



STANDARDIZED TESTING

What You Need to Know

By Shelly Taylor

As homeschool parents, we all have questions concerning our child taking a standardized test.

Are standardized tests required in Pennsylvania? If so, at what age or grade? Must my child take the PSSA at the local school or are there other options available to me? How do I prepare my child for standardized tests?

Who is required to be tested?

Students in grades three, five and eight. At the discretion of the supervisor, other grade levels can be tested.

What subjects must be tested?

Only reading/language arts and mathematics are required. At the discretion of the supervisor, other subjects may be included.

Can a parent or guardian test their child?

No. The supervisor shall ensure that the nationally normed standardized tests or the Statewide tests shall not be administered by the child's parent or guardian.

When shall I have my child tested?

Children can be tested anytime during the school year; however, the most popular time would be in the fall and spring. If your children are tested in the fall with the TerraNova, Stanford, or Iowa test, they will be given the test of the grade level recently completed. (For example, a 3rd grader tested in the fall would take the 2nd grade test.) However, due to the design and norming of some standardized tests such as the Woodcock Johnson tests, testing is better administrated in the spring.

What nationally normed standardized tests does the Dept. of Education accept?

In addition to the PSSA, the PA Department of Education has established a list of nationally normed standardized tests that satisfy the homeschool law requirements (see list below,)

What preparation can we give our children before taking a standardized test?

Preparation can begin at a young age. Teach them to follow directions and to pay attention to details and to correct mistakes. (This is especially true for math). Reading comprehension will naturally be part of their reading, science, social studies etc. programs. A child is never too young to start understanding what has been read. After reading a story or assignment with your child, ask them questions to see if they understood what was read. Continue this process, in a more in-depth level, for independent students.

Quiz/test them as often as you feel is necessary so they get a sense of sitting still, not talking, and the

need to do something they may not be accustomed to doing. (This definitely applies to the SAT college preparation.)

Tell them they are going to take a test because the law requires it. Encourage them to do their best but it's only something that is required by law.

If your child needs more formal preparation, a number of test preparation books, can be found online or at an educational bookstore.

Shelly Taylor is PA certified and has been evaluating/testing students since 1996. For more information on standardized tests and to read a copy of the homeschool law, Act 169, in its entirety, visit Shelly's website at www.iTestEval.com.

Approved Standardized Tests

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has approval the following national normed standardized tests to be used in home education programs

Because PDE occasionally changes approved tests, please check PDE's website for a current listing.

1. California Achievement Test (CAT)
2. Comprehensive Testing Program IV (CTP IV)
3. Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)
4. Measures of Academic Process (MAP)
5. Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT)
6. Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised (PIAT-R)
7. Stanford Achievement Test (SAT)
8. TerraNova (Survey) (TN)
9. Woodcock Johnson Revised Test of Achievement III (WJ-R)
10. Woodcock Johnson IV (WJ IV)
11. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT III)