

# Supporting Your Child Through SATs: A Parent-Friendly Guide

Practical advice to help your child  
succeed confidently

# Understanding SATs Stress

# Supporting Your Child Through SATs

## **Emotional Support Matters**

Parents' calm and reassuring behavior helps reduce children's stress during SATs.

## **Maintaining Healthy Routines**

Consistent routines and predictability create a safe environment for children to thrive.

## **Focus on Encouragement**

Encouraging effort over test scores helps children feel valued and confident.



# What Is SATs Stress?

## Understanding SATs Stress

SATs stress is normal worry that can help focus, but excessive stress affects sleep and mood.

## Physical and Behavioural Signs

Stress may appear as physical complaints like tummy aches or irritability and avoidance behaviours.

## Role of Parents

Parents help manage stress by normalising nerves and reassuring children about SATs importance and self-worth.



# How Anxiety Works

## **Physical Symptoms**

Anxiety in children often manifests through physical symptoms like racing heart, tummy aches, and headaches.

## **Anxious Thoughts**

Children may experience worst-case thinking, overestimating dangers and underestimating their coping ability.

## **Behavioral Responses**

Anxiety can cause children to avoid tasks, become clingy, or become emotionally dysregulated.

## **Empathy and Reassurance**

Responding with empathy and calming strategies helps children manage anxiety effectively.

# The SATs Stress Cycle



- Stress often follows a cycle: worried thoughts lead to physical feelings of anxiety, which then influence behaviour, such as avoidance or panic.
- Avoiding work may bring short-term relief, but it can increase worry later, keeping the cycle going. Parents can help break this cycle by supporting calm routines and encouraging gentle, manageable steps rather than pushing for perfection.
- Predictable mornings, short revision sessions, and planned relaxation time all help signal safety to a child's brain. When parents stay calm and consistent, children are more likely to feel secure and able to cope with the demands of SATs.

# Practical Support Before and During SATs

# What Parents Can Do Before SATs

## **Maintain Calm Routines**

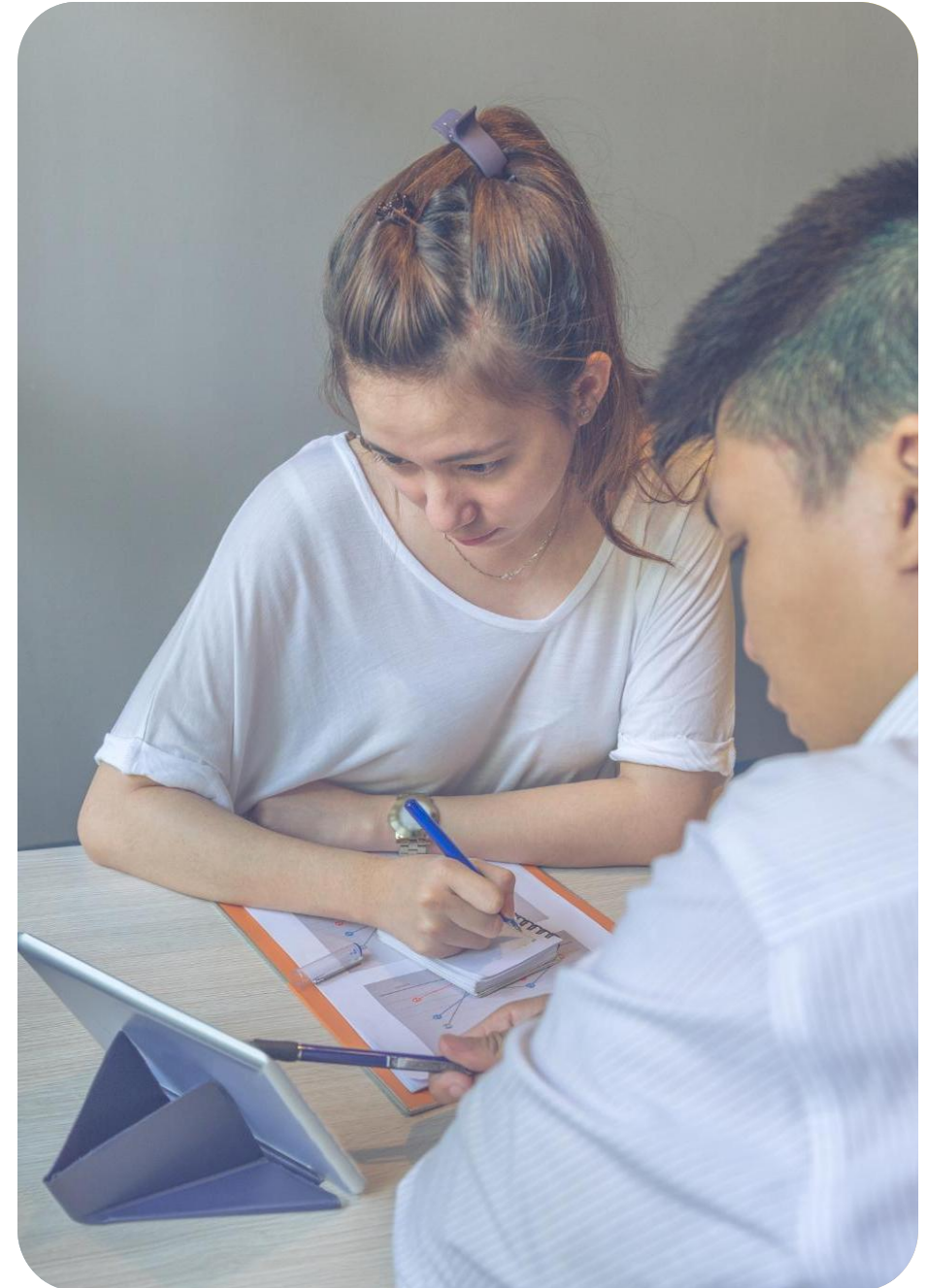
Keeping predictable routines like preparing clothes and early bedtimes reduces test day stress.

## **Provide Encouragement**

Use clear, calm phrases like 'Doing your best is the best you can do' to support children emotionally before SATs.

## **Limit Anxiety Exposure**

Avoid discussing SATs stress around siblings or other parents to prevent transferring anxiety to children.



# Supporting Revision at Home

## **Effective Study Sessions**

Short revision sessions of 20–30 minutes with breaks improve focus and reduce fatigue during study time.

## **Task Management**

Breaking revision tasks into small, manageable chunks helps reduce overwhelm and builds confidence.

## **Balanced Revision Approach**

Balancing revision with time for relaxation and play supports mental well-being and sustained motivation.

## **Supportive Environment**

A calm and encouraging parental presence encourages effort and reduces stress more than checking answers.



# Creating the Right Environment

## Flexible Study Spaces

Different children prefer various environments; some need silence, others benefit from gentle background noise.

## Minimizing Distractions

Reducing distractions like phones or television helps children focus during revision sessions.

## Alternative Study Locations

Libraries or other quiet spaces offer good alternatives when home is busy and noisy.

## Child Involvement

Involving children in decisions about their study environment gives them control and comfort.





# Family Life During SATs Week

## **Lowered Expectations**

Reducing chores and understanding mood changes helps ease children's stress during SATs week.

## **Maintaining Normalcy**

Keeping family routines steady while allowing extra downtime helps children feel secure and supported.

## **Positive Reinforcement**

Offering small rewards and shared meals reduces pressure and encourages children's efforts.

## **Parental Emotional Awareness**

Parents managing their own stress helps create a calm environment for sensitive children.

Care, Calm, and  
Moving Forward

# Sleep, Food, and Exercise

## **Importance of Sleep**

Children require 8–10 hours of sleep to reduce stress and improve concentration during exams.

## **Balanced Nutrition**

Regular meals maintain energy and focus; reducing sugar and caffeine helps lower anxiety.

## **Physical Activity Benefits**

Gentle exercise like walking or outdoor play releases tension and boosts mood.



# Helping Your Child Stay Regulated

## **Calming the Body**

Slow breathing and grounding techniques help children reduce anxiety by calming their bodies effectively.

## **Parental Calmness**

Parents staying calm themselves sends a strong safety message, helping children feel secure and supported.

## **Reassurance and Focus**

Reminding children that feelings pass and they are safe helps them settle nerves and focus during stressful times.



## Belly Breathing

Belly breathing is a great way to calm down when you are upset.

Imagine that there is a balloon in your belly.

As you take a big breath in through your nose, try to fill up the balloon so that your belly puffs up.

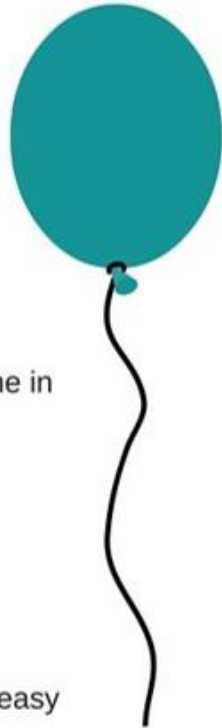
Now breathe out through your mouth (like blowing bubble) and let all of the air out of the balloon.

Take slow breaths. Try to count to 4 as you breathe in and count to 4 as you breathe out.

Inhale...2...3...4  
Exhale...2...3...4

Repeat until you are calm.

Remember to practice every day until it becomes easy to use when you need it.



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5 4 3 2 1

**SLOW DOWN & CALM DOWN**

**FIRST- TAKE 3 SLOW BELLY BREATHS!**

5 List 5 things you can SEE



4 List 4 things you can FEEL



3 List 3 things you can HEAR



2 List 2 things you can SMELL



1 List something you like to TASTE



**FINISHED? - TAKE ANOTHER 3 SLOW BELLY BREATHS**

# During and After SATs

## **During SATs Support**

Encourage children to focus on one test at a time and remind that SATs don't affect secondary school placement.

## **Post-Test Emotional Care**

Avoid detailed questioning after tests and allow children to express their feelings if they want to.

## **Celebrating Completion**

Celebrate effort and completion of SATs rather than results, reinforcing children's value regardless of outcome.

## **Positive Closure Activities**

Plan enjoyable activities after SATs to help children close this chapter positively and feel valued.



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# Final Message

## **Calm and Consistent Support**

Providing calm and steady reassurance helps children feel emotionally safe during stressful test periods.

## **Prioritising Emotional Wellbeing**

Focusing on emotional safety and balance helps children build resilience beyond the tests themselves.

## **Impact of Reassurance and Patience**

Parental validation, patience, and belief significantly boost children's confidence during exams.

