



## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH TEST ANXIETY

### What Is Test Anxiety?

- Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety exhibited by children who have studied class material and are confident about what they have learned; however, they tend to become extremely nervous when having to take the exam.
- Test anxiety may occur due to a fear of failure, poor test history, and, in some instances, a lack of preparation.
- Children with test anxiety may exhibit physical symptoms, such as headaches, nausea, diarrhea, excessive sweating, shortness of breath, rapid heart rate, light-headedness, and feeling faint.
- Test anxiety can lead to a panic attack, which is the abrupt onset of intense fear or discomfort in which the individual may feel like they are unable to breathe.
- Feelings of anger, fear, helplessness, and disappointment also are common emotional responses to test anxiety.
- Difficulty concentrating, having negative thoughts, and comparing oneself to peers are evident as well.

### Tips In Dealing With Test Anxiety:

- **Be prepared** – Develop good study habits. Study at least a week or two before the exam, in smaller increments of time and over a few days. “All-nighters” are strongly discouraged. Most importantly, try to simulate exam conditions by working through a practice test, following the same time constraints.
- **Develop good test-taking skills** – Read the directions carefully, answer questions you know first and then return to the more difficult ones. Outline essays before you begin to write them.
- **Maintain a positive attitude** – Remember that your self-worth should not be dependent on or defined by a test grade. Creating a system of rewards and reasonable expectations for studying can help to produce effective studying habits. There is no benefit to negative thinking.
- **Stay focused** – Concentrate on the test, not other students during your exams. Try not to talk to other students about the subject material before taking an exam.
- **Practice relaxation techniques** – If you feel stressed during the exam, take deep, slow breaths and consciously relax your muscles, one at a time. This can invigorate your body and will allow you to better focus on the exam. Relaxation techniques also should be practiced prior the exam.
- **Stay healthy** – Get enough sleep, eat healthy, exercise, and allow for personal time. When stressed, your immunization level is lower, which can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion. When this occurs, it becomes very difficult to handle stress and anxiety, as well as think clearly.
- **Develop a strong support system** – Parents, friends, and school personnel can help provide you with strategies for dealing with stress.