



COLLABORATIVE  
ACADEMIC  
TESTING  
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**To:** Prospective Parents  
**From:** The Independent Schools Admission Association of Dallas (ISAAD) and The President of Collaborative Academic Testing Service (CATS)  
**RE:** Admission Testing Preparation

Please visit [www.catstexas.com](http://www.catstexas.com) to complete your child's registration.

Cognitive ability testing, such as the tests administered through CATS, is fundamentally different from achievement testing. Cognitive ability testing presents test takers with novel tasks to measure intellectual ability while achievement testing measures subject area expertise. Normative data for cognitive ability tests assume that test takers have not been previously exposed to the material. Prior exposure invalidates test results and is easily detected. Practicing, rehearsing, preparing, studying or tutoring for a cognitive ability test is not appropriate.

Unlike cognitive ability testing, preparation for achievement testing is appropriate and may be useful. To study for an academic achievement test is to prepare for it. A reasonable level of preparation for achievement testing expands general understanding of important content areas. However, parents should be aware that excessive preparation for achievement testing raises anxiety and negatively affects results. Acquiring a copy of the test and rehearsing or memorizing the correct answers is never appropriate. Preparing for “a” test is appropriate while rehearsing for “the” test is not.

Please note that CATS modified the admission testing procedures to better protect the integrity of the CATS testing process. At the time of CATS registration, all applicant families will be asked to endorse a statement acknowledging that no cognitive ability tutoring should occur prior to CATS testing and acknowledging the receipt of this document. On the day of testing, families will be asked to report any exposure the applicant may have had to the testing materials including any specific cognitive ability test tutoring. Indications of prior exposure to testing materials will be reported to the appropriate schools.

While reasonable preparation does not compromise the integrity of achievement testing, tutoring for cognitive ability testing invalidates testing results. The Admission Directors of the Independent Schools Admission Association of Dallas seek to make the admission process fair and appropriate for everyone. We need accurate testing data to secure good fits between schools and children.