

Otis Lennon School Ability Test otherwise known as OLSAT

While the Stanford Achievement Test is a measure of what a student has learned, the OLSAT measures a student's ability to learn. The test evaluates a student's performance by a variety of tasks such as detecting likenesses and differences, recalling words and numbers, defining words and following directions, classifying, establishing sequence, solving arithmetic problems, and completing analogies. These activities have been shown to be valid measures of an individual's ability to reason logically.

While public and private schools use the OLSAT for a variety of reasons, it is helpful as home educators to be aware of how the OLSAT can assist us in our home education programs. Ideally, the percentile rank of the basic battery should be similar to the percentile rank of the total OLSAT. If it is similar, we can know we are adequately challenging our students to learn to the best of their abilities. If the percentile rank of the OLSAT is significantly higher than the percentile rank of the SAT, the student is not being adequately challenged in his or her curriculum. If the percentile rank of the OLSAT is lower than the percentile rank of the SAT, congratulations! You are challenging your student to do their best.

There is a column on the SAT report that is labeled AAC Range. If your student scores low in a subject area, it indicates that your student, even if they are doing relatively well, could be doing better.

Some general reminders on testing:

Standardized testing is helpful to parents to evaluate whether the curricula worked for the student, not whether the student passed or failed. Don't panic if your student's scores are not what you thought they would be. It is helpful to test every year. This allows your student to feel more comfortable with testing. It also allows you to be able to see the big picture. Remember, the student's day-to-day progress shows more about the progress of your student than one test.

Never look at just one year. It is important to look at a trend. We want to look at the basic battery (math, reading, and English) and see whether our students improve or at least remain in the same percentile from year to year. If there is a decrease, we need to examine the curricula we are using, as well as determine if we are spending adequate time with our student, ensuring they understand the concepts being taught. Home education requires a teacher as well as a student working together.

The grade equivalent score is the most commonly misinterpreted score on the SAT. If a 2nd grader earns a grade equivalent of 5.7, this does not mean he is doing the work of a fifth grader. It means that an average 5th grader in the 7th month would have scored as well as your student on this particular test.