IOWA TESTING FAQ’S (info copied from www.homeschoolertests.com)

**Why should my child be tested?**

-Home school parents who work closely with their children every
 day usually know quite accurately where their children are

 academically.

-Standardized tests can affirm both your child's learning progress

 and your teaching ability. An objective evaluation can encourage

 teacher and student and also provide confirmation of your success

 to other family members, friends, and the state, where required.

-Standardized tests might also point out weaknesses that you may

 not have noticed. You can then work to improve in these areas.

**Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for grades K-8 and also called Iowa**

**Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) for Grades 9-12:**

The Iowa gives a lot of sub-scores, so you can see more clearly how your

child did on each different subject. The Iowa Test publishers require someone

with a B.A. to administer the Iowa test. It is easily administered and provides

the required information for a very reasonable cost. Many large support

groups provide this test. The complete battery takes 2.5 - 4.5 hours for

grades K-2; 5.5 hours for grades 3-8 and 4.5 hours for grades 9-12.

**How do I choose the grade level of the test?**

Most of the time it is prudent to choose the test level based on what grade

the child would be in if in traditional school. If the child is working above or

below grade level in a majority of subjects, then you might choose to use that

grade level to get the most accurate and helpful results. In order to make the

most practical use of the scores you should not test above your child's

reading level.

**How can I prepare my child for testing?**

If you are concerned about testing, consider looking at some test prep

materials. The Scoring High series (which prepares students for a particular

test) and the Spectrum workbooks (which are more generic, not geared to a

particular test, and less expensive) are popular choices. (Both are available

from Rainbow Resource, and Spectrum is sometimes available at bookstores

like Borders and/or Barnes & Noble.) These might help a child who has never

have taken a test before understand what it's going to be like, so they are

comfortable emotionally with the testing.

Having your child see and maybe work through some test prep materials can

not only help your child be comfortable with testing, it can de-mystify the

testing for you, too. Most of these tests are pretty much just multiple-choice

worksheets.

You might want to explain to your children that this is something they must

do to follow the law; it will show them the things they do best; they should

try to do their best, but not worry too much about it. You can tell them that

some questions will probably be very easy for them while some might be too

hard for them. They should not spend too much time on the difficult questions

but should give them their best guess.

**Checklist for the Day of the Test**

23. Checklist for the Day of the Test - Compiled from many sources

including an article by Ruth Beechick, Dorothy Karman, and Gregory

Cizek in the February/March 1990 Teaching Home, reprinted with

permission.

(\_\_) Plan ahead for a peaceful, unhurried evening and morning before the

test.

(\_\_) Check directions to the testing site and plan to leave and arrive early to

avoid stress before the test.

(\_\_) Make sure your child sleeps well, eats a healthy breakfast, and gets

enough water to drink.

(\_\_) Be prepared with necessary tools such as extra pencils or calculators if

allowed.

(\_\_) If this is your child's first test, you may want to be present in the back of

the room for at least part of the time to relieve his anxiety.

(\_\_) Be sure your child understands what to do if he needs to go to the

bathroom during the test. Try to prevent this need.

(\_\_) Avoid conversations between other students and your child before a test;

anxiety is contagious.

(\_\_) Pray with your child that he will remember what he has learned and do

his best.

Thank the Lord that He promised to always be with your child and take good

care of him.

**21. What Test-Taking Skills Can I Teach My Child?**

There are specific skills and strategies involved in taking tests that can help

your child do his best.

**1. Directions**

\_\_ Always listen to and read the directions carefully; don't assume that you

already know them. Sometimes they change only slightly, but significantly,

from one section to the next.

\_\_ Ask the instructor to explain any directions that you do not understand.

\_\_ Be sure you know how and where to mark the answers, especially if they

are on a separate sheet.

\_\_ Mark answers carefully and neatly, filling in the blanks completely so that it

will be graded correctly.

**2. Wording**

\_\_ Watch out for wording such as "Which of the following is not true?" or for

answers that sound or look similar.

\_\_ On a true or false question, look for the words never, always, only, best.

**3. Attitude**

\_\_ Relax by taking several slow, deep breaths and changing your position

from time to time.

\_\_ Remember that you know a lot of information and that you are doing your

best to show what you know.

\_\_ Breathe a short prayer for the Lord's help (as prayed earlier).

**4. Pacing**

\_\_ Since most tests are timed, don't get bogged down on a question that you

can't answer or are unsure about.

\_\_ Answer the items you are sure of first. This builds confidence, and you

won't miss points on easy questions by running out of time.

\_\_ Skip difficult questions and place an "x" by the number of the question in

the margin on the answer sheet.

\_\_ Answer questions that you're not sure of the best you can and mark them

with a "?" in the margin.

\_\_ When you have answered all the other questions, answer the questions

with an "X" in the margin and recheck questions you marked with "?".

**5. Helps**

\_\_ If you need to, look back at the reading selection to check facts and ideas.

\_\_ Try each answer in the blank to help you decide which one sounds right.

\_\_ Remember, sometimes there are no mistakes to be found or two answers

can be correct and you must choose the answer that includes them both.

\_\_ When you are not sure, eliminate answers you know are incorrect and take

your best guess among the rest. Some of your guesses may be right.

**6. Math**

\_\_ On arithmetic test items, do a quick estimate with rounded-off numbers.

This will help you avoid "silly" mistakes and may even help you locate the

only possible answer.

\_\_ When you copy a math problem onto scratch paper, line up the numbers

carefully and double check your copying.

\_\_ Check math problems by reversing operations.

**7. Timing**

\_\_ Use all the time allotted for the test; review your test if you finish early.

\_\_ Recheck the directions, questions, and your answers.

\_\_ Do not change answers unless they are obviously wrong

\_\_ Don't panic when students start handing in their papers. There's no reward

for being the first.