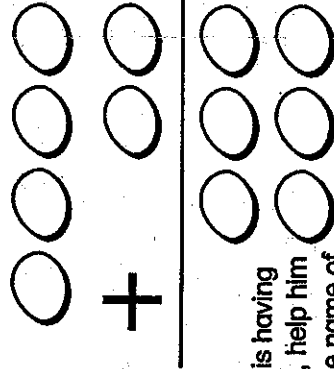


- ◆ Help your child develop the habit of underlining what each problem asks for. After your child has a solution, he or she can go back to make sure it answers the question that has been underlined.



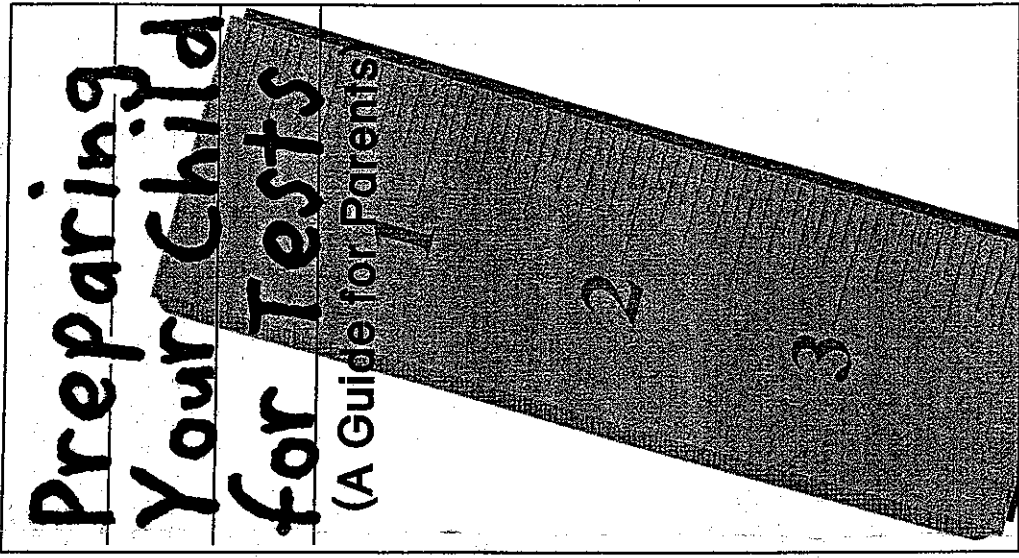
- ◆ Here's one way your child can get "unstuck" when faced with a difficult problem. Tell him or her to think of Fact Families. For example, if your child is having difficulty finding  $6 - 2$ , help him or her to remember the name of its addition "relative":  $2 + 4 = 6$ . Sometimes drawing a picture of the fact helps. For example,  $00000000$  shows  $6 - 2 = 4$ .



- ◆ Eating right and getting enough sleep and exercise is what gives your child the energy he or she needs to be alert and attentive in school every day. Help your child stick to a reasonable schedule.
- ◆ One way to help your child remember math concepts learned in school is to review ideas on the papers that he or she brings home every day. Do the Home Activities given at the bottom of each paper.

## TAKING STANDARDIZED TESTS

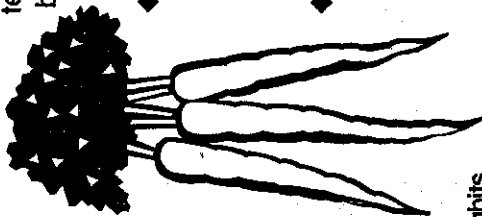
- ◆ The best way to avoid test jitters is to come to school well-rested and prepared. This often means simply showing up with a sharpened pencil and a positive attitude.
- ◆ Prepare your child by telling him or her to listen carefully to the directions before beginning the actual work.
- ◆ When the teacher is reading the directions for a test, tell your child to listen carefully before starting anything. Sometimes having children retell the directions in their own words is helpful.
- ◆ Tell your child to put a check alongside a question that he or she is not sure about and then go back to it if time permits.
- ◆ Usually, it's best not to leave any blanks on a test; so tell your child to make his or her best guess.
- ◆ Point out that the purpose of many standardized tests is to see how much the children are learning.
- ◆ Most importantly, tell your child not to be afraid of making mistakes. Even grown-ups learn from mistakes!



*Tests are like rulers, except that instead of measuring inches, they measure what we already know and what we still need to learn.*

Dear Parents,

Whether a driving test or an audition, a swim meet or a pop quiz, tests are part of life. Your child is probably so new at taking tests that he or she hasn't developed bad habits or attitudes about them. In fact, the early grades are the perfect time to learn simple skills that will help your child become a confident test-taker now and in the grades ahead. Test-taking is like any skill. There are a lot of small, steady steps that lead to success. You can help your child become test-ready by focusing on attitude and work habits and by sharing some actual test-taking tips.

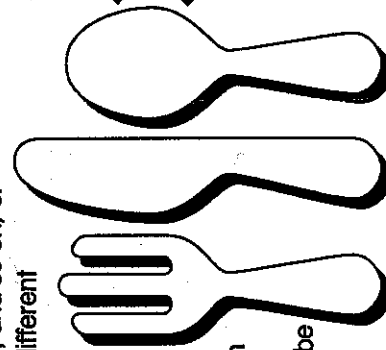


## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

- ◆ Help your child develop sensible work habits for doing daily tasks and homework. These include paying attention to details, working neatly and carefully, and being thorough.
- ◆ Model appropriate behavior as you do your chores or as you and your child work together on leisure-time projects.
- ◆ Help your child develop the habit of completing one task before going on to another. Remind your child that cleanup is the last part of any job.
- ◆ Teach your child organizational skills by straightening his or her room together and by encouraging your child to put back things after using them.

## BECOMING TEST READY

- ◆ Promote the concept that tests are tools teachers use to get to know their students better. Tests show what someone already understands and what someone has left to learn.
- ◆ Help your child practice following directions. For example, give your child a number of tasks to do in order. Use key words such as *before*, *after*, *when*, and *during*.
- ◆ Reinforce number concepts by having your child count silverware, dishes, and so on. Play number games with coins, such as counting off the correct number of pennies in a dime.
- ◆ Plan math family nights and hold Math Olympics. Challenge your child with math-related activities, such as finding math tools around the house (e.g., tape measure, ruler, scale, and so on) or finding examples of different shapes (e.g., rectangular place mats).
- ◆ Plan an outdoor treasure hunt and give your child written or oral directions. Older children might be able to follow simple hand-drawn maps.



- ◆ Use rulers, yardsticks, and tape measures for a "Measurement Treasure Hunt." Prepare directions ahead of time. For example, "Find something that is about two times as tall as you are. Find something that comes up to your knees. Write down its name and its measurement."
- ◆ When preparing snacks, encourage your child to make different patterns with carrot sticks, celery, and other vegetables. Other finger foods, such as cheese and crackers, can be arranged in various patterns.
- ◆ Tips for doing math homework can, of course, extend to taking math tests.
- ◆ To avoid careless mistakes when adding or subtracting, encourage your child to look at the sign before answering the problem.

## PREPARING FOR MATH TESTS

- ◆ Tell your child to always show his or her work on the page. This avoids scrap paper getting lost, and it allows the teacher to see how your child thinks when he or she is solving a problem.
- ◆ Encourage your child to keep columns neat and straight to avoid careless mistakes.
- ◆ Tell your child to circle or underline key words that tell which computation is needed. For example, when a problem has the word *about*, it signals that a guess or an estimate is wanted.