



NEWS

Testing Time: Ways to Support Your Student

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It's officially spring. While that may mean warmer temperatures and flower buds, in many places across the country, it also means testing season. Many students are taking standardized tests at this time of year and some can feel overwhelmed by the hours-long exams. As a parent, you can help your student handle this stressful time. We talked to TODAY Show contributor and educational psychologist **Dr. Michele Borba** for tips you can do at home to support your student.

Serve a Healthy Breakfast

For years, research has shown the importance of breakfast on academic performance, the same applies for tests. Make sure you focus on foods that are healthy, like eggs and whole grain toast, or oatmeal packed with fruit and nuts. Items like donuts and sugary drinks can leave your student hungry just an hour or two later. A nutritious breakfast can help your child stay focused and alert.

Safeguard Sleep

Make sure your student gets enough sleep the night before exams and in the days leading up to tests. Growing children of all ages need adequate sleep in order to perform optimally in the classroom, and this also applies during testing time. Enforce a tech curfew – no phones, tablets, video games, or TV thirty minutes prior to bedtime. This will help your child wind down and prepare to get a good night's rest.

Say No To Energy Drinks

Energy drinks are not recommended by Parent Toolkit Health & Wellness experts, but the reality is your older student might try energy drinks to help her study longer. Aside from having no nutritional value, the added caffeine can impair her ability to go to sleep when the time comes.

Stay Positive

Your child can be influenced by your reaction to testing time. Give him a positive send-off in the morning and tell him he has the needed skills, he just needs to relax and pace himself.

Don't Stress

Your stress can spill over to your student. By keeping your own stress levels down, you can help your child. Try to emphasize to your child that she doesn't have to be perfect, and that you'll support her no matter what. Students sometimes feel added pressure to do well on tests from parents, and that can end up having a negative effect on their performance.

By using these tips, your student has the optimum combination for performance with reduced stress. When testing is over, continue to stay positive with your student, regardless of his performance. There will always be more tests, and your continued support will help him approach future exams in a more positive light.