

# 5 Things You Need to Know About — Third Grade Testing —

Third grade is the first year that children in Florida take the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) test, which is given each spring. This test includes English language Arts (reading and language), as well as math. Districts in Florida are required to give students the FSA as one way to measure knowledge of the Florida Standards, which indicate what they have to learn in each grade. Many families become anxious when their children enter third grade because of the high stakes placed on this test and the pressure to avoid possible retention. Here are some things you need to know to dispel common myths and ease anxiety.

**1** Florida law and the Alachua County student progression plan state that in order to move into fourth grade, a student is required to show knowledge of the third grade reading standards. However, the FSA is not the only way to show this knowledge, and therefore is **NOT the only factor** that determines third grade retention. If a child doesn't do well on the FSA, the school and the district will look at many other measurements of his or her reading ability, such as i-Station (a computer-based program that your child will use throughout the year), or a portfolio of his or her work.

If your child has a reading deficiency, or the teacher or school has any concern that he/she might not move on to fourth grade, **you will be notified well in advance** of the end of the school year (typically in January) so that steps can be taken to help your child. The school does not want to retain your child unless absolutely necessary, and therefore they will work closely with you to help them.

**2**

**3** Your child's teacher will do his/her best to help your child become familiar with the testing environment and ease their anxiety. They realize this is the first time most children will take a standardized test, and therefore they will talk with them about it in advance to help manage their expectations. Your child will also take a practice test, which will help them understand what the test will be like.

You can help your child by letting them know that you are not anxious about how they will do in third grade. **Let them know that you believe in them**, and you know they can learn what they need to in order to move on to the next grade. Let them know that if they are struggling, their teachers and family are here to help with whatever they need, and that everyone is on their side.

**4**

**5** Set the tone for your child early in the year by encouraging them to take their time on their homework and classwork, as well as to check their work when they are finished. Encourage them to read every day, and talk with them about what they are reading to make sure they understand it. Your child's teacher may provide additional tools you can use to help your child throughout the year, but if he/she doesn't, feel free to ask!

**MORE INFORMATION** about the Florida Standards  
and testing in our schools: <https://accpta.org/advocates-pta/testing/>