spaced learning: Why kids benefit from shorter lessons — with breaks," Parenting Science.

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