

Tips for helping students with homework

With the start of a new school year, homework will once again become a big issue for schools and students. Some parents ask for additional homework to be assigned, while others may question the value of work outside the classroom.

Homework is an opportunity for students to learn and for families to be involved in their children's education. Parents are reminded that homework helps their children to:

- review and practice what they've covered in class
- prepare for the next day's lesson
- learn to use resources such as libraries, reference materials and web sites to find information about a subject
- work independently and time management and study skills *(homework and assignments provide some students with their first chance to manage time and to meet deadlines)*

Here are some tips for parents to help their children develop good study and homework habits:

Set a Regular Time for Homework

- A consistent schedule for homework helps students organize their time and finish assignments. The schedule should take into consideration the amount of homework that has been assigned and your child's extra-curricular activity schedule.

Pick a Place

- Your child's homework area should have good lighting and be fairly quiet. In some cases, it is best for the child to be close to the parent for monitoring and assistance.
- Make sure all the materials that the child needs (dictionary, calculator, pencil, eraser, tape, scissors, pencil crayons, magazines etc.) are in the

homework area, so that time is not spent every night running around to gather these items.

Remove Distractions

- Turn off the computer, TV, radio and CD player if they interfere with your child's ability to concentrate. Discourage your child from making and receiving telephone calls, checking e-mails, sending text messages or accessing the computer (social networking sites, MSM, chat rooms etc) during homework time.
- Encourage other family members to take part in a quiet activity during homework time.

Identify Appropriate Resources

- Talk to your child's teacher about the appropriate use of computers as learning and homework tools. Check with the teacher to identify suitable web sites. Inquire about the use of school computers after school hours if you don't have one in your home. Many public libraries and bookstores also make computers and the Internet available to students.

Set a Good Example

- Show your child that the skills he/she is learning are an important part of the things he/she will do as an adult. Let him/her see you reading books, newspapers and computer screens; writing reports, letters, e-mails and lists; using math to balance your cheque book or solve puzzles; doing other things that require thought and effort.

Be Involved - Appropriately

- Children are more likely to complete homework successfully when parents monitor their assignments. How closely you need to monitor depends upon his/her age, how independent he/she is and how well he/she does in school.

- Encourage your child to clarify assignments and due dates prior to bringing them home.
- Check your child's agenda daily to ensure that all homework has been completed.
- Don't do your child's homework for him/her. Completing assignments for your child won't help him/her to understand and use information. And it won't help him/her to become confident in his/her own abilities.

Give practice tests

- Help your child prepare for a spelling test by saying the words as he writes them. Write a sample math test based on questions in the textbook, or review information that he has taken notes on in school.

Talk about the Assignments

- Asking questions can help your child to think through an assignment and break it down into small, manageable parts. Here are some questions to ask:
 - Do you understand what you're supposed to do?
 - Do you need help in understanding how to do this assignment?
 - Do you have everything you need to do the assignment?
 - Does your answer make sense to you?

If they don't know the answers to these questions, they need to seek clarification from their teacher.



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