

ESTS (Testing/Talent Search) Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. What kind of talent is meant by the term 'Elementary Student Talent Search'?**
A. Academic talent. The EXPLORE test measures a student's abilities in English, Reading, Mathematics and Science.
- Q. How old does a student have to be to take the EXPLORE test?**
A. Students in 3rd through 6th grades may take the EXPLORE test.
- Q. How does a student qualify to take the EXPLORE test?**
A. The following students are eligible for the EXPLORE test:
- Students identified as gifted
 - Students earning PSSA scores at the following levels
 1. Grade 3: 1657 in Mathematics OR 1618 in Reading
 2. Grade 4: 1661 in Mathematics OR 1622 in Reading
 3. Grade 5: 1665 in Mathematics OR 1625 in Reading
 - Students earning a score at the 95th percentile on a nationally standardized test (such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Stanford Achievement Test, or Terra Nova test) on one or more of the following sections:
 1. Math (Total score or score on any math subtest)
 2. Verbal (Vocabulary, Reading, or Language)
 3. Science
 4. Composite or Total Score
- Q. Does a student need to take the EXPLORE test every year?**
A. No, but students may take the test again to see how much they have improved.
- Q. My child is in 3rd grade. Should she take the EXPLORE test?**
A. Third graders meeting the 95th percentile guideline may take the test. Since this test was designed for eighth graders, it is quite challenging for many third graders. If your child is likely to get upset if he/she does not know all of the answers or is unable to finish the test, we recommend waiting until fourth grade to take the test. You might have your child take the sample items from the EXPLORE test found at www.act.org/explore/ests/preview.html.
- Q. My child missed the EXPLORE test this year. When can he take the test?**
A. The EXPLORE test is given each year at the end of January and again at the end of February. Students who miss the January testing may register for the February testing. Students who miss the February testing must wait until the following year.
- Q. Are there scholarships for testing?**
A. Yes. Students receiving the free or reduced-cost lunch program at school are eligible for a fee reduction.
- Q. Will I receive a confirmation of my test registration?**
A. Online registrations receive an email. For paper registrations, your cancelled check is your receipt.
- Q. If a student is unable to take the EXPLORE test after registering, can he/she get a refund?**
A. C-MITES has a no-refund policy on test registration fees. Once a student registers for the test, costs have already been incurred. These costs include processing the registration form, publishing the Information and Resources book, and preparing the test materials. Testing fees cannot be refunded if a student is unable to test for any reason. The student will still receive C-MITES mailings. Students who choose to be removed from the C-MITES mailing list will receive a \$10 rebate.
- Q. We have already registered for testing in January. Can we switch to February?**
A. Yes. Call ACT, our testing company, at (319) 337-1369 and they can make the change for you. There is a fee for changing test dates or sites if you call after a certain date. Call the C-MITES office with any other questions.
- Q. Why should my child take the EXPLORE test?**
A. To learn more about his/her academic abilities, receive priority placement in the Summer Program, and to be placed on the C-MITES permanent mailing list to receive information for gifted students.

- Q. Should we register for January or February testing?**
A. We recommend registering for January. If your child is sick in January, you can reschedule for February.
- Q. I registered for testing, but I haven't received an admission ticket.**
A. Call the C-MITES office.
- Q. My child was scheduled for a February test date, but she was sick. What do I do?**
A. Unfortunately, you cannot reschedule for another date.
- Q. When do I get the test results?**
A. Students should receive their EXPLORE test results by March 27th. These results will be mailed directly from ACT, our testing company, to the student's home. C-MITES receives the results in May.
- Q. Does my child's school get a report of my child's performance on the EXPLORE test?**
A. Only if parents gave written permission on the EXPLORE test registration form. Parents are also welcome to share a copy of the score report that is included in the test scores mailing for that purpose.
- Q. How long does it take to complete the testing?**
A. Students should report before 8:30 am and they should be finished by 11:30 am. Actual testing time is 2 hours.
- Q. There is no EXPLORE test site in my area. How do I get a site established near me?**
A. Encourage your school personnel to contact C-MITES. We are always looking for new test site locations.
- Q. What happens if the weather is bad for C-MITES testing?**
A. We will update our telephone message at (412) 268-1629, extension 1. Do not attempt to drive to testing if your local conditions are dangerous.