



During the second week of May Australian children in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will take part in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The stated purpose of this testing program is to gain an overall picture of educational attainment levels to assist education policy and decision-making. Read on for tips for preparing your child or young person for school testing.

Parents boycotting NAPLAN; Our children need teachers and parents who provide opportunities for curiosity, exploration and mastery. They need less pressure, less high-stakes testing and more opportunities to grow and learn at their own pace with appropriate support. Our children need exposure to a wide range of options, activities and arts. NAPLAN threatens these opportunities.

In terms of individual students' learning, NAPLAN is next to useless. Individual student data has a short shelf life. NAPLAN data takes so long to come back to a teacher that it loses any potential value it had in regards to individuals. It is a poor teacher that has to rely on NAPLAN to tell them what students in their care can and cannot do. As a means of assessing student understanding, it is a blunt instrument.

[Read more](#)

Whether your child stresses or take them in his stride here are some tips to help prepare your child or young person for the NAPLAN tests:

1. Take your cues from your child: If your child doesn't worry about them then neither should you. Be careful not to create a problem that doesn't exist by incessantly talking about, or worse, worrying about the test.

2. Focus on doing their best & trying hard: Choose your words carefully when you speak with your kids. As with all their learning activities place your focus squarely on effort rather than results. The only pressure on kids should be to try hard rather than to do well.

3. Listen to any concerns they have: If your child confesses to some nerves then validate their feelings, rather than shut them down with a 'get over it' response. "Yes, sometimes tests can be a little scary, but they get easier every time you take them." Use this as an opportunity to develop some emotional smarts, which starts with recognising how kids feel.

4. Give them some relaxation ideas: Anxious or nervous kids will benefit from some simple relaxation strategies. Taking some deep breaths, changing their thinking and exercising the morning of the test are some simple ways to help kids get some feeling of control.

5. Help them retain their perspective: One way to help children who become excessively anxious about an event is to ask what's the worst thing that could happen? Okay, they may not do as well as they would like but the sun will still rise tomorrow, if they don't do as well as they'd like. Keeping perspective is a life skill that we all need to practise.

A positive, caring parent attitude is one of the best gifts you can give a child when they are apprehensive or nervous about approaching any different situation whether it's going on school camp, joining a new club or sitting a NAPLAN test.

Read more; [Michael Grose \(Parenting Ideas\)](#)