

## **Conquer the stress, ace the test – Managing examination anxiety during CBSE Board examinations 2024**

*(A survival guide for parents)*

Dear Parents,

The 2024 board examinations are right around the corner. It can be a challenging time for the students. However, we also recognise that in India the whole family gets involved in the process. Based on interactions with students over a few years, here are some ways in which you can be supportive to your ward.

**A) Soothe your own anxieties** – Children are very attuned to the parent’s state of mind during this time period, often looking up to them in order to gauge their own responses. If you’re too anxious, there are chances that could influence your child’s perception of the exam. If you find yourself more stressed than usual, find ways to ground yourself emotionally. This is known as co-regulation in psychological jargon.

**B) Be mindful of the words you use** – Words are very powerful. They can uplift and they can disempower. More so during a hectic time period. Reflect on the language that you’re using. Is it too critical? Harsh? Negative? Is it supportive or painting the examination as a scary event? Or is it rooted in optimism?

**C) Guide but do not project** (A sentiment captured in PM Modi’s ‘Pariksha pe Charcha’ as well) – The lines between protection and projection get blurred very quickly. Sometimes a child’s choice of subject after these examinations are a ground for many of us to fulfill what remains vacant in our own lives. You can offer your child a perspective based on your experience but if you push too much, chances are even if it’s correct...it will push them away.

**D) Help out by retaining a structure** – Chances are that your child’s whole energy is divested in studies and entrances. During this time many children fail to respond to bodily cues like hunger, thirst and the need for movement. Setting up a meal plan or specific timings/intervals where you can provide them with tea, coffee (try to avoid excessive caffeine), juices, liquids and foods that are high in energy go a long way. Additionally, sitting in one corner and studying the whole day isn’t very healthy. At least encourage your child to take frequent breaks and move their bodies a little bit. For example, they could listen to music and walk or go outdoors for an hour to get some light.

**E) Balancing structure with pockets of autonomy** – All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. If there’s continuous studying and no room for fun or play,

the exam can evoke a lot of repulsion in children. To enable them to study in a sustainable way, all fun cannot be completely halted. An outing once a week or letting them watch an interesting show before sleeping also allows your child to decompress. This is rejuvenating. Not distracting.

F) **Sleep hygiene** – Sleep, especially deep sleep is incredibly important. This is the time when the brain and its various components that are deployed in learning get to recharge and rewire. Many students are unable to sleep because of examination anxiety. If your child argues when you request them to sleep on time, instead of reacting to them defensively give them logic that cannot be argued with. Such as connecting better retention to reduction in doing the same concept multiple times in a state of exhaustion/sleep deprivation which would leave them with some time to pursue the things they like.

G) **Be realistic** – While one can give their best shot and must be encouraged to, every child has different strengths and capacities. Instead of forcefully fitting your child into a social mold, recognize their strengths and help them in maximizing that. Children can be pushed but if we push them too hard, the unconscious message that is delivered is that the papers are more significant than their interests and limitations. Every child has their own unique potential that doesn't stop developing after boards. Rather, this is the starting point of their lives.

H) **Maintain boundaries** with relatives/outsidere who are overtly inquisitive about your child's performance.

Various articles on the internet capture these tips but if we had to leave with one thought for the reader, it is that this too is a phase...not the whole of life. The boards are not just an opportunity for the child to showcase their academic/cognitive abilities but also an invitation for us to develop capacities which we too as parents may not always have had opportunities to develop as fully. (for example., bearing anxiety, learning how to soothe it, self-regulation and its connection to co-regulation).

*It is crucial to acknowledge one's limitations in a supportive role as well. If you find that your child is extraordinarily anxious during this phase, please connect them to a counsellor, a trusted mentor/teacher or a therapist so that they can receive all the support that they can to perform to the optimum.*

School Counsellor

DEAR STUDENTS,  
SCAN THIS QR CODE TO LISTEN TO SOME MOTIVATIONAL AND UPLIFTING  
MUSIC WHENEVER YOU TAKE A STUDY BREAK TO KEEP YOURSELVES GOING,  
SUSTAINABLY.



**EXAM MOTIVATION PLAYLIST FOR  
CBSE BOARD EXAMS (2023-24)**

Counselling Corner (TIS)

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