

# Parents and Families Newsletter

## Spring 2024

All content will be trans-adapted for a Spanish version of the newsletter.

Other languages are available through the S'more newsletter.

**Dear Parents and Families,**

Welcome to the spring edition of our newsletter just in time to gear up for the upcoming state testing season. This issue is packed with tips and tricks to help your child through testing season and beyond.

We will be sharing:

- Easy, at-home activities to boost your child's confidence and skills using educational games and learning adventures!
- Helpful resources like practice tests and study guides to help with test prep.
- Suggestions that will answer your questions and provide support for your child.

**In this issue you will find information on the following resources:**

**Comic Creator**



**How Stuff Works**



**College & Career Preparation**



Don't forget to fill out this [quick survey](#) to share any information or suggestions you might have for the next newsletter. We value your input!

# Announcements



The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and End of Course (EOC) Testing will take place between April 9th and May 3rd. These state tests are used to determine a child's preparedness for the next grade level. Below are the timeframes when testing will occur by grade level and subject.

*Talk to your child's teacher to find out which dates they will be testing.*

Test Dates	STAAR
April 9-19	Grades 3-8 Reading Language Arts English I English II
April 16-26	Grade 5 Science Grade 8 Science Grade 8 Social Studies Biology U.S. History
April 23-May 3	Grades 3-8 Mathematics Algebra I

For more information about assessments in Texas, visit the following resources on [TXEL.org](https://www.txel.org) under [Supporting My Child](#). The links can be found in the "Texas Assessments Resources for Parents" section as shown below.

## Texas Assessments Resources for Parents

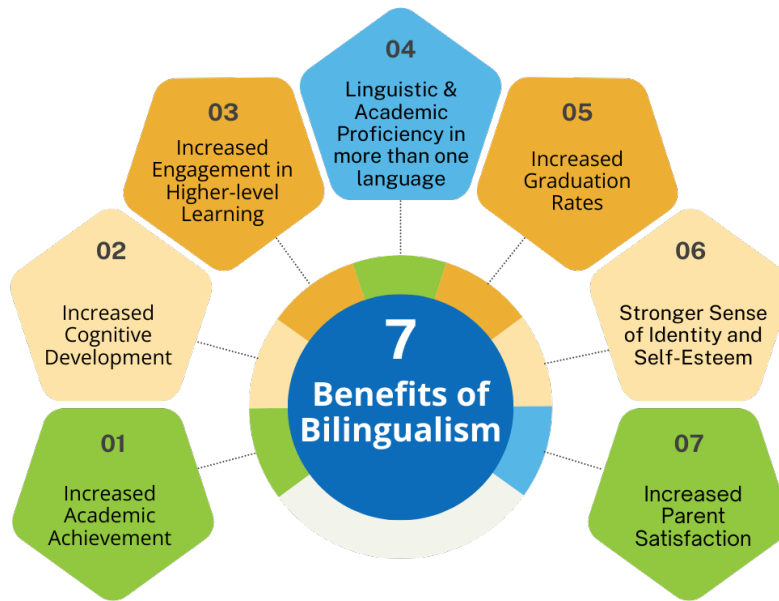
Visit the [Practice Test Site for TELPAS & STAAR](#) so your child can get familiar with how the test might look on the day of their testing. Ask your child's teacher about what tests they will be taking and in what language.

To learn more about the STAAR Test in Texas, go to the [STAAR resources webpage](#) where you will find more information about who is tested, what is tested, what the test looks like, and much more.

If you would like to see a printable version of previous STAAR tests that you can use with your child to practice questions, visit the [STAAR Released Test Questions](#).

# Bilingualism

Bilingual children benefit from their language skills in many different ways – from increased academic achievement to language proficiency that can lead to increased employment opportunities. The diagram below shows seven benefits of bilingualism that you can share with your child.



The activities shared in our **“At-Home Learning”** section, below, will help develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Check out [past newsletters](#) for different activities in this section as well.

## Resource Center

### At-Home Learning Sites for Students

The following educational websites are free resources that will help your child improve their English language skills.

Don't forget to visit [txel.org/SupportingChild](http://txel.org/SupportingChild) for more interactive educational websites.



#### Comic Creator

**Target Skills:** Writing

**Recommended Grade Levels:** K-12

Improve writing skills by developing a short comic.

Tap into your child's imagination and have them create a comic book storyline about where they may want to go one day or a dream that they have for themselves.

1. Open the [Supporting My Child](#) page on the TXEL.org website and click on "Student Activities."
2. Scroll down to the "Read Write Think: Comic Creator."
3. Click on "Launch the Tool" and have your child develop a title and subtitle.
4. Your child will decide on how many panels to include in their comic (1, 2, 3, or 6).
5. Children can add backgrounds, images, and dialogue along with captions to develop their comic.

Once the comic is complete, click **Finish** and print a PDF to keep a copy of their creation.



### How Stuff Works

**Recommended Grade Levels:** 4-12

**Target Skill:** Reading comprehension

**Articles for students to read about interesting topics.**

Get your child curious about how things work. Ask your child questions about Science, tech, home and garden, or much more. All of these can be found on this site. Then have them share the information they found.

1. Open the [Supporting My Child](#) page on the TXEL.org website.
2. Click on "Student Activities."
3. Select "Howstuffworks."
4. Have your child select a topic on the top menu bar and have them read an article that interests them and share what they learned with you.



Let them explore what they want from the different topics. You will be amazed at what they find out.



### TEA Graduation Toolkit

**Target Skill:** Planning your future

**Recommended Grade Levels:** 6-12

**A tool to guide students toward a successful graduation.**

This toolkit helps you and your child understand graduation program requirements and endorsements that will help prepare your child for their future. Read through the toolkit together and discuss what they will need to keep in mind as they head toward graduation.

1. Open the [Student Resources](#) page on the TXEL.org website and go to the paragraph under Graduating High School and click on the "TEA Graduation Toolkit" link.
2. Read the resource to find out everything you need to know to prepare your child for graduation.
3. A great resource to guide the discussion about the future is the [Texas Reality Check](#), located on page 10 of the TEA Graduation Toolkit.

Once you've made a plan together, post the checklist somewhere that is visual so you and your child can stay dedicated to their future.

## At-Home Learning

There may be opportunities to support your child's learning at home. The following activities are some ideas you can try. For more resources, go to the [Supporting My Child page](#), then click on "Student Activities" on [TXEL.org](#).



### Read Together

Make reading together a routine in your household. Reading with your child regularly is one of the best things you can do to increase your child's language skills. Talk about the pictures, the story, or the characters. Ask your child simple questions like: What happened first? How would you change the story? Remind me, what happened in the last chapter? These conversations will help reading comprehension and speaking skills that will lead to stronger writing skills.

### Shopping with Technology or Sales Ads

Have your child look at a grocery store app or printed store ads help you shop for items you need. These simple tasks allow your child to use images and connect them with language. This is a simple way to help your child understand basic vocabulary. For older children, this activity will allow them to also build their math skills as well. You can give them a budget or ask them to calculate what they will need to make a certain recipe.





## 50-Cent Words

A simple way to improve your child's vocabulary is to encourage your child to replace simple words with words that are not often used. These are often called "50-cent words" because they bring more value to your language and writing. For example, instead of saying "I had a good day." Encourage your child to replace 'good' with a less common word like 'amazing' or 'exceptional'. Just by

doing this, your child will become mindful of the words they use when speaking and it will reflect in their writing.

Read more at the [Supporting my Child](#) page on the [TXEL.org](#) website.

## College and Career Prep

### Post-Secondary Readiness

Finding the right college for your child may be difficult. Going on college tours can help! Take your child to a local campus or technical school. It's a great way to spark conversations about their future.

While you're there:

- Chat about their interests and strengths. What excites them? What are they good at?
- Check out the financial aid office, bookstore, and dorms. Show them the support available and what college life is like.

This trip will open their eyes to different options and get them thinking about their goals. It's the first step on their journey beyond high school!

# Self-Care Tips

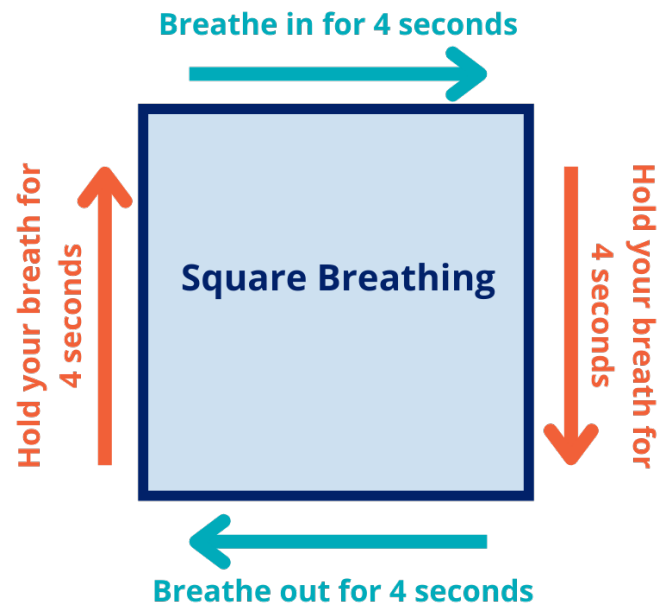
Taking care of yourself (self-care) is key to feeling good and tackling family demands. So how do you stay energized? Here are two great tips from the article, "[Why Self-Care?](#)":

1. Eat healthy: Think fruits, veggies, grains, and low-fat dairy. Add in protein from seafood, lean meats, eggs, beans, nuts, and seeds for extra power.
2. Move your body: Regular walks and stretches will keep your energy levels up and feeling great.



By fueling your body with good food and getting active, you'll be able to have more energy for you and your family.

***If you or your child is feeling overwhelmed, take some time for square breathing:***



# Final Thoughts

## Spring

Be sure to take time to enjoy the sunshine and relax with your family. Personal self care will ensure you have the energy needed for life's daily chores. Also, when you're relaxed, so is your child. When your child is relaxed, he or she will approach school with an open mind and positive attitude.

If you see signs of stress, try one of the techniques shared above with your child and have them practice it for when you are not around. A child's greatest teacher is you!

If you have any suggestions on topics you'd like to read about, please let us know by completing this [short survey](#).

## Previous Newsletters

All of our Newsletters can be found on the [Newsletters page](#) on the [TXEL.org](#) website. Click through the past editions to find additional information and resources designed for you and your child.



Welcome to the Parents and Families Newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide information and resources that are relevant, accessible, and impactful to support parent, families, and community partners to ensure the academic success of the State's emergent bilingual students. **Remember that S'more translates to all languages through the translate button in the top right corner.**

**Featured Editions  
In English**

**Ediciones destacadas  
en español**



## Subscribe to the Site

Stay informed about the resources and support available by subscribing to [TXEL.org](https://www.txel.org). Click on the [Subscribe Today!](#)

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## Supporting Emergent Bilingual Students in Texas

[TXEL.org](https://www.txel.org) is a web portal that provides information and resources that are relevant, accessible, and impactful to support educational leaders, teachers, parents and families, and community partners to ensure the academic success of the State's emergent bilingual students.



Contact us at: <https://www.txel.org/contact/>

Email: [EmergentBilingualSupport@tea.texas.gov](mailto:EmergentBilingualSupport@tea.texas.gov)

Visit: [www.tea.texas.gov](http://www.tea.texas.gov)