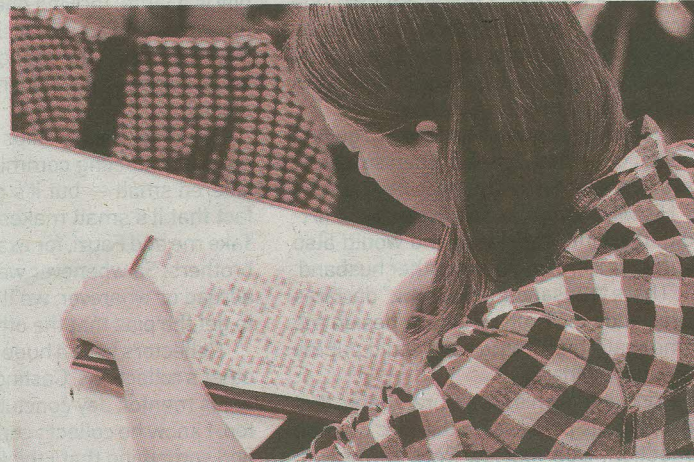


# Parents' role during exam season

AS we head into the final few months of the school year, one word will start to haunt many students and parents alike: Exams! Like it or not, exams are still a very critical component of our education system. Much has been debated about the merits of exams, but it doesn't seem like we're in any hurry to ditch it just yet.

Hence, the next best thing then is to face it positively. While the students have presumably been preparing all year for their final exams, parents too have an important role to play to ensure that the season doesn't create any negative effects on their children. No matter how prepared a student is, exam season can still be a very emotional period for all.

First, let's examine what are the emotions experienced by a typical student. It ranges from a positive emotion of optimism, all the way to the negative ones such as anxiety and paranoia. We've all gone through this and somehow survived. Now it's our children's turn and they may



be looking up to us for support. The last thing we should do is to make them more anxious.

Depending on the importance of the exam, the level of fear, anxiety and stress will go up proportionately. In many cases, the symptoms could be worse in parents than children. This is especially true for those competitive parents who just can't

accept anything but the best grades for their kids.

### CREATE POSITIVE VIBES

In his book *Kids Pick Up On Everything: How Parental Stress Is Toxic To Kids*, David Code wrote: "Children can 'catch' their parents' stress just like they catch a virus, soaking up the stress that pervades a household until their developing nervous systems reach 'overload'. Then kids act out or get sick."

This is the worse time to have a negative, stressful aura at home. Parents need to create a positive, stress-free environment, at least for the duration of the exam period. Of course, the best is to cultivate this positivity all year-round so that our children can have a fun and conducive environment to study.



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So, what can parents do to ease some of the tensions? Plenty actually. We need to look at it from a balanced perspective of physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects. Ensure that the children have a healthy and balanced diet. Avoid junk food as they bring little nutritional values. Don't remove physical exercise and play just because our kids need to study. Physical exercise releases endorphin, a natural drug that promotes happy and positive feelings.

In many cases, last minute study can also be effective when done with a small group of friends. Encourage our kids to form a study group with the right people. Let them help each other to learn. However, do consider the child's style as well, as some may prefer solitary study. Bottomline: just ensure that the environment at home

is a positive one. Leave trivial issues for another day because these can affect their emotions negatively, unnecessarily.