



EASY TIPS AND STRATEGIES

to Prepare for the State Testing

... so your child's test day is stress-free

Your state test is just the beginning of many standardized tests to come:

- The ACT® or SAT®
- Advancement Placement (AP) exams
- ACCUPLACER tests for community colleges or technical schools
- The ASVAB exam for certain military branches
- Exams to get into business or medical school
- Exams to get certified in certain trades
- Exams to earn or maintain professional licenses

These tests can play an important role in your child's future!

That's why it's **AWESOME** you're being proactive now, so you can help your child take on standardized tests with confidence.

Here are ways to help your child prepare for the state test, so your child knows what to expect, feels more confident, and does his or her best on test day.

#1: Make sure your child has a firm foundation in the skills that will be assessed

This is true for any standardized test.

For state testing in particular, you want to make sure your child has the skills to be successful and happy in school.

Sounds great, you think, but what's the best way to make sure my child's skills are on track?

To learn where your child is meeting skill standards and where your child may be struggling:

- Look at your child's report card and any teacher comments.
- Attend all parent/teacher conferences to get each teacher's perceptions, especially for reading and math.
- Make sure you have open communication with your child's teacher(s).
- Ask your child's teacher(s) what you can do at home.

If you don't have a clear picture of whether your child's skills are on track, you're always welcome to bring your child into Sylvan for a Sylvan Insight™ Assessment.

You'll learn **exactly** how our child is doing compared to grade level and get unique insights into your child's strengths and skill gaps.

#2: Ask your child's teacher(s) or principal how the school prepares kids for your state test

Usually, schools will proactively send out information about how they prepare kids for their state test.

You'll most likely see this information **near the start of the school year**.

But you don't have to wait for information to come to you. You can:

- Go to a PTA meeting and talk to the principal.
- Ask your child's math and reading teachers at parent-teacher conferences. (The "get to know you" conference at the start of the year is the perfect time for this conversation.)

Test preparation varies from school to school.

Oftentimes, schools start to prepare students a few months before the test, so kids know what to expect and feel less nervous on test day.

To prepare, schools may:

- Start giving kids homework questions in a standardized test format.
- Give kids a practice test to get familiar with what they'll encounter on test day, so they'll feel more confident.
- Have students spend time doing activities on a computer using the testing program or similar software. That way, they'll be more familiar with how to do things on test day.
- Offer after-school practice and preparation.

#3: Proactively help with preparation

You want your child to learn essential skills, so he or she can confidently advance through school. Not to mention, you don't want your child to feel any unnecessary anxiety!

That's why it's important to help your child master skills and prepare for the testing format.

Here are some practical ways you can do that. If your child:

- Struggles with any **skills**, make sure your child is getting proactive help and/or extra practice.
- Is working on a **homework assignment that has multiple-choice questions**, make sure he or she understands the answer format.
- Is working on **homework with written responses**, make sure your child can write out complete sentences (as may be expected on the state test).
- Gets stressed out when **taking tests**, seek out programs that can build your child's confidence with test taking. (Sylvan offers several programs to help your child become a more confident test taker, including a dedicated program for your state test.)

#4: Reassure your child to relieve his or her fears

Standardized tests can give some children (and adults) a lot of anxiety!

Remind your child that the state test is nothing to be afraid of. Explain that your state test is designed to help your child's school determine who may need additional help.

For younger kids, make sure your child understands that this test doesn't affect his or her grades.

There is one piece of information we don't recommend sharing before your state test ...

In some states, the state test is used to determine whether your child can move to the next grade level or graduate from high school. (However, you probably already know whether your child is at-risk for being held back.)

Sharing this information with your child can be counter-productive, giving your child extra pressure and stress.

#5: Seek out test preparation programs to help your child feel more prepared and less anxious

For many kids, the "fear of the unknown" is a big source of stress.

To help ease your child's fears, make sure your child:

1. Is as familiar as possible with what the test looks like
2. Has had enough practice with the test

If you can't do this through your school, Sylvan offers a **State Test Prep Program**. (It's best to start it 8-12 weeks before a test, but any amount of prep can help.)

Sylvan's program helps kids:

- Target and improve the skills that need the most help. (You'll see a positive impact in class too!)
- Get more confident with tests using special strategies and through hands-on practice.
- Keep anxiety down and build confidence up.
- Be more successful on test day and well beyond.

You'll not only help your child get familiar with the testing format, but your child will hone essential skills for their grade level. You'll see a ripple effect in school: higher scores, more hands up in class, even greater confidence on homework.

#6: Rest up and eat well heading into the test

Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep on the night before the test. On the morning of the exam, give your child a good breakfast. This will help keep your child's energy up and improve their ability to focus.

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