



Standardized testing: questions to anticipate from parents and suggested answers

Should I opt my child out and refuse the test?

- I can't advise you one way or the other on that.
- It's a decision you have to make in the best interests of your child. There are a lot of great resources online that can help you decide what to do. These include njkidsandfamilies.org, where you can tell your story, find resources, and sign up to receive updates.
- I can assure you that I will support whatever decision you make and will not treat your child any differently either way.



Is it legal to opt out and refuse in New Jersey?

- My understanding is that the law doesn't address that issue. I've heard that parents have "refused" their children from the test in the past.
- Parents have a lot of rights when it comes to their children's education.
- There are places online that can tell you more about what other parents in New Jersey have done.

Will my child be penalized if I opt out and refuse?

Will she be kept out of honors classes or maybe even held back?

- I can assure you your child won't face any consequences or discrimination in my classroom no matter what you choose to do.
- If you choose to opt out and refuse, I'd raise that concern with the principal.
- There are a lot of ways to determine the appropriate placement for a student. Test scores can be used, but if they aren't available, there are certainly other ways to make those decisions.
- It is my understanding that, if you refuse the test, your children cannot be marked absent from school, only absent from taking the test.

Will the school lose funding if I opt out and refuse?

- I'm not aware of anything in the law that says schools can be penalized financially or otherwise if parents opt their children out of standardized testing by refusing it.
- Although the No Child Left Behind Act does say that 95% of students must take the test or the school will fail to make "adequate yearly progress," this provision is now essentially irrelevant because:
 - Schools that do not receive federal Title I funds are exempt.
 - Currently, 41 states –including New Jersey – have waivers from the U.S. Department of Education that eliminate any consequences.
- Your only concern should be what is best for your child.

