

School Homework Tips

Children learn as much out of school as they do in school. They learn things at home and in their community. Children learn a great deal from their parents, and parents are important partners in the learning experience. Parental interest, common sense, and a few basic skills can help make school a successful learning experience for children.



Parental interest sends a strong message to children - that education is important, and that learning can be fun and worth the effort.

Teachers assign homework for many reasons. It can give students extra practice time, apply information learned, and help them expand their knowledge beyond what learned in class. Assignments are also a good way for children to learn to work independently. Homework assignments can also help students work on bigger projects, learn about other resources, like encyclopaedias and the web, and visit libraries.

A checklist for helping your child with homework:

- Try to set aside a special, quiet place with good lighting for homework.
- Keep basic supplies like paper, pencils, pens, markers, rulers, etc. in a box in the homework area.
- Try to have a regular time each day to do homework.
- Help your child use organizational tools, like school planners, calendars, and folders.
- When children are assigned larger projects that require a few days or weeks to complete, help them to schedule their time and break the assignment into manageable pieces.

Questions to ask your child:

- What is today's homework/assignment?
- Is the task clear? Do you understand what you have to do? If not, suggest calling a classmate
- When is the work due?
- If it is a major project, would it help to make a time line in your planner?

Other ways to help:

- Be positive, supportive. And encouraging. Remember to look for areas of improvement.
- Remember that it is your child's homework, not yours.
- Let your child know that you have confidence in him/her. Remind him/her of past successes, perhaps in sports, music or other difficult homework assignments.
- Show interest and praise him/her when he/she has done something well.
- Try to make criticisms or suggestions in a helpful way.
- Get to know the teacher early in the year, and find out about homework policies and expectations.
- Call the teacher if there are homework problems or issues you can't resolve. Do it earlier, rather than later before it becomes a major issue.

Why Do Homework?

- Research from a variety of educational sources supports the importance of students doing homework.
- Homework encourages students to learn good habits and attitudes which will apply in later life (life long learning).
- Homework teaches children to work independently and encourages discipline and responsibility.
- Students who do more homework, on average, do better in school. As children move up through the grades, homework becomes even more important to school success.
- Homework provides an opportunity for parents to get involved in their children's education.

Teachers assign homework for various reasons.

It can help students:

- practice what they have learned in school.
- get ready for the next day's class.
- use resources, such as libraries, research material, internet, etc.
- learn about other interesting things that they may not have the time to explore at school.

Some Examples of Homework:

- finishing an assignment
- reviewing for a test
- editing assignments
- organizing binders or portfolios
- reviewing notes
- reading an assigned section from a text
- reading a novel
- researching a topic
- studying for an exam
- problem-solving
- completing a survey
- discussing a topic with parents
- catching up on missed assignments/notes

Four Keys to Monitor Success

1. **Show That You Think Education and Homework are Important.**
Children are more eager to do homework if they know that their parents care that it gets done.
2. **Monitor Your Child's Work**
Check to see that assignments are started and finished on time. If you aren't home when the homework is finished, look it over when you get home. (This will vary upon the age of your child and his/her previously demonstrated responsibility.) Limit TV viewing and socializing. Help your child to maintain a balance between social/sports activities and academics.
3. **Provide Guidance**
Encourage good work habits. Help your child to schedule homework time. Talk about assignments and ask questions. This helps your child think through an assignment and break it

into small, workable parts. Give praise when she/he has done a good job. Provide helpful criticism when your child hasn't done his/her best work so that there can be an improvement.

4. **Talk with Someone at School if Problems Come Up**

If homework problems do arise, everyone needs to work together to resolve them - - the school, teachers, parents, and students. Different problems require different solutions. Maybe the homework was too hard or too easy for your child? Perhaps your child likes to procrastinate. Comments from parents can provide teachers with insight into the child's homework difficulties. The teacher, together with the parent and child can develop a plan to encourage homework success.

A Checklist For Helping Your Child With Homework

Be Sure Your Child has:

- an appropriate work place.
- a regular time each day for doing homework.
- basic supplies, such as paper, pencils, pens, markers, and ruler.
- a clock to monitor use of time.
- a completed agenda book.

Questions to Ask Your Child:

- What's your assignment today?
- Is the assignment clear? (If not, consider calling a classmate.)
- When is it due? How many marks is it worth?
- Do you need special resources (eg. a trip to the library or access to a computer)?
- Do you need special supplies (eg. graph paper or posterboard)?
- Have you started today's assignment? Finished it?
- Is it a long-term assignment (eg. essay, research project or science project)?
- For a major project, would it help to write out the steps or make a schedule?
- Would a practice test be useful?
- Have you caught up on any missed assignments/notes when you were absent?

Other Ways to Help:

- Look over your child's homework, but don't do the work! Ask your child to explain what he/she has done.
- Meet the teachers early in the year and find out about the homework policy
- Review teacher comments on homework that has been returned and discuss with your child.
- Observe your child's style of learning and try to understand how he/she works best (eg. by using visual aids or by reading aloud, etc.)
- Contact the teacher if there's a homework problem you can't resolve.
- Attend school information sessions on curriculum, parenting skills, etc. as offered by your school.
- Congratulate your child on a job well done!

One of the most positive ways in which you, as a parent can influence your child is through the modelling you do at home. It is a well-known fact that "actions speak louder than words." The more

often your child sees you in an active role as a learner, the greater the likelihood that he/she will follow your lead.

Asking For Help

If you need additional information, consider the following:

1. See your child's teacher.
2. Ask a peer tutor or learning buddy for help.
3. Talk to the resource teacher or guidance counsellor.
4. Refer to other study skills brochures available at your school or on this site:

General Tips for Parents

- Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.
- Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.
- Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available.
- Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.
- Help your child with time management.
- Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.
- Be positive about homework.
- Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.
- When your child does homework, you do homework.
- Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.
- When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.
- Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.
- When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.
- Co-operate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.
- If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away. Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.
- Stay informed. Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.
- Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework. Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.
- Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration. Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.
- Reward progress in homework. If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.