



## Reducing Testing Anxiety

### Teacher Strategies

Teachers set the tone for the testing process and the testing environment. Research indicates that adequate test preparation can significantly improve students' attitudes toward test taking, thereby enhancing their performance.

The following strategies may assist students in reducing test anxiety:

- √ Help students practice study skills (learn to pick out the most important study topics, use note cards, have a study buddy, work in teams, use assignment calendar, etc.).
- √ Model a positive attitude toward testing, using positive statements about the process and belief in the students' ability to perform well.
- √ Explain the purpose of testing.
- √ Notify students of the test well in advance.
- √ Help students understand the test format and test directions prior to testing.
- √ Practice test-taking strategies (e.g., know time limits, use pacing, read the entire question first, underline key words, use process of elimination, etc.).
- √ Simulate timed test sessions.
- √ Teach students to avoid cram sessions.
- √ Create study groups.
- √ Provide extra support for at-risk students (study buddy, volunteer tutor).
- √ Encourage students not to compare themselves to others, but focus on self-improvement.
- √ Use SAL-P to help students understand where they are on the FCAT scoring scale.

- √ Address test anxiety by exploring students' concerns and, if necessary meet with the school counselor/parents of identified students to confront this issue.
- √ Teach students to recognize signs of anxiety and how to manage such feelings.
- √ Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, stretching, picturing a positive scene, etc.
- √ Encourage students to use positive self-talk and imagery ("I know I can do well on this test", visualize the test with an "A" on top) before, during and after the test.
- √ Encourage students to boost energy and mood by eating properly, exercising, taking time for leisure and getting enough rest.
- √ Create a positive testing environment.
- √ We are teaching the standards all students need to learn.
- √ Frequent assessments don't prepare us for FCAT. They inform instruction so a teacher can better serve a student and meet their needs.
- √ FCAT is a "snapshot" of what we know.
- √ Don't stress that a student will fail if they don't do well on the test.
- √ Don't say we are preparing for the test.
- √ Don't stress testing every day.
- √ Stress that will be prepared for the test.