

TO TEST OR NOT TO TEST?

The time for the Stanford 10 Achievement Test is rapidly approaching. BCHE will be administering this test March 18-20, 2013. The results from this test may be submitted to the Brevard County School Board or Christian Heritage Academy as a form of an annual evaluation for your children.

“Why test?” you may ask. Testing allows the opportunity to see how your child performs in comparison with other children in his or her age group. The detailed scoring report sent to parents after the test is useful in evaluating your student’s strengths and weaknesses. This information is also valuable in assessing curricula choices. Some texts may need supplementary material to keep your child at the appropriate level, or perhaps a newfound program is proving beneficial. The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test is administered with the Stanford 10. This is helpful in identifying “gifted” students or determining if your curricula are too challenging, too easy, or just right. Additionally, having a standardized test completed and scored can calm overly concerned family members or neighbors who may be second-guessing your decision to homeschool (in my case it was the family dentist).

Now let us consider your child. In our society, testing surrounds us. Very often, it is in a multiple-choice format. Arguably, this may not be the best gauge of subject knowledge, but nonetheless, this type of test abounds. Testing in this format is given to obtain a Driver’s License, college admittance, scholarship qualifications, graduate school admissions, certifications (everything from real estate licenses to mechanic certifications to engineering licenses, etc.). Starting young, so to speak, helps condition our kids to the testing environment. Testing through BCHE places them in an environment with other homeschool parents that will proctor and monitor their tests with an encouraging, kind attitude and other homeschooled kids (many of which they may already know) like themselves.

There are also reasons you may opt out of standardized testing for your child. A child who is unable to sit quietly, focus on the testing materials, and follow instructions (most individual tests are about 20-50 minute in length followed by short breaks) may become frustrated and possibly distract other students. You can work throughout your school year towards this learned skill. Family health concerns or commitments may affect your ability to be available for the three consecutive days of testing. You may be able to recruit a qualified person to administer a standardized test in your home. For some students, the tests can cause a great deal of stress. Again, you know your own child, and you can best determine the appropriate course of action concerning testing.

In coming weeks, we will be sharing some tips for testing, as well as, deciphering what the test scores really mean. Feel free to look around the website often. Registration forms for the Stanford 10 Testing can be found under the Resources Tab.