

5 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD

Throughout their academic career, all students will take standardized tests, including an annual state test to measure how well they are progressing in the skills and content at each grade level.

Tests can open doors to many great opportunities in life, including college, scholarships and professional careers. For many students, however, standardized tests can bring a lot of stress and anxiety. Here are some resources to help you better understand what your child is learning and some simple things you can do at home to help him or her feel less anxious and more prepared for the PARCC test.

- ✓ **FIND OUT THE FACTS.** To start, students will take the test sometime between March 7 and June 10 (check with your child’s school for exact dates) and it will be broken down into three to four units in each subject. Students will typically take one or two units on any given day. Depending on the grade level and subject, students will have up to 110 minutes to complete each unit, though many will finish in much less time. In 2014, students took a field test to determine how much time was needed to finish each section. Once that time was determined, additional time was added to ensure all students had ample time. For more information about the PARCC test, visit <http://bealearninghero.org/classroom/parcc> and talk to your child’s principal and teachers.
- ✓ **TAKE A LOOK AT THE PRACTICE TEST.** This will help you better understand how the test is aligned to classroom work and see the types of reading, math and writing questions your child will be answering. You may want to walk through the test with your child to help familiarize him or her with the test format and features and answer any questions. To see a practice test, visit <http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/>. You can also see questions from last year’s PARCC test at <https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items>.
- ✓ **KNOW WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD BE LEARNING IN ENGLISH AND MATH.** To find out the learning expectations of your child’s grade level in both subjects, take a look at the PTA Parents’ Guide to Success at <http://www.pta.org/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2909&navItemNumber=4065> which gives descriptions of the skills and knowledge your child is expected to gain every year. You can also see samples of what your child’s writing should look like in every grade at <http://raisethebarparents.org/what-will-my-child-be-learning-each-year>.
- ✓ **USE YOUR CHILD’S TEST RESULTS FROM LAST YEAR TO IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE HE OR SHE MIGHT NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT.** Talk with your child’s teachers to see what types of supplemental activities you can do at home. Find activities that match your child’s performance in both subjects in the Be a Learning Hero Skill Builder at <http://bealearninghero.org/skill-builder>.
- ✓ **PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!** Homework is a great way to reinforce the skills and content your child learns everyday in the classroom and that the test measures. In addition to the state test, it is another measure you can use to see how well your child is progressing throughout the year. To get homework help in both subjects, visit <https://homeworkhelpdesk.org/>. For sample problems and questions along with solutions and answers, visit <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/common-core-test-guide/>.