

Minimize stress when studying for tests

Take a moment to think about the type of pressure on your shoulders in the days and hours before a workplace presentation – or perhaps the stress that built up the last time you moved your home, changed your job, or even juggled all of these things at the same time. Education professionals say that our children have similar anxiety every time a school test or an exam is looming.

A survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid for Kumon Math and Reading Centres found that no university students escape exam stress, while 40 per cent experience high stress. As many as 43 per cent said they never start studying early enough for exams, while 27 per cent admitted to staying up all night studying.

“Lack of preparation and cramming are huge stress factors,” says Dr. Donna McGhie-Richmond, “And too much pressure at any time can inhibit performance.”

Students of every age experience the pressures of learning – and indeed, younger students face even more demands now with the country wide, provincial testing. With a little guidance however, parents can help to change the behaviour that leads to cramming and the consequent anxiety. Take a look at a sampling of Dr. McGhie-Richmond’s stress-prevention tips on this subject:

- Establish a regular study time every day and stick to it. Ask your child what time is best – and while flexibility is required, do ensure that the study time is a habit that occurs every day.
- Together, record assignment due dates and test dates on the family calendar and in your child’s personal agenda. Review the calendar at the beginning of each week to allow enough preparation time.
- Use the designated study time to complete homework, to review challenging schoolwork, and to prepare for tests. Even if homework has already been completed, use the time for reading or reviewing.

Source: Dr. Donna McGhie-Richmond, Educational Specialist, Kumon Math and Reading Centres

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