

Getting results - help your child prepare for provincial tests

For parents of primary and junior school students

Grade 3 and 6 students participate

All grade 3 and 6 students in publicly-funded schools across the province participate in Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) testing. The testing will take place over several days in May and June. Students are tested in reading, writing and mathematics. The tests are based on the Ontario curriculum expectations, and measure the skills your child has learned by the end of the primary (grade 3) and junior (grade 6) divisions.

Stay positive

Here are a few things you can do to help your child stay positive about the test:

- Celebrate your child's successes and efforts each day.
- Limit your child's absences from school.
- Schedule appointments at times other than the assessment period.
- Ensure that your child gets a good night's sleep and eats a healthy breakfast and lunch.
- Make sure that your child arrives at school on time.
- Speak positively about the test. Say things like, "Try your best."
- Continue regularly scheduled extra-curricular activities.

Learning for life (not just for EQAO!)

Promote lifelong learning and not just learning for test time:

- Show an interest in your child's schoolwork by talking about what he has done.
- Use and check your child's agenda daily.
- Establish a daily homework routine.
- Support your child with her homework assignments, but don't do it for her.

- Include your child in planning for family activities (e.g., timing, sequence of events, things you'll need).
- Encourage your child to show his thinking while working through activities. Have him consider the following questions:
 - Have I done what I was supposed to do?
 - Can I add any details to show my thinking?
 - Have I communicated what I wanted to?
 - Have I checked my work over?

Reading beyond books

- newspapers
- magazines
- websites
- e-mails
- pamphlets
- mail
- comics

Talk about books as you're reading them

- Make reading fun and share how much you love to read.
- Read aloud to your child beginning in infancy.
- Continue to read aloud even when your child is able to read on her own. You will be able to share books that are rich in new vocabulary and have interesting story lines.
- Stop and talk about the book. Make predictions, talk about new words or ask questions.
- Ask your child to retell the story as he remembers it.
- Have your child relate the story to her own experiences (e.g., What does that remind you of?).

- Encourage your child to read factual texts as well as fiction.
- Let your kids see you as a reader.
- Show ways you use writing in everyday life.
- Encourage your child to write for many different purposes (lists, recipes, letters, research reports, journals, stories, instructions).
- Focus on your child's strengths, learning to write well is a difficult process.
- Encourage risk-taking.
- Praise his attempts.

Encourage "pre-writing" strategies (e.g., brainstorm ideas, making a plan, draft an outline).

- Try not to correct all your child's mistakes, but help her to look back at her own work carefully.
- Writing includes ideas, organization, word usage, not just punctuation and spelling.

Writing materials to have at home

- variety of paper
- pens, pencils, markers, pencil crayons
- envelopes
- post-it notes
- index cards

Keywords

Throughout the assessment, keywords are used to identify the type of response required from the student. The keywords to practice with your child include:

Compare - tell what is the same and what is different

Describe - use words to create a mental picture for the reader

Determine - use mathematics to find a solution to the problem

List - use point form

Use math daily

- Remember that math is more than just addition and subtraction. There are five strands in the Ontario math curriculum: numeration, measurement, patterning and algebra, data management and probability, geometry.
- Encourage the use of manipulatives (counters, shapes, etc. to help show his thinking).
- Help your child to see practical uses for math (e.g., cooking, building, planning, shopping, measuring, estimating).
- Encourage your child to estimate first, then figure it out.
- Encourage your child to problem-solve.
- Sometimes there is more than one right answer!
- Encourage your child to communicate how the problem was solved (use numbers, pictures, words to explain).

It's just one piece of assessment

Although EQAO offers valuable information about your child's learning, it is only one piece of the picture. Classroom assessments are crucial to improving student learning. The levels achieved on EQAO will not be reflected on your child's report card.

For more information

For further information on grades 3 and 6 testing, visit the EQAO website at www.eqao.com and click on "Parent Resources." Sample questions can also be viewed. Also, visit the Peel board's website at www.peelschools.org.

Workshop presented Pat Stellick and Carole Chapman, coordinating principals