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## NCEO Tool 9

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Reasons Why  
Students with  
Disabilities Should  
Take State Tests:  
A Customizable  
Template for a  
Flyer for Parents  
and Families

1% Toolkit

# **Reasons Why Students with Disabilities Should Take State Tests: A Customizable Template for a Flyer for Parents and Families**

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The National Center on Educational Outcomes is supported through a Cooperative Agreement (#H326G160001) with the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The Center is affiliated with the Institute on Community Integration at the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. The contents of this report were developed under the Cooperative Agreement from the U.S. Department of Education, but does not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the U.S. Department of Education or Offices within it. Readers should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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Strunk, K., Ressa, V.A., Huennekens, B., Thurlow, M.L., and Peterson, T. (2020). *Reasons why students with disabilities should take state tests: A customizable template for a flyer for parents and families* (NCEO Tool #9). National Center on Educational Outcomes.

## **Reasons Why Students with Disabilities Should Take State Tests: A Customizable Template for a Flyer for Parents and Families**

Federal laws, both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), require that all students participate in state assessments. State assessments of reading/language arts, mathematics, and science are administered each year. They include both general assessments, which are taken by most students with disabilities, and alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

ESSA also stipulates that to meet accountability requirements, at least 95% of all students and 95% of students with disabilities participate in statewide assessments. States incur negative consequences when they are unable to meet the 95% participation rates.

### **Purpose of Tool**

This resource was developed by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) to identify and describe reasons why students with disabilities should take state tests. The purpose of the tool is to provide a concise resource that administrators, teachers, and other educators can use when communicating with parents and families about why it is so important that their children with disabilities participate in state assessments. It also provides strategies to reduce student test anxiety.

This resource provides useful information for parents and families that they can factor into their thinking when making decisions about assessment participation. It is intended to provide a neutral but useful mechanism to guide positive, thoughtful conversations about student assessment participation. For example, this tool could be used during Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meetings or parent-teacher meetings. Students also may find this resource useful. The tool may be customized by a state, district, or school. To access the Word document, see <https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/Presentations/ParentFlyerNCEOtemplate.docx>.

# REASONS WHY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SHOULD TAKE STATE TESTS



**Remind Your Child of These Stress Reducers for the Day of Testing and During the Test**



**Eat well and get plenty of sleep.**



**Wear comfortable clothes.**

## How Does Taking the State Tests Help My Child?

- It provides you with information that you can use to advocate for supports and services for your child.
- It results in instruction appropriately rigorous for your child's educational needs.
- It supports high expectations and protects your child from the harm of low expectations.

## How Does Taking the State Tests Help My Child's School?

- It holds the school responsible for the learning of all students.
- It gives a complete and accurate picture of how all students in the school are doing, including those with disabilities. When students with disabilities are not included in test results, they are excluded from school improvement plans, and possibly funding allocations based on test results.

## What are Some Ways to Ensure a Less Stressful State Testing Experience for Your Child?

- Talk together about what makes testing stressful.
- Work with your child and your child's teacher on a plan to address stress triggers well before the time of the test.
- Have your child practice using identified stress-reducing strategies (breathing exercises, imagining peaceful scenes) for other possible "stressful" activities prior to testing.
- Work with your child to identify accommodations that help with reducing stress (self-calming object, music, favorite seat location). Be sure they are listed on the IEP and that your child has contributed to the list.
- Use positive language about testing and help your child use positive self-talk (e.g., I can do my best; mistakes are okay; tests are helpful).
- Have your child practice taking tests several times using planned stress-reducing strategies.
- Talk about testing as part of instruction and a regular part of the school day.
- Remind your child that passing the test is not required for promotion or graduation. See the Pathways to Graduation information.

## CONTACT



(Delete the instructions below and add in your contact information)

Scan the QR code to the left with a smartphone camera to go to QR-Code-Generator.com and create your own custom QR code for your website for free.

[www.yourwebsites.com](http://www.yourwebsites.com)



Have all needed materials at hand.



Practice positive self-talk, deep breathing, and use of calming accommodations.



Ask questions if you do not understand directions. Know that some questions about the test itself cannot be answered.



Don't worry if you are unsure about an answer because many tests are designed to ask hard questions.

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