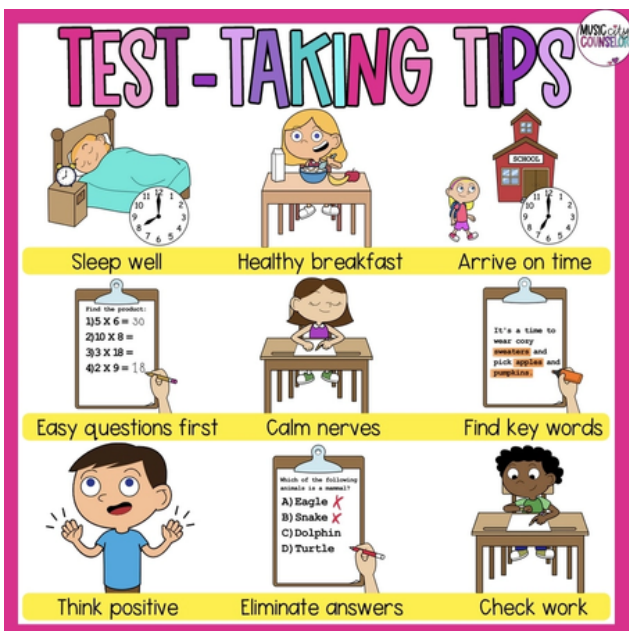


Counseling Corner

Whiteford Elementary School



Becoming a Confident Test-Taker

It's about that time of year! Testing season is quickly approaching, and educators everywhere are witnessing their students' growing nervousness, addressing hypothetical testing questions and worries, and equipping them with valuable test-taking strategies. Throughout the month, I will also be visiting each 2nd-5th grade (and even one 1st grade!) classroom for engaging activities to offer extra tips to prepare them for their tests. After all, test prep **can** be enjoyable! For those interested in extending this learning at home, here are some useful tips.

Get Plenty of Sleep the Night Before

Numerous studies suggest that children between the ages of 6 and 12 should aim to get 9-12 hours of sleep per night. This is especially true and important the night before a big test. We want to ensure that our children are as rested and energized as possible before taking the test, so having a consistent bedtime leading up to test day can help with this structure and routine!

Eat a Healthy Breakfast

Encourage children to choose foods that will fuel their bodies and minds to do their best work! Instead of sugary cereals or greasy bacon, consider offering eggs or a bowl of fruit. In addition to having a nutritious breakfast, ensuring proper hydration is important. Drinking cold water can also aid in concentration and promote relaxation!

Arrive to School on Time

In addition to getting enough rest, make sure your child wakes up with plenty of time in the morning to prepare for school, ensuring they can eat a proper breakfast and arrive on time and without feeling rushed. Limiting stress on test days is crucial, so having enough time to get ready in the morning and arriving at school on time guarantees they won't miss anything if their test is scheduled early in the school day.

For additional tips, tricks, information, and book recommendations leading up to testing day, visit my Counseling Corner Newsletters and Resources section in my Schoology group!

Practice Positive Self-Talk and Challenge Negative Thoughts

Believing in ourselves and our capabilities can significantly impact our performance before a big test. It's important to do our best to avoid negative thought patterns, known as thinking traps, that tend to be overly negative or unrealistic. By flipping our worry thoughts into helpful and optimistic ones, we can change our mindset in a positive way. For instance, rather than thinking, "These questions are too hard. I can't do this," you could shift your thinking to, "This test is challenging, but I've learned so much this year, and I know I can do hard things." Revisit our Counseling Corner Newsletter on Positive Self-Talk from 2/9/24 for more!

Calm Your Nerves

Feeling nervous before a big test is normal! Despite this, it's important to be able to control those nerves so we can focus and do our best. We can learn to control these emotions by identifying these feelings in our bodies. For example, feeling worried may cause our hands to shake, our bellies to hurt, our heart to race, or our palms to get sweaty. When we notice these signs, we can help ourselves refocus by taking a quick brain break to calm our nerves. Teach your child to take calming breaths in through their nose and out through their mouth while counting to 10. Repeat this as many times as they need. To learn about additional coping skills you can help your child practice before the big day, revisit our Counseling Corner Newsletters on Coping Skills from 3/10/23 and Grounding from 3/24/23.