

NAPLAN results out soon: it shouldn't be a testing time

If you have school-age children in Year 3, 5, 7 or 9, you'd be aware that they took the NAPLAN tests (the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) in May this year.



Testing children at school is not new. It happens every week in most schools. However, NAPLAN is a national test that is specifically designed to provide a snapshot of your child's learning in literacy and numeracy.

Reading, writing and maths are basic skills that help us all get on in this world. School, work and life become hard if you can't read, write and understand how numbers work. As a parent, I want my children to be able to read the bus timetable to catch the bus home, or know how much change they should get after buying food at the school canteen. These simple activities rely on literacy and numeracy. Like all parents, I want to know if my children can do better and I want to know that as early as possible.

The results for this year's tests will be with you over the coming weeks, earlier than in previous years. Sometime in August or September – the exact timing varies from state to state – you will receive your child's NAPLAN report.

In the NAPLAN report, your child's results will be shown against six levels of achievement. The black dot is your child's result. The black triangle is the average results for all Australian children in that year level.

If your child's black dot is close to the black triangle, it means your child is performing at a similar level to other children of a like age. If your child's black dot is well above the black triangle, they are doing better than children in their year level across Australia; and if it is much lower, they aren't doing as well as children in their year level across Australia.

If you are happy with what you see in your child's NAPLAN student report, take the time to explain the results to them and encourage them in their areas of strength.

If you aren't so happy with what you see in your child's NAPLAN student report, here're a few things to consider:

- NAPLAN takes place every second year. So, you could go back and look at your child's previous school reports. Is NAPLAN showing you the same thing you see in them? Or is NAPLAN not reflecting what you know about your child? NAPLAN is a snapshot of your child's abilities in literacy and numeracy, so it's good to compare what you are seeing in the NAPLAN report against other school reports before reaching any conclusions.

- Think about how your child deals with tests. For some children, tests are a breeze, while others may struggle. Although NAPLAN isn't a pass or fail test, it's still a test. Perhaps your child is normally good at reading, but for some reason their NAPLAN results show the opposite.
- Maybe your child was unwell or distracted on the day of NAPLAN?

After you've considered these things, you might make a time to have a talk with your child's teacher. Talking to your child's teacher will help you to put the NAPLAN results into context and understand what you and the school can do with the results, and how to assist your child in the areas that they may need help in.

Remember that NAPLAN is only a snapshot of how your child was going in literacy and numeracy at that point in time.

Whatever you do, don't stop any activities your child enjoys and don't focus your child only on reading, writing and maths. All activities are crucial to the school program and contribute to developing informed, happy children who are confident in their own abilities.



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The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for the national assessment program, including NAPLAN, and the My School website. ACARA works to improve the learning for all young Australians through world-class school curriculum, assessment and reporting.