

The argument:
**TESTING IS BAD.
PERIOD.**

What's at the heart of it? Some people don't like being graded or labeled or typed, and they don't want it for their kids.

FIRST FIND COMMON GROUND.

"You're right. Tests aren't fun. They're not supposed to be. There's always some discomfort with evaluation—it's part of life."

THEN PIVOT TO A HIGHER EMOTION: COMMON SENSE AND PEACE OF MIND.

"Tests are part of life, from childhood through adulthood. They let us know we're ready to move on. They reassure parents that their kids have mastered the skills they need to reach the next level. And they help schools know what kids need."

DOs ↑

- 1** Do normalize testing. Remind people how some form of testing adds value to their life.

"These tests are just like an annual checkup—an important opportunity to find out how your child is doing, and how they compare to other kids their age. Just like height and weight are benchmarks, these tests are benchmarks for reading and math."

"Throughout childhood you must be able to pass certain levels, show some mastery, before you can move on. From video games to swimming lessons to driving tests to tryouts, kids have lots of moments when they have to prove themselves."

- 2** Do find positive sound bites, especially from students.

- 3** Do talk about how these tests are different.

"The new tests have broader ways to recognize talent and skill. They measure creativity and critical thinking, not just memorization."

- 4** Do sell the power of information.

"Teachers will change from year to year. But the information from these tests will provide the constant, objective benchmark you can track over the course of your child's education."

"These tests provide valuable, objective information for every kind of student. If your child is falling behind, the information will help the teacher provide more support. If your child is excelling, the information will help the teacher provide more challenge. They're designed to get your kids the help they need, or the advancement they've earned."

DON'Ts ↓

- 1** Don't sell the experience of testing, sell the value of information. Sell the results.

"Growing requires discomfort. Learning includes challenges. The process isn't fun for anyone, but the information is really important."

- 2** Don't compare it to a flu shot, that's negative. Stick with annual checkup.

DID YOU KNOW?

Testing can find kids who are really smart but don't show it in the classroom, or identify kids who are really good at school but bad at tests.



WATCH OUT FOR RABBIT HOLES!

Make sure you know the technical implementation in your state. There might still be some "bubble testing."

AUDIENCE SHIFTS

BUSINESS
Some business people will relate to the idea of certification exams.

TEACHERS
Tests provide valuable, objective information for a teaching practice. They're another tool teachers can use to help kids.