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4 tips & tricks to know for acing school interviews

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School interviews are one of the biggest challenges in the school application process. Parents often urge their children to get prepared by having them digest as much information as possible before the interview. However, this can often be counterproductive, as doing so tends to confuse students and make them feel nervous.

Luckily, we are getting some tips straight from the experts to help you and your little ones overcome the school interview process. Jennifer Ma, an education expert and the co-founder of Arch Education, gives us the lowdown on how parents can help their children get prepared for school interviews step by step!



Photo: Jerry Wang (via Unsplash)

Give children a sense of ownership

In order to help children understand the importance of admissions interviews, it is important for them to recognise the **purpose of the interview exercise**. It will enable them to understand why they have to be there, what they are supposed to do, and how admissions interviews might impact their future. Parents should also explain to their children the **benefits of excelling in admissions interviews**—that way, children would be better able to take responsibility for their interview(s).



Photo: Cottonbro (via Pexels)

Reduce stress

Children may find the process of preparing for interviews stressful, resulting in their nervousness and poor performance as such. Ma believes that parents should do the following to help their children reduce stress:

- **Parents should not stress themselves out.** Children are often sensitive to the emotions of their parents and can sense their nervousness on the interview day based on several indicators, including how they dress and their moods. If parents stress themselves out, it will likely make the children feel nervous.
- **Gain experience by interacting with different people.** If children lack the experience of interacting with different people, they may be shy about meeting different interviewers. Broadening children's social exposure will help them get used to the interview setting, allowing them to communicate with confidence.



Photo: August de Richelieu (via Pexels)

Prepare for self-introduction

Self-introduction is a significant part of any admissions interview, and one way to help the little ones feel confident is for parents to aid their children in preparing a "standard script" for self-introduction. What goes into the script could prove to be very important in helping your children stand out from others.

Ma suggests that the script should only highlight three points: academic results, personal interests, as well as their passion and talents. On top of general talking points, parents should also discuss with their children about adding personalised features into the introduction. For example, if they like to read, then children should provide elaboration on things like their favourite books and genres, along with the reasons behind their hobbies and preferences. A personal touch can leave a long-lasting impression in interviewers' minds.



Photo: Julia M Cameron (via Pexels)

Learn how to ask questions

Children may not always be able to understand exactly what interviewers are asking or know the answers to the interview questions. According to Ma, there are two ways for children to work around such difficulties:

- For younger children who do not fully understand the questions, they could reply with the following: "As this is not something I have learnt yet, please could you tell me more about it?" Doing so would give interviewers the impression that the child is able to remain calm even when they are faced with something that is new to them, and more importantly, that they have the right attitude to learning.
- For older students, Ma would suggest them to start by paraphrasing the question, as this would give them more thinking time before responding to the question, such as: "For this question, do you mean to say that...?" Doing so would enable them to narrow down the scope of potential answers and also acquire information from interviewers to better phrase their answers.

Acing a school interview in a competitive education environment like Hong Kong certainly is no walk in the park, but keeping these essential tips and tricks in mind will help children feel like they have control over what is expected of them in their interviews, and also help parents prepare their little ones for the big day.