

## Standardized Assessments and your child

Tests are useful tools.

They give students an opportunity to show what they have learned. Assessments are one way to measure children's improvement in school. Later in life, taking tests will be part of getting:

- ✎ Driver's licenses
- ✎ Many types of jobs
- ✎ Acceptance into vocational schools and colleges
- ✎ Licenses to practice many trades and professions

Standardized tests are a key part of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Under this act, it requires states to give every child in the nation an assessment in math and reading or language arts:

- Each year in grades 3-8
- At least once in high school

The law also calls for science tests; at least once during grades 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12.

Test results from a school serve as a "report card" of the school's strong suit and challenges. The state can compare schools with one another and identify schools that need help.

It promotes proven teaching methods for example:

- Scientific research has shown that some teaching methods are more effective than others.
- NCLB encourages schools to use these more effective methods in the classroom.
- NCLB makes funds available to help
  - Develop high quality reading programs
  - Ensure that students are reading at their grade level
  - Provide high quality professional development

Each state decides which tests to use. Tests must reflect a states requirement for:

- Subjects and skills that students are expected to know (academic content)
- How well students are expected to perform in each area
- Some states purchase tests
- Many states develop their own tests

Standardized Assessment results provide useful information for everyone involved such as:

- ◆ State officials-identify schools that need improvement; direct resources
- ◆ School districts-set goals and create plans to improve
- ◆ School staff-identify and strengthen any weak areas
- ◆ Parents-how well schools are teaching their kids
- ◆ Children-benefit from improvements to schools; receive the extra help they need

Many states require students to pass a standardized test before they can advance to the next grade of graduate from high school.

*Channing Bete Company 2009*

## Parents can help their child prepare to do his or her best

- ☺ Attend school each day--unless, of course he or she is ill.
- ☺ Start each day with a healthy breakfast
- ☺ Eat healthy meals and snacks
- ☺ Get at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week
- ☺ Get enough sleep each night

Encourage your child to ask you or a teacher for help, if they don't understand a homework assignment.

### Talk about school with your child:

- Be sure your child knows that you're interested in school
- Encourage your child to take about their day-what they are learning/homework/upcoming quizzes or tests
- Stay positive- Your child will take his or her cues about the value of learning from you
- Review homework assignments with your child
- Go over test results together
- Talk to your child's teacher(s) often
- Ask questions about the tests your child takes
- Attend school conferences and informational meetings

### Standardized Assessments may look very different from regular classroom tests. It is important to practice the "mechanics" of standardized tests.

- Your child will be asked to read problems, questions, and passages
- They may be on a computer screen or in a preprinted test booklet
  - Read the possible answers (for multiple choice and true-false questions)
  - Decide on an answer
  - Click on the answer (if using a computer) or fill in the "bubble on a printed answer sheet.
- Making the right mark is essential (bubble should be filled in completely)
- Neatness is important
- Master that mouse
- Double check answers
- Be careful with preprinted answer sheets (use a ruler or 3x5 index card to not lose their place)

Test-taking tips: Children will be less likely to make mistakes when they know how to approach a test. Encourage your child to keep these tips in mind:

- 👂 Listen carefully to the spoken directions-ask questions if not sure
- 📖 Read through the written directions-read more than once if need to
- 📖 Glance through the problems- plan time accordingly
- 📖 Read all the questions or problems-do easiest first-don't spend a lot of time on one problem-if get stuck-move on-and come back if time permits
- 📖 Read the entire question or problem- skipping over words like "never" or "not" can lead to wrong answers
- 🖼️ Look at any pictures-they may provide clues
- ✍️ Go back and check answers-if you have time