



# TIPS FOR HELPING KIDS WITH TEST ANXIETY



## About Test Anxiety

**What is test anxiety?** Test anxiety is a feeling of nervousness, stress, or anxiety related to test taking that usually results in an inability to perform well.

**How common is test anxiety?** Studies show that test anxiety affects 10-40% of students.

**What are the signs of test anxiety?** Test anxiety can present itself in different ways, but here are a few things to look out for:

- Asking to stay home on test days
- Stomachaches or headaches before or during a test
- Trouble sleeping before a test
- Low test grades, even though the child clearly knows and understands the content.

## Help Your Child Feel Prepared

Here are some ideas that your child can use to feel ready for the test:

- If possible, study for the test a little bit at a time instead of cramming last minute.
- Get a good night's sleep. Try to go to bed early and leave any devices or electronics in another room.
- Eat breakfast. A full stomach makes it easier to focus.
- Get to school/class on time or a few minutes early. This will give you time to settle in, make sure you have what you need, and ask any questions before the test starts.

## Help Your Child Feel Confident

Help your child feel confident by teaching test-taking strategies like:

- Read the directions carefully.
- Underline or circle important information.
- Cross out answers you know aren't right.
- If you don't know the answer, move on and come back to it.
- Try to answer all the questions.
- Double-check your answers.

## Help Your Child Feel Calm

To help kids feel less anxious during the test, help them learn coping skills that they can use while they are working, like:

- Deep Breathing: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds.
- Positive Self-Talk: Come up with an encouraging sentence to tell yourself.
- Tensing & Relaxing: Focus on one part of your body. Make it as tense as possible, then relax.
- Focusing on what you can control