



Academics and Anxiety: How to Help Your Teen Do Well in School without Stressing Out

Jed Applerouth, founder of Applerouth Tutoring Services, will be speaking to Bronx Science parents at our PA meeting on Thursday, Jan. 18. To give you an idea of who he is and what he'll be talking about, read on!

Tell us about yourself and what you do.

I have been studying student learning and helping students attain academic success for the last 17 years. After a brief stint teaching in AmeriCorps, working as a business analyst, and selling my landscape paintings in a few art galleries, I founded Applerouth Tutoring Services in 2001. I began working with high school students to help develop their study skills, improve their GPAs and attain higher test scores. Applerouth Tutoring Services now employs over 250 expert tutors, serving students in NYC, Washington DC, Chicago, LA, Atlanta and Seattle.

In 2004 I returned to graduate school to sharpen my skill set and learn how to better serve my students. I completed a Masters of Professional Counseling in 2007 and a PhD in Educational Psychology in 2015.

How can we as parents support our kids and help them modify their study habits to become more successful in school?

Parents can encourage students to think strategically about all aspects of their learning. They can help students structure their study environments to minimize distractions and maximize focus, find their optimal time to study and the optimal schedule for breaks, and be less passive in their studying. Passive studying needs to go. Good studying should reveal errors, deficits, and areas of needed focus. Students need to learn techniques for self-assessment, practice retrieving and recalling content. The act of self-testing actually enhances learning much more than any form of passive review.

How do you help students deal with the stress of schoolwork and standardized tests?

Self-regulation is the name of the game in high-stakes testing and in other stress-inducing activities in life. Students must come to understand the stress response, and how it manifests for them. All students would be well-served to attend to their self-talk, the inner dialogue that has a profound effect on their state of mind and performance. We can address student's self-talk, their specific fears and anxieties. We can practice regulating the stress response,

understanding the neurochemistry at play, helping students calm down the amygdala and reduce stress levels. We can work on specific breathing techniques, attend to the state of stress or relaxation of the body, use written exercises and guided imagery to help reduce the stress response. There are dozens of ways in which we can help students find the particular approaches that serve them best.

Any words of encouragement for parents who are also suffering from anxiety about their children's performance in school or on standardized tests?

When parents experience anxiety about testing outcomes, that can have a negative impact on their children's performance: in certain cases, anxious parents can ratchet up the anxiety levels of their children. Parents can learn techniques to regulate their own anxieties and approach their children from a place of support and encouragement. This will allow students to achieve their optimal outcomes. Ultimately you must approach this process from a place of trust rather than fear. Be supportive. Encourage your kids without putting excess pressure on them.

Don't miss the PA meeting on Jan. 18! At the end of the meeting, Jed will raffle off two free consultation packages for students. Each package consists of a diagnostic SAT and ACT test, a consultation with an enrollment specialist, and a 1.5-hour tutoring session either in person or online.

In the meantime, check out Applerouth's website (applerouth.com) for more information.