

Activity**The Clock Is Ticking!**

Purpose: Discover a strategy for taking timed tests.

Instructions to child:

Parent: Sit comfortably with your eyes open or closed. Take a few breaths.
(Pause)

Imagine that you are getting ready for the CSAPs (standardized testing). Remember, all the test sections are timed.

What do you notice?

Child: All I see is a huge clock—tick, tick, tick.

Parent: Tell me more about the clock. Are you even in your picture?

Child: Nope. Just this huge clock that makes a loud noise. TICK, TICK, TICK!

(Carefully observe your child. Watch for signs of stress, tension, anxiety: breathing becoming shallow, sweating, or nervousness.)

Parent: How do you feel?

Child: I'm scared that I'll mess up the test and won't finish in time. I must be stupid!

Parent: Wow, that really worries you, huh?

Child: You know that I don't do good on timed tests. I can't even think, I get so scared.

Parent: I get it. That must really be scary for you (acknowledgment of feelings).

Let's stop for a second and take a breath. Breathe in and out. Breathe all the way into your tummy. Put your hand on your tummy and just breathe into your hand.

(Pause)

Do you still see that big clock?

Child: Uh-huh.

Parent: Anything else?

Child: No (showing signs of anxiety and nervousness).

Parent: (Observe him). How do you feel? Are you hot or cold?

Child: Really hot.

Parent: How hot?

Child: Like I'm burning up!

Parent: What would you like to do? Turn on a fan? Open a window? Jump in a swimming pool to cool off?

Child: How about opening a window?

Parent: OK. Imagine that you are opening a window to let the fresh cool air in. Let the air cool you down. Let it go through your entire body. What do you notice?

Child: (Big sigh from the child.) Phew ... I just opened the window and some wind is blowing.

Parent: How does that make you feel?

Child: Better, not so hot.

Parent: So what do you notice now? What does the clock look like?

Child: Hey, the clock is gone!

Parent: Where did it go?

Child: I don't know.

Parent: What do you see in your picture now?

Child: I'm just sitting at my desk.

Parent: What are you doing?

Child: Playing with my pencils.

Parent: Tell me more about how you look.

Child: I'm very little, and looking scared. I'm holding my pencils very tight. (Observe your child. You might actually see his hands gripping tightly.)

Parent: How about shaking out your hands. Let those pencils go and just shake all the tightness out of your hands. Wiggle your fingers. Just shake, shake, shake!

(Encourage him to really move his hands and fingers.)

Now what would you like to do?

Child: Jump around!

Parent: Do it!

(Encourage him to jump, move, laugh.)

Parent: You look like you're having fun!

OK. It's time to take your test. Are you ready?

Child: I don't really want to take it, but I can. At least I'm not so hot and my fingers are wiggling. Hey, I seem to be bigger than I was before!

Parent: Nice! What else would you bring into your picture to help you on the test?

Child: All the answers!

Parent: Well, that would certainly be helpful. How can you do that?

Child: I can write all the stuff I learned on a sheet and save the sheet in my head.

Parent: And anytime you could check your answer sheet in your head for information? Is that right?

Child: Yeah!

Parent: So imagine how it feels now—going into your classroom, breathing with the window open, wiggling your hands and toes and having all the answers in your head (**See It!**).

Child: I think I can take my test now.

Parent: Make yourself strong and smart. What can you say to remind you of feeling like this?

Child: I'm smart and have all the answers in my head (**Say It!**).

Parent: You're the best! Now gently open your eyes and shake out all your wiggles. Practice everyday saying, "I am smart and have all the answers in my head." Say it while you see and feel yourself breathing with the window open and wiggling your arms and fingers.

This was great fun!

Ready to study for the test now?

Child: OK (**Do It!**).