



YOUR CONTINUOUS LOVE,
SUPPORT AND CHAMPIONING
OF YOUR CHILD IS THE
"ORDINARY MAGIC" * THAT
HELPS THEM SUCCEED



*A term coined by the psychologist Ann Maston.

As a parent or primary caregiver, you are the first educator of your child. Whether you have formal education or not, you are the most important adult in your child's life.

From the day your child was born, you have played an essential role in supporting their development. From the moment that they were learning to sit, walk and talk you created the best environment for them to grow and learn. You love and care for them, and together you have built the foundations enabling them to go out into the world.

As your child starts formal school, teachers take the driver's seat in facilitating your child's education, but you still play a vital role in providing your child with the support that will see them fulfil their potential.

As your child returns to school for the second term, where they will be writing exams, your support during this time is essential to your child.

This Parent Power Pack shares ideas on how you can encourage and champion your child during exam time.

WHY ARE EXAMS IMPORTANT?

Exams can be a daunting experience for both you and your child. Your child writes exams and tests at their school for two reasons:

- The first reason is for the teacher to be able to assess what your child has learnt in a subject or learning area.
- The second – which is just as important – is for you, your child and their teacher to learn more about the areas where your child may be struggling, so that you are all better able to support your child's academic development after the tests or exams by making decisions in the best interest of your child. For example, if your child is struggling with mathematics, their teacher can offer extra tuition or your child could change subjects from mathematics to mathematical literacy.

WHAT INFORMATION MUST THE SCHOOL PROVIDE?

Your child has a right to quality basic education, no matter what school they go to and whether you are paying school fees or not. Even though exams are meant to test what your child has learned, the school needs to provide you and your child with the correct information regarding exams so that your child has the best chance at passing.

- The school should give your child an exam timetable before the exams start. If the school has not provided your child with a timetable, you have a right to request this from the school.
- Each subject teacher should provide your child, and all the learners, with a list of what they will need to know to be able to write the exam in a specific subject. If your child has not received this, encourage them to ask their teacher or teachers.
- Most schools have parent-teacher meetings at least once a term where parents are provided with information about the progress of their children. If your child's school does not have parent-teacher meetings, you can request meetings with your child's teachers to find out about where your child is excelling and where they need more support. Checking your child's first term report can guide you in setting up appointments with the correct teachers at the school.



Learners at LM Malgas Secondary School in Willowvale, Eastern Cape. Photo: Max Bastard

HOW CAN THE SCHOOL HELP DURING EXAMS?

- **Remove the fear!**

Your child's school can help by making exams less intimidating, showing your child how to revise, focusing on the content and skills required, and how such skills can be applied by giving them mock test questions to complete within time constraints.

- **Encourage, support and be flexible**

Open communication is encouraged between teachers, parents and learners. This will help you to find ways to support your child to prepare for their exams. Your child will feel safe to ask questions about subjects and issues that they may be struggling with.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD DURING EXAMS?

You should know that you are not expected to become a teacher. You are in partnership with the teachers and the school. Your role as a parent is to support your child through the process of learning by creating a space where they can prepare for their exams and tests.

Here are a few tips on how you can do this:

- **When you have your child's exam timetable, sit with them and talk about how much time they need to be able to prepare for the exams.**
- **Help them draw up a study timetable, and make sure that everyone at home understands that during the agreed-upon study times, the child has space to study with minimal distraction.**
- **Make sure that your child maintains a proper balance between study and rest. It's important to tell your child that they need time to rest after an exam and recharge before they can do any beneficial study for the next exam.**
- **Ensure that your child has enough sleep every day, and that they eat healthy food.**

LISTEN TO THE STORY OF THEIR DAY AND MOVE ON

After each day's exams, when you get home ask your child how their exam was. Simply allow them the time and space to tell their story and do not be tempted to review the errors they think they may have made. Your attentive listening will make your child feel supported.

DON'T OVERHYPE THE IMPORTANCE OF ANY EXAM

It's important to make it clear to your child that your love and regard for them is in no way dependent on how they perform in the exams. Affirmation is the best gift you can give them, always.

MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD CONTINUES TO MIX WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Make sure that your child isn't isolated during the exam preparations and the exams. It's important for your child to connect and keep in contact with their peers during this time. This keeps their spirits up and can keep them motivated.

GET SUPPORT

Get to know other parents at your child's school and community and talk to them too. It can feel as if situations and struggles are new, but some parents have walked the same journey as you and will have advice for you as you love, support and champion your child throughout their education. That's parent power.

POSITIVE PARENTING

The Parent Centre

www.theparentcentre.org.za

021 762 0116

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

South African Depression and
Anxiety Group

www.SADAG.org; 0800 456 789

[Parent Power](#) is a movement of parents and caregivers championing children's right to quality education.

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