



English Parents' Committee Association



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Katherine Korakakis is the President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA) and Head of Entrepreneurship at ProMontreal Entrepreneurs (PME), an early-stage VC fund. She has spent over a decade fostering entrepreneurial initiatives in Quebec, particularly through the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Katherine also serves as Vice-President of PME MTL Centre-Ouest, participates on key investment committees, and has co-authored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education, contributing her expertise to various corporate boards.

President's message

Exam Preparation and School Transitions

Dear parents,

I am pleased to present the recommendations of EPCA and its parent committees regarding Bill 94, introduced by Minister of Education Bernard Drainville. This Bill seeks to reinforce secularism within Quebec's education system by amending the Education Act and the Act Respecting Private Education. The proposed legislation introduces new obligations for schools, administration, staff, students, and volunteers to uphold principles of state secularism and democratic values.

To learn more about our specific recommendations on Bill 94, see the information we provided [here](#).

Banning Cell Phones in Schools

You may have seen recent news coverage announcing that, starting in the 2025 school year, students will no longer be permitted to use cell phones during school hours—whether inside the school or on the playground, with specific exceptions for pedagogical purposes, health requirements, or special needs accommodations.

While the goal is to create a more focused learning environment, it is crucial that governing boards play an active role in determining how this policy is applied within their specific contexts. Equally important is the involvement of students and parents to identify challenges and develop workable solutions, ensuring that these new measures are both realistic and considerate of diverse needs.





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President's message

Exam Preparation and School Transitions cont.

Ensuring Access to Education for All Students

We have heard from parents whose children, despite meeting academic requirements, are being refused entry to CEGEP programs solely because they cannot meet heightened French language criteria. This is particularly concerning for students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who may require modified learning environments and additional time to acquire language skills. The absence of reasonable accommodations for these students contradicts the very principles of accessibility and inclusion that our education system is meant to uphold.

We are committed to advocating for these provisions and will continue to work with our government partners, and educational partners to ensure that every student, regardless of their learning profile, has the opportunity to succeed.

As we approach the end of the school year, our newsletter is dedicated to helping parents and students prepare for final exams and important transitions. We remain dedicated to representing your voice on these critical issues, advocating for policies that not only support academic success but also prioritize the well-being and inclusion of all students.

In solidarity,

Katherine Korakakis
President,
English Parents' Committee Association



Exam Study Tips for Parents and Students

Studying for exams isn't quite the same as regular homework or studying during the school year. It requires a bit more structure and intention—but with the right approach, students can get through it without burning out. Here are a few simple ways you can support your child during exam time.

1. Sleep First

This is the #1 priority. If your child isn't sleeping enough, nothing else will stick. Late-night cramming won't help if they're too tired to think straight the next day. If they're feeling anxious or having trouble winding down, try things like calming playlists, meditation apps, or aromatherapy. And make screens-off-an-hour-before-bed a house rule that is strictly enforced during exam period. They can sneak their after-hours scrolling once they've crushed their exams!

2. Take Breaks to Boost Learning

Believe it or not, breaks help brains! When your child studies something new, their brain needs downtime to sort it out and store it properly. This is called “consolidation”. Think of learning like riding a bike—we're wobbly at first, but with practice (and rest in between), things start to click. That's why cramming doesn't work—real learning takes time and space.

3. Mix It Up

Tied in to the idea of consolidation, spending hours on the same subject is usually ineffective and can lead to burnout. Our brains get bored. Try switching subjects each day or breaking up longer study sessions with different topics. It keeps things fresh and helps with focus.

4. Let Them Teach You

One of the best ways to really understand something is to teach it. Ask your child to explain what they're learning or walk you through a problem. Showing genuine interest in what they're learning can also motivate them to engage more actively with the material.

5. Short and Focused Sessions

Encourage 30–45 minute study blocks, followed by a quick 5–10 minute break. Look up the Pomodoro Technique: for many people, it's much more effective than long, dragged-out sessions. Everyone's brain has a limit—work with it, not against it.

6. Use a Mix of Learning Tools

Textbooks and notes are great, but switching things up can help kids stay engaged. Look for YouTube videos, podcasts, or even educational games related to what they're learning. As a starting point, Alloprof has a ton of resources to offer. Keep in mind that the material doesn't need to be a perfect match—related topics still help reinforce subjects learned in class and keep things interesting.

Final Tip: Stay positive. Exams can be stressful, but a calm and supportive home environment makes all the difference. Even small encouragements from you can go a long way.

Getting Ready for Exams: Strategies for Special Needs Students

Exams and preparing for them can be stressful for everyone, but especially for special needs students. Additional preparation and support can make a big difference for them. Here are some tips to help them succeed:

- **Understand Individual Needs:** Every student with special needs is unique. Take the time to understand the specific challenges and strengths of your child.
- **Ask for a Supportive Environment:** Ensure the exam environment is conducive to your child's needs. This might include providing a quiet space, adjusting lighting or seating arrangements, or allowing for breaks as needed.
- **Use Assistive Technology if possible:** Leverage assistive technology tools to help students with special needs access exam materials more easily. This could include screen readers, speech-to-text software, or specialized keyboards.
- **Request Accommodations:** Request accommodations that level the playing field for students with special needs. This might include extra time, breaks, or alternate formats for exams (e.g., oral exams instead of written).

If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) make sure these strategies are included and outlined in their IEP.

You can also use the below Preparation preparation and Study Technics:

- **Find the best Study Techniques:** Find study methods that work best for your child. This could include using flashcards, mind maps, practice tests, or summarizing key points in their own words.
- **Help them get Organized:** Develop a study schedule and create a dedicated study space that is free from distraction
- **Practice Test-Taking:** Help your child develop effective test-taking strategies through practice and guidance such as reading questions carefully, underlining keywords, eliminating wrong answers, and planning time effectively. Teach them techniques such as breaking down questions, managing time effectively, and staying calm under pressure. This helps students get comfortable with the format and time pressure of the real exam.
- **Offer Visual Supports:** Use visual aids such as diagrams, charts, or graphic organizers to help your child understand and organize information. Visual supports can be particularly helpful for students with learning disabilities or attention issues.
- **Chunk Information:** Break down exam content into smaller, more manageable chunks. This can make studying more approachable and reduce feelings of overwhelm for students with special needs.



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Getting Ready for Exams: Strategies for Special Needs Students

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You can also provide Additional Support:

- **Encourage Self-Advocacy:** Teach your child how to advocate for their own needs. Encourage them to communicate with teachers or support staff about any accommodations or assistance they require during exams.
- **Provide Positive Reinforcement:** Offer praise and encouragement to boost your child's confidence and motivation. Recognize their efforts and progress, regardless of the outcome of the exam.
- **Support Emotional Well-being:** Recognize the emotional impact that exams can have on students with special needs. Offer emotional support and stress management techniques, such as deep breathing exercises or mindfulness techniques.
- **Focus on Progress:** Celebrate small victories and encourage your child throughout the preparation process.
- **A Good Night's Sleep:** Ensure your child gets a good night's sleep before the exam to be well-rested and focused.
- **Teacher Communication:** Maintain open communication with your child's teacher about any specific needs or concerns regarding the exam.

By understanding the exam format, implementing effective study strategies, and providing personalized support, you can help your special needs child feel more prepared and confident on exam day.



What is Test Anxiety and Signs to Look Out For

It's not unusual for kids to get a little nervous before a big test — sweaty palms, a racing heart, maybe even a sleepless night. But for some kids, that nervousness doesn't go away. It lingers, grows, and can even get in the way of learning and performance. That's when we're dealing with something more than just the average pre-test jitters — we're talking about test anxiety.

What Is Test Anxiety, Really?

Test anxiety is a form of performance anxiety that shows up before or during tests. It's that overwhelming sense of fear or dread that a child might feel at the mere mention of a quiz, pop test, or final exam. This anxiety isn't just mental — it can manifest physically and emotionally, affecting a child's mood, behaviour, and even their health.

And while any child can experience test anxiety, it's especially common among kids who learn and think differently. Kids with ADHD, dyslexia, or other learning challenges often carry the extra weight of past academic struggles. Each tough experience can chip away at their confidence, and when it's time for the next test, all those feelings come rushing back.

Signs You Might Be Seeing Test Anxiety

Test anxiety doesn't always look the way you'd expect. It's not just about saying "I'm nervous." It can show up in surprising — and sometimes confusing — ways. Here are a few signs to look out for:

- Sudden mood swings, crankiness, or irritability
- Refusing to study or avoiding school altogether
- Frequent complaints of headaches or stomach aches, especially on test days
- Trouble sleeping before a test
- Repeating negative self-talk like "I'm going to fail" or "I'm not smart enough"
- Obsessing over test results before it even happens

Sometimes, these signs might seem like typical kid behaviour, but when they cluster around test times, they're worth paying attention to.



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What is Test Anxiety and Signs to Look Out For

cont.

Why Learning Differences Can Make Test Anxiety Worse

Kids with learning differences often need to work harder to keep up — not because they're any less capable, but because their brains process information differently. Tests, especially those not designed with these differences in mind, can become major obstacles.

When a child with dyslexia faces a timed reading test, or a student with ADHD is asked to sit still and concentrate in a quiet room, it can feel impossible. That sense of failure or “not measuring up” can build over time, feeding into anxiety and making each new test feel more overwhelming than the last.

So, How Can We Help?

The good news is that there are ways to support kids through this. Remember small shifts can make a big difference.

Here are a few ideas to start:

- Talk openly about tests and normalize nervousness — it's okay to feel anxious.
- Create low-stakes practice opportunities at home or in the classroom to build confidence.
- Focus on progress, not perfection — praise effort, growth, and resilience.
- Teach coping skills, such as breathing techniques, visualization, or positive self-talk.
- Stay connected with teachers, counsellors, and specialists so everyone's on the same page.



Final Thoughts

Test anxiety doesn't mean your child is broken or incapable. In fact, many kids experiencing it are working harder than we even realize. With understanding, patience, and the right tools, we can help them feel safe, supported, and confident — not just on test days, but every day.

Remember: It's not just about teaching kids how to pass a test. It's about helping them believe in their ability to learn, grow, and succeed on their own terms.

5 Tips to Help High-Schoolers Cope with Test Anxiety

High school brings a new level of academic pressure — from midterms and finals to entrance exams and standardized provincial tests. For many teens, especially those with learning and thinking differences, these assessments can feel like high-stakes hurdles. And with that pressure often comes test anxiety — the kind that lingers in the days before the test and peaks the morning of.

So how can you help your teen manage the stress without letting it overwhelm them? Here are five practical strategies to support your high schooler through test season.



1. Listen to Their Worries — About Tests and Beyond

Sometimes, the anxiety teens feel about tests isn't just about the test itself — it's about what comes after. For students nearing graduation, every exam can feel like a make-or-break moment for their future.

Create space for honest conversations. Ask your teen how they're feeling and really listen — without rushing to reassure or solve everything. Acknowledge their concerns but remind them of the big picture. Try saying something like, "Yes, this test is important, and we'll help you prepare. But remember, there are many different paths after high school — and we'll find the right one for you."

2. Swap Cramming for Steady Prep

Last-minute cramming is a recipe for stress, especially for students who struggle with time management or organization. Instead, help your teen build a realistic study schedule.

Start by mapping out upcoming tests on a monthly calendar. Then break that down into weekly goals — what to review and when. Regular check-ins to update the plan can keep things on track and help your teen feel more in control of their learning.

3. Demystify the Test Format

For many teens, uncertainty around the type of test can fuel anxiety. Is it multiple choice? Short answer? Essays? Diagrams to label?

Encourage your teen to talk to their teacher in advance about what to expect. Knowing the format can help them tailor their study sessions — and if a test includes a skill they struggle with (like handwriting or memory recall), they'll have time to practice or seek accommodations.

5 Tips to Help High-Schoolers Cope with Test Anxiety

cont.

4. Review Test Supports and Accommodations

If your teen has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or receives testing accommodations, make sure they understand exactly what those supports are — and that they're entitled to use them.

Knowing they'll have extra time, quiet space, or assistive technology can ease anxiety. Just as important: Encourage them to speak up if those supports aren't in place on test day. Learning to self-advocate is an empowering skill that can reduce feelings of helplessness.

5. Normalize Setbacks — and Build a Game Plan

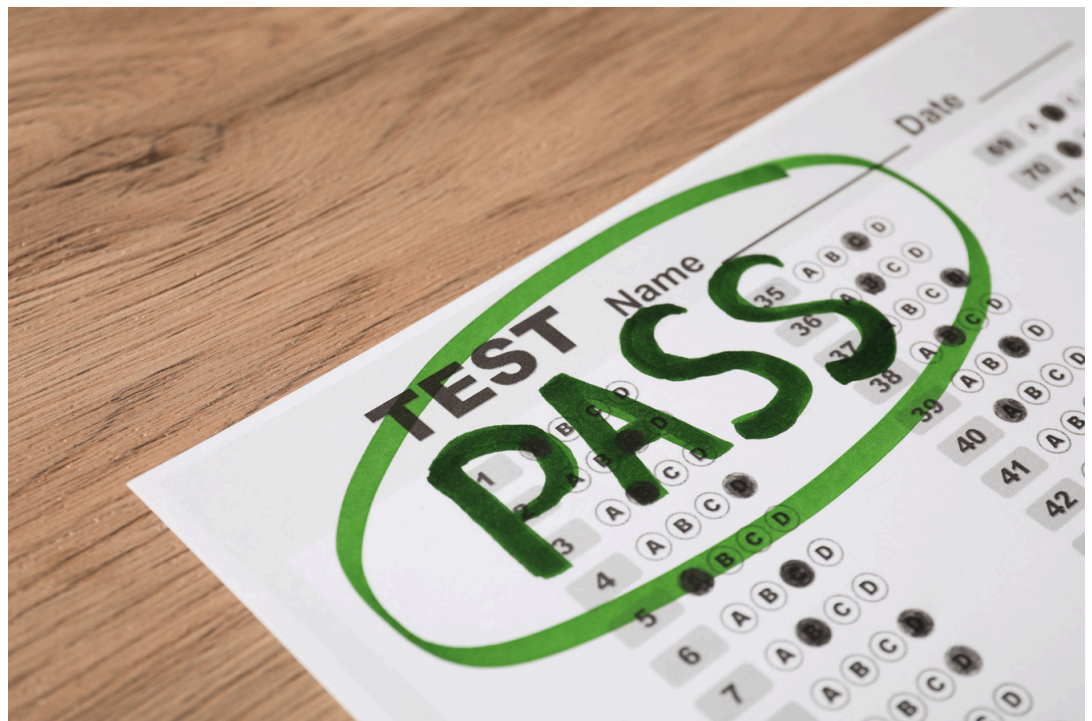
Sometimes, even after solid prep and support, things don't go as planned. That can feel devastating to a teen who already struggles with self-confidence.

Instead of letting a bad grade feed a fear of failure, treat it as feedback. Sit down with your teen and talk about what went well and what didn't. Then make a plan — maybe it's revisiting study strategies, looping in the IEP team, or simply adjusting expectations.

You might say, "I know you worked hard, and I'm proud of you for that. Let's talk about what we can try differently next time — we're in this together."

Final Thought

Test anxiety is tough, but it's not insurmountable. With the right tools, planning, and support, your teen can learn to face exams with more confidence and less stress. The goal isn't perfection — it's helping them feel prepared, empowered, and understood.



Supporting Your Child's Mental Health This Summer—Especially After Ministry Exams

As summer approaches, students are wrapping up the school year—and for some, that includes the added pressure of Ministry exams. Whether your child is in Grade 5, 6, or secondary 4, or 5, the weeks leading up to summer can be stressful and emotionally taxing.

Even after exams are over, the transition to summer break can bring a mix of relief, uncertainty, and emotional fatigue. As a parent, your support is vital during this time.

Here are five keyways to help maintain your child's mental health heading into the summer months:

1. Respect Recovery Time After Exams

If your child has just completed Ministry exams, they may feel mentally drained. Give them space to rest and recover—don't rush them into summer plans immediately. A few days of downtime can go a long way for emotional reset.

2. Keep a Light Routine

Even with the school year behind them, kids still benefit from structure. Encourage a consistent sleep schedule, regular meals, and a healthy balance of activity and downtime.

3. Open the Conversation

Ask how they feel about how exams went and what summer looks like for them. Normalizing discussions around stress and uncertainty can ease anxiety and help them process the year's end in a healthy way.

4. Foster Connection and Purpose

Social connection and a sense of purpose help stabilize emotional well-being. Suggest summer camps, part-time work, volunteer roles, or creative projects. These give kids something to look forward to and feel good about.

5. Be Mindful of Mental Health Red Flags

Some students may feel disappointed by how exams went or anxious about results. Look for signs like withdrawal, mood swings, changes in appetite or sleep, or loss of interest in activities. These may indicate a deeper need for support. Professional help is available, and early intervention is powerful.

Summer is a chance for students to recharge and reset—especially after a demanding academic year. With a little structure, open communication, and emotional support, your child can step into summer with confidence and calm. The EPCA would like to remind parents that self-care is also important. As your child's number one advocate, it is important that you take care of your own mental health as well.

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Supporting Your Child's Confidence: Strategies for Exam Season and Beyond

Mission: Alloprof helps students in Quebec to transform academic challenges into successes, thanks to its free, professional, and stimulating services.



As exam season approaches, it's natural for students—and parents—to feel a bit stressed. But building confidence doesn't happen overnight. It's a gradual process, and with the right support and mindset your child can approach exams and other challenges with a greater sense of self-assurance. At [Alloprof](#), we're here to help every step of the way with free tools and resources to help your child feel prepared and confident.



Understanding Memory Blanks: They're Normal!

It's common for students to experience memory blanks during exams—especially when nerves kick in. One way to reduce this pressure is by practising relaxation techniques like deep breathing to calm the mind. In cases where students are allowed memory aids during exams, it's helpful to have organized summaries or formulas ready; but make sure they're practising recall without them too. For more on reducing memory blanks, see [Why Some Children Have Memory Blanks During Exams](#).

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Supporting Your Child's Confidence

cont.

The Balance: Pushing vs. Pushing Too Hard

As parents, we want the best for our kids. But pushing them too hard can sometimes backfire. Instead of focusing solely on grades, celebrate their effort and progress. Acknowledge the hard work they put in—regardless of the outcome. This helps them understand that setbacks are part of the journey. Managing expectations is key to helping them stay motivated and confident.

Reducing Stress—A Confidence Booster

Stress and confidence don't mix. Help your child manage their stress levels with activities that help them feel more centred. Even small steps like taking a break, getting outdoors, or practising mindful breathing can make a huge difference. Simple stress-relief techniques can help your child stay calm and focused—especially during stressful times. And if they struggle with performance anxiety, we've got some great insights on how to tackle it head-on.

Celebrate Mistakes—They're Part of Growth

We all make mistakes, and that's how we learn. Encourage your child to see mistakes not as failures, but as opportunities to grow. Celebrate their progress and the effort they put into their work, even if things don't go perfectly. Honey, You Deserve to Feel Proud is a reminder that every step forward counts!

Exams Don't Have to Be a Source of Stress

Exams can feel overwhelming, but breaking down study sessions into smaller chunks and keeping a calm mindset can work wonders. Help your child focus on the process rather than stressing over results.

Confidence Begins with Support

At the end of the day, confidence isn't just about acing tests—it's about helping your child believe in themselves and their abilities. By focusing on effort, managing stress, and embracing challenges, you're giving them the tools to thrive in school and beyond. For more tips and resources, visit Alloprof's Parent Resources section.

Parent Resources



The Quebec Federation of Parents' Committees, with support from various partners – including EPCA's President Katherine Korakakis, has put together a guide to assist parents whose children are facing violence or bullying issues at school – click [here](#).

Tutoring



Homework Help



ENGLISH ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES

Explainer: What Quebec parents and students need to know about English eligibility certificates: At this [LINK](#) are details on how to apply for a certificate and who is eligible to attend English schools in Quebec.

EPCA MISSION STATEMENT

The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) is a coalition of parents' committees of Quebec's English-language public school boards, representing more than 100,00 students in the youth sector.

EPCA advocates for a strong and sustainable English-language public education system to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for our children, while respecting the culture and language of anglophone Quebecers.

To do so, EPCA seeks to engage and motivate parents across Quebec to contribute to strong, representative and effective parent governance, to foster positive relationships with stakeholders across the educational spectrum, and to provide guidance and support to all member organizations.

What would you like to see in
our upcoming editions?

[TELL US HERE](#)

5253, Blvd. Decarie, Suite 309, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 3C3
(514) 778-3722 - epcaquebec.org - president@epcaquebec.org

EPCA STRATEGIC PILLARS

INFORM

Using all communications tools at our disposal, offer up-to-date information on public education initiatives, parent governance interests, best practices and issues management to ensure a healthy, well-engaged anglophone parent community.

CONSULT

Ensure strong, high-quality and consistent feedback mechanisms with members and partners across the English-language public school network through both electronic and in-person methods.

SUPPORT

Provide training and professional development at all levels of parent governance, optimize the sharing of best practices and provide multiple support services for parent committees, governing boards and parent delegates in need.

ADVOCATE

Push for appropriate policy change and improvement through enhanced partnerships with like-minded organizations, Government working groups/tasks forces, and related organizations, through well-considered political positions on behalf of English- Language parents committees across Quebec, taking into account regional difference and the urban/rural divide.