

Do's and Don'ts to help you and your child manage examination stress!

Parent Kit

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Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

Examinations are not the be-all and end-all, but provide the opportunity for children to assess how much they have learnt.

There are things that we can choose to do and not to do, so that we can better support our children academically and emotionally during the examination period.

In this issue of Parent Kit, we answer 8 questions asked by parents, and provide you with tips to manage the examination stress. Sit tight and enjoy the ride (read)!

Days leading up to the exams



Question 01: How can I motivate my child to study?

IF YOUR CHILD IS...

- Procrastinating because he/she is anxious
- Distracted by digital devices
- Stuck in his/her revision because he/she has forgotten concepts learnt previously

YOU CAN TRY TO...

- Guide him/her to break down revision into smaller, more achievable tasks.
- Set ground rules together e.g. 10 mins of play after each task is completed. The key is to be consistent and to lead by example!
- Encourage your child to revisit the earlier chapters. If needed, ask them to approach his/her teachers and/or older siblings for help.

Question 01: How can I motivate my child to study?

IF YOUR CHILD IS...

- Lethargic and lacks energy to do anything

YOU CAN TRY TO...

- Guide your child to draw up a schedule which includes time for homework, revision, play, exercise and rest. Recreational activities and rest are key to helping the child de-stress and can boost their mood and energy.

Parents can also approach your child's teacher to discuss concerns about your child, so that together, better support can be provided.

Question 02: How do I know if my child is feeling stressed?

Stress is not necessarily a bad thing. It is normal to feel stressed during the examination period, just like how you may feel when you have an important deadline coming up. In the right amounts, stress can be a form of extra energy that the body uses to prepare for and overcome challenges.

However, too much stress is not good. If your child presents the following signs of stress in combination, extreme or long-lasting forms, it may be an indication of too much stress.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struggles to pay attention to studies or activities• Tiredness• Rebellious streak | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excuses to miss school/class• Stays away from others• Sulking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of appetite and sleep• Spending more time on mobile devices and social media |
|---|---|--|

Question 02: How do I know if my child is feeling stressed?

Some children may fear failure, which further drives up anxiety during examination periods. A fear of failure may be identified through cues such as:

- o “If I don’t do well, I think that I will have no future”
- o “I am not good enough/ useless/ have no talent”
- o “Others will think less of me”



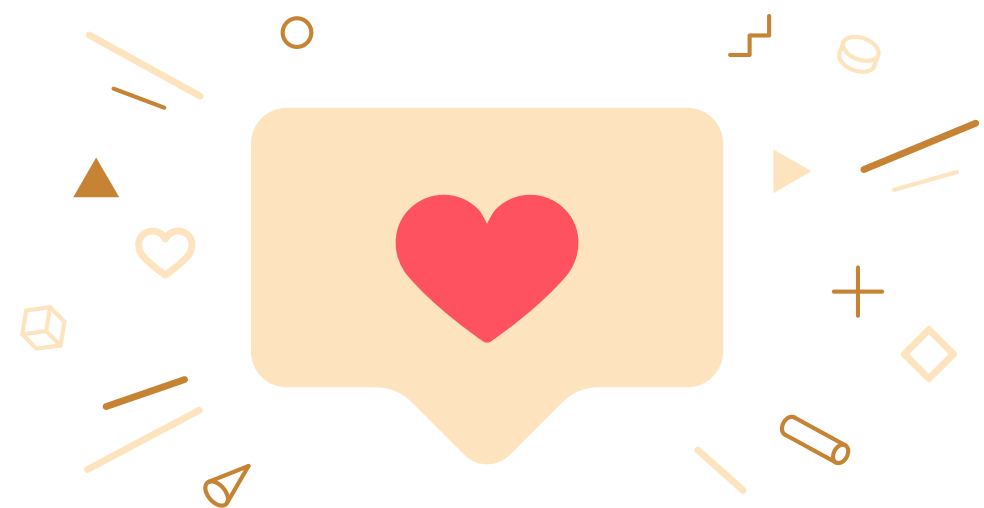
Question 03: What can I do to help my child manage his/her stress?

Know your child's needs and be present

- Pay attention to your child and communicate frequently in an open and supportive manner. Continue with your usual conversation topics (e.g. “How was your day?” and “What are you looking forward to this weekend?”), so that your child's mind is not overwhelmed by the upcoming exams.
- Provide practical support (such as making sure your child has a healthy diet and adequate sleep) to overcome any hurdles he/she may be facing.

Role model

- Share with your child some of your own experiences of dealing with stress, how you managed it and maintained positivity.



Question 03: What can I do to help my child manage his/her stress?

Reassure

- Let your child know that they are loved and accepted regardless of their examination performance.
- Recognise that it is normal to feel stressed, anxious and nervous during the examination period.
- Provide positive feedback and cheer him/her on for every effort.



If you require more advice, please approach the School Counsellor.

Question 04: How can I manage my own stress so that it is not passed on to my child?

Be mindful of what you say, your reactions, and the body language you display. For example, parents may say, *“If you don’t do well, you will not have a good future”*. Parents may use this with the best intentions, to motivate their child to score his/her best. However, the child may see it as an expectation to score high marks so as not to disappoint their parents.

When communicating with your child, focus on positivity, reassurance and calm to keep stress levels low.



Question 04: How can I manage my own stress so that it is not passed on to my child?

To manage your stress or anxiety, you could:

- Regulate your emotions (e.g. deep breathing, focusing on your locus of control)
- Speak to someone you trust (e.g. spouse, family members, close colleagues)
- Ensure sufficient rest, exercise and eat well
- Continue to spend time with your child to bond, e.g. doing household chores or playing a board game together



During the exam period



Question 05: How can I help him/her stay alert?

Help them get a good night's sleep

- Make sure your child gets sufficient rest every night especially during examination period. Studying all night without good sleep can worsen worries.



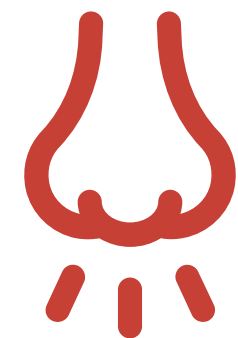
Fuel them up

- Start your child's day with a nutritious breakfast, and pack healthy snacks for ongoing energy throughout the day.



Calm their nerves

- Practise deep breathing with your child; it can slow down a racing pulse and mind and help them stay positive.



Question 06: How do I encourage my child, especially if he/she is discouraged after a paper?

Give him/her a big hug, before talking about it.

Avoid being dismissive or disapproving, and steer the conversation away from what might deepen their worries - the difficulty level of the examination, discussion on examination questions and how their peers found the examination.

Begin the conversation with how your child is feeling and guide him/her to learn from the experience.

- *I noticed that you're feeling upset/tired (after revision/the exam), do you want to tell me about it?*
- *How are you feeling about the exam? What was good about it? What was not so good about it?*

Let your child know that making mistakes is part of learning and encourage him/her to persevere even though it may be challenging.



**Before, during,
and after results
are released**



Question 07: Does it call for a celebration?

Celebrate the effort, not the results.



If your child has put in his/her best efforts, appreciate your child's hard work and praise his/her efforts. You can also show it through a simple gesture. E.g. have a nice meal together at the end of the examinations, **before** the results release, to let your child know that you are celebrating his/her effort.



Click [here](#) for more tips on how to praise your child!

Question 08: How can I have a conversation with my child about his/her performance or results?

Don't compare

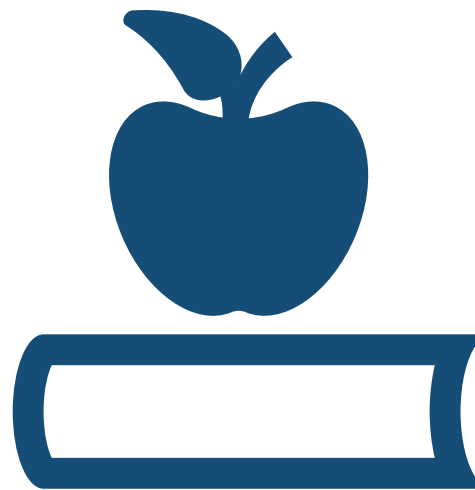


Steer the conversation away from the highest or lowest score in class, how many marks your child's classmates received, etc.

Regardless of the outcome, it is important for your child to know that you love them, and that their grades don't define them.

Question 08: How can I have a conversation with my child about his/her performance or results?

Get your child to own his/her learning



Focus on getting your child to learn from the experience, instead of what cannot be changed.

- *“Your effort for Math paid off! What was it that worked well this time?”*
- *“You did not manage to achieve your goal for English, what could be the reasons?”*

With your support, they can develop a love of learning and the resilience to view challenges and failures as opportunities to improve.



Click [here](#) to access more tips on how you can better relate with your child!

Have more questions? Want to hear more?

Watch our recent Facebook live session – **Providing Social and Emotional Support for your Child during the Exam Season**. Our panelists – Christine Wong (Lead School Counsellor in MOE) and Sha-En Yeo (wellness coach and TEDx speaker) – share how you can support your children emotionally and build their resilience through this examination season.

Take a look at the comments section to learn what has worked for other parents. Click [here](#) and start the video from 04.30. Enjoy!



Examinations are not the be-all and end-all. Every child is unique, with different strengths and talents, and untapped potential. Every child will flourish in their own way.

Let's see examinations as a way to get feedback for continual improvement, and focus our efforts on guiding our children to nurture self-discipline, perseverance, resilience, time managements skills (and more!) in the process of revising for examinations.

The phase of preparing for and taking examinations will end, but the important life skills acquired in the process will carry them throughout life.

Parent Kit

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Parenting  with MOE

What we've got lined up for the next few weeks:

-  How to Get Your Child to Stop Coming to You
-  How to Know If Your Child Is Doing Okay in School
-  How to Keep Sane Through the Exam Season

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What You Don't Have to Do This Weekend (Or Ever):

- 1** Give them answers to their homework 
- 2** WhatsApp other parents on what's coming up for the week 
- 3** Pack their bags for them 

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