



The logo for İSTEK SCHOOLS, featuring a stylized sun or flower icon to the left of the text 'İSTEK SCHOOLS' in a white, sans-serif font.

It is a publication
of the
Psychological
Guidance
Department

Hello,

As the Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department of İSTEK Schools, we embark on this journey with the belief that we will successfully complete the university preparation process with the cooperation of our valued parents and the determination of our students. We share with you the newsletter "Being a Parent of a Student Preparing for the Exam," prepared in light of current research on what awaits us on this journey.

Happy reading!





PARENTAL ATTITUDES DURING THE UNIVERSITY PREPARATION PROCESS

Effort, rather than success, is and should be appreciated. In this process, understanding and listening to our students, sharing responsibilities when necessary, and being willing to find common ground and communicate openly will increase students' well-being, motivation, and effort.

Use of Confidence-Based and Supportive Language:

Research shows that parents adopting a trust-based approach and supportive language strengthens students' sense of self-efficacy by reducing test anxiety (Yıldız and Dönmez 157). Accordingly, using language that recognizes effort by focusing on the effort, regardless of the outcome, is one factor that makes students feel valued. (Erkan and Sucuoğlu 51). One example of supportive language is avoiding judgmental and comparative language and engaging in empathic communication. This strengthens the parent-student relationship based on trust, facilitates a healthier university preparation process, and protects the parent-child relationship.

Listening to the Causes, Consequences and Solution Plan of the Situation Instead of Criticism:

Every student may experience periods of fluctuation in academic performance and decreased motivation. The key during these periods is to demonstrate an empathetic approach and make them feel understood rather than judged. Research shows that when students are listened to and feel their feelings are validated, they are more likely to listen to criticism without becoming defensive (Demir and Arslan 84). Parents should assess the situation with open-ended questions like, "What caused this situation?" and "How do you think this situation is affecting you?" before launching into criticism, allowing the student to develop their own solution plan (Özkan 133).

Furthermore, we must remember that not every practice exam (TYT/AYT practice exams, IB mock exams, and international admissions proficiency exams) is equally feasible, and that the student's own outcome is not the only variable that determines the student's outcome. We must discuss practice exam results with a view to finding solutions, recognizing that variables such

as the student's emotional state, physiological state, external factors, and so on will also influence the outcome.

Avoiding Excessive Expectations and Pressure

During this process, parents' excessive expectations or intense pressure can damage the student's psychological resilience and increase exam anxiety (Gür and Aksoy 91). High-expectation statements such as, " You must achieve a high score, you must score 30 or higher in math. You must be the best, " can increase students' fear of making mistakes and demotivate them. (Tuna 144). Therefore, parents should align their expectations with the student's realistic goals and evaluate the process not only in terms of results but also in terms of effort and development, which supports both the student's academic success and emotional health.

Positive Feedback, Celebrating Small Successes, and Recognizing Effort

Recognizing and appreciating small successes will boost students' intrinsic motivation and encourage them to strive for success. However, sometimes, despite effort, achieving success can take time. You should emphasize that this is a process, and in such cases, you should let them know that you see their effort and believe they can succeed.

Being Aware of Individual Diversity and Avoiding Comparison:

Every student is unique; that each student's learning pace varies, that readiness is unique to each individual. We must remember that these exam results are not intended to reveal a student's failures, but rather to demonstrate what needs to be changed and improved. Others' scores, others' study time, others' written grades... We must not lay the foundation for an adult who believes that others are more valuable than themselves because of their achievements, and that they can only be recognized when they succeed.

Managing Anxiety During the University Preparation Process

Anxiety is an internal stimulus necessary for survival. Every individual should experience a certain amount of anxiety, and this is healthy. Therefore, maintaining the necessary level of anxiety and managing it effectively during the university preparation process will lead to effort and success. You, our valued parents, and we, the Guidance and Counseling Department, are always there for our students to maintain this anxiety at the optimal level and to successfully manage anxiety throughout the process. So, what should we do to ensure successful anxiety management?



We Should Focus on Controllable Variables Instead of Uncontrollable Variables

Controllable Variables

- **Time Management:** Creating annual, weekly, and monthly plans, and knowing where students are, where they need to be, and where they will be, allows for more systematic study and positive outcomes in reducing exam anxiety. For 11th-grade students, in particular, starting this year, identifying their small and large, near and far-reaching goals and working with a plan and schedule will contribute to their progress in 12th grade. For students preparing for university abroad, starting their preparations for the admission/application requirements and required proficiency exams of their target country and university, starting in 11th grade, will ensure a more positive admissions process.
- **Information Disruption:** You should verify information you encounter on various websites, social media accounts, and other sources with the official websites of institutions like ÖSYM, YÖK, YÖK Atlas, and other institutions, as well as the official websites of domestic and international universities. When we encounter information that does not reflect reality, the anxiety levels of our students and parents increase.
- **Question Solving and Practice Analysis:** We must ensure that students analyze their practice exams. We must remind them that any unanalyzed practice exams will not contribute to their academic success.
- **Sleep, Nutrition, and Physical Activity:** Regular sleep, a balanced diet, and adequate physical activity strengthen students' attention span, motivation, and ability to cope with anxiety (Kara and Demir 142). Therefore, guiding students toward an active lifestyle, healthy eating, and sleep patterns, and supporting them in these processes, will also increase their psychological resilience.
- **Support Seeking Behavior/School Psychological Counselor:** As the İSTEK Schools Guidance and Counseling team, we

would like to remind you that we are always here for you to ask questions and provide necessary guidance.

İSTEK Schools

Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department

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