

# Homework

Assigning homework serves various purposes. It serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of material that can be covered in class, and supplements and reinforces work done in school. In addition, it fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility, and brings home and school closer together. Completing homework on time clearly contributes to school success.

## How can parents help?

Helping should begin with an understanding that children are responsible for homework. Parents are there to help them get organized and to encourage them when they get stuck. It's a good idea to check with the teacher at the beginning of the year to get a sense of how much assistance to provide your child. The following are other ways to help:

- **Set a regular study time.** Keep your child's attention span in mind. You may need two short periods with a break in between. Check with your child's teacher if you are not sure about how much time to set aside for study. Make it a regular period, though, with a beginning and an ending time.
- **Provide a quiet place for study with minimal distractions.** Some children work better with a little, low-level background sound. (Avoid having the television on, however.) Children don't necessarily need to study in a private space.
- **Provide basic materials.** Pens, pencils, lined paper, pencil sharpener, and so forth are usually all your child will need. In higher grades, you child may need graph paper, a dictionary, and other materials.
- **Help your child get organized to bring home needed materials.** Provide either a notebook with dividers and pockets in it or a backpack so your child can reduce the chances of losing papers, notes, or assignments. If getting organized is a problem, involve the teacher. In the earlier grades especially, most teachers are willing to prompt children to take home the required materials.
- **Have your child write down daily homework assignments.** Encourage your child to take notes concerning assignments in case questions arise later at home.
- **Praise your child's efforts.** If questions arise about the assignments, and your child asks for help, ask him or her questions or work through an example rather than simply providing the answer.
- **For younger children, go over homework assignments with your child.** Do several problems or questions together, then observe your child doing the next one or two.

## **How much time should my child spend on homework?**

The National PTA and the National Education Association recommend no more than 20 minutes of homework per day for children in kindergarten through third grade, and 20 to 40 minutes per day for fourth through sixth graders. From seventh to twelfth grade, the recommended amount of time varies according to the type and number of subjects a student is taking.

If you have any concerns regarding the amount or type of homework assigned, share them with your child's teacher or principal.

Students may not always view homework as a pleasant experience, but if the assignment serves a good purpose and parents reinforce the completion of tasks, students will benefit by gaining higher grades, better study habits, and a more positive attitude toward school and learning. Homework assignments give parents insight into the school curriculum and offer a greater opportunity for student learning to occur.

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