
READY for SCHOOL Parent News:
Admissions Testing

As your child prepares to transition from a Bright Horizons center to a public or private school, you may find that some schools require a form of “Admissions Testing.” This testing could be as simple as a one-on-one interaction with an unfamiliar adult who asks your child questions and/or asks her to perform certain skills (building block towers, standing on one foot, etc.). Or it could mean a paper and pencil test. We all remember taking tests as school children and sometimes just the atmosphere of being “tested” created tension, even if the tasks themselves were easy. You can help a lot by modeling a relaxed attitude for your child prior to and on the day of the testing.

Giving your child some preparation ahead of time may be helpful. A few suggestions:

- Find out as much as you can about the type of Admissions Test prior to the day of the test. Ask whether your child will be completing a paper and pencil type of test or whether the test will merely be some questions from an adult (What is your name, address, phone number?” “Can you name 3 animals?,” etc.) and/or tasks such as asking your child to manipulate blocks, puzzles, etc.
- If your child has been told not to talk to strangers, he may be uncomfortable leaving you and going to talk with someone unfamiliar. Ask if you can accompany your child. If not, let your child know this is someone that you trust and it is OK to talk with them. Tell your child this person wants to ask him some questions about things he’s been learning at preschool or kindergarten.
- If the test your child is supposed to take is paper and pencil, and this is a new skill for your child, you may want to offer some experiences with paper and pencil before the actual test. Many children enjoy letter and number “workbooks” which can be purchased at the local grocery or drug store. Remember this is not SAT prep and keep it fun and light. Stop when your child loses interest. You are not teaching them how to take a test, just offering them experience with tools which may be unfamiliar. You can also ask your child’s teacher for some guidance or suggestions for your particular child.

Any form of testing is a snapshot in time and can be influenced by how your child is feeling that day, how comfortable she is in the setting, the approach of the tester, etc. Schools should look at testing as only one factor in the whole picture of your child including reviewing his portfolio, talking to his teacher and yourself, etc. Whether your child meets the school’s entrance criteria or not, remember to communicate your continual caring for your child. Children are very perceptive and pick up on subtle signals of disappointment. In most cases, there are several good options for schools. They are different, but each offers strengths. In the long run, whether your child gets in the “right” school is less important than their ongoing, caring, supportive relationship with you.