

# Independent Learning Newsletter Tips

## How can parents help during stressful assessment times?

The second semester often heralds blocks of examinations or assessments for students. Some students cope well with the pressure and stress while others find it overwhelming. Of course, the more prepared students are, the less stress they are likely to experience. Encourage students to start their preparation for examinations and assessments early, in particular their study notes. If your student has examination blocks this semester, these tips will help you provide the support they need.

1. Lifestyle makes a big difference to results: healthy eating, lots of water, lots of sleep, exercise and time for relaxation are essential. Make sure students are eating as healthily as possible. Provide healthy snacks and drinks and healthy meals. It is important that students look after their health during this period as stress can take a huge toll on the body. A nutritious diet and a bit of exercise not only help students think more effectively, but will help them deal with stress as well. Some students will try and sacrifice sleep during this time, remind them that the last stage of memory takes place while students are sleeping.
2. Ask students what they need from you and what you can do. Offer to help with revision, to go and buy any books or stationery needed. Be their personal assistant and help with exam timetables, preparation, lunches etc. Many students find it helpful if their parent tests them on the material they need to memorise.
3. Focus on a positive outlook and personal best: encourage students to be proud of their successes and what they achieve and constantly assure them that all you want is for them to do the best they can and walk away feeling proud of their efforts this year. Praise the effort they put into their study. Avoid criticism and negativity. Remember there are always multiple paths in life for your student to get to where they want to go.
4. Keep communication lines open. Listen. See if you can have a weekly meeting to give students a chance to talk through where they are with each subject and what is going on and if they are having any difficulties. Remember that you are the convenient target for anger (that isn't really directed at you) but you also might be a good shoulder to cry on. Seek professional help if you feel your student is not coping and needs it.
5. If students are stressed or worried, first let them vent, then talk together ways they could approach their issues. Who could they talk to at school on ways to improve or ways to manage their stress? What outside resources do they have? What is it they feel most anxious about? Is there specific help they need? What can parents do to help?