
Homework Hassles??

Here are some
suggestions....

Why is there homework???

- Student achievement rises significantly when teachers regularly assign homework and students conscientiously do it, and the academic benefits increase as children move into the upper grades. Homework can help children develop good habits and attitudes. It can teach children self-discipline and responsibility. More importantly, it can encourage a love of learning.
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Why bother with homework?

- Homework assignments provide the time and experience students need to develop study habits that support learning. Students experience the results of their effort as well as the ability to cope with mistakes and difficulty (Bempechat, 2004).
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But it's such a drag!

- When students think of homework, usually it's a negative thought. But it shouldn't be, because learning should be fun. Today no one can become truly educated if they don't learn to work on their own.
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Family homework policy

- Provide clear homework policies. Create and communicate a homework policy at the home. Include expectations, consequences, guidelines, and helpful tips in your family's homework policies. The beginning of school is a good time to review your expectations and practices.
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START FRESH!!!!

- ❑ The beginning of school is a GREAT time to review your family's expectations and practices.
 - ❑ Homework completion is crucial to academic success at the high school.
 - ❑ [Paulu \(1998\)](#) notes that family routines -- which include set homework times -- have been linked to higher student achievement.
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Routines and expectations

- Set aside a specific time for homework each day ([Paulu, 1998](#)). This might involve limiting television-watching or phone calls until homework is finished ([Gaillard, 1994](#)).
 - Parents should be careful, though, not to pit homework against activities students enjoy, or to create situations in which students rush through their work in order to get back to other activities ([Black, 1996](#)).
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Consistency pays off

- Be as consistent as possible throughout the school year ([Paulu, 1998](#)). Getting students accustomed to a regular homework pattern early in the year is helpful to all students, but may be especially important for students with learning disabilities ([Patton, 1994](#)).
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Supplies

- Make sure students have all the supplies they need ([Paulu, 1998](#)). Check in with students ahead of time about the kinds of projects they will be doing: It might be tough to find a calculator or a report cover at 9:00 the night before an assignment is due.
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Are they really studying?

- ❑ Create a place at home that is conducive to studying ([Patton, 1994](#); [Paulu, 1998](#)). Good study environments are well-lit and quiet.
 - ❑ Although every child's learning style is different, most educators agree that students do best when the television is off and the student is free from distractions ([Gaillard, 1994](#); [Paulu, 1998](#)).
 - ❑ If the grades aren't in line with the time your child seems to be putting in, perhaps working where someone can observe would be advisable.
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Building good habits...

- Parents often want their children to do homework shortly after arriving home. This is especially true if the parent is still at work because it's a productive way for the children to spend time before mom or dad gets home. But experience shows that students with homework problems usually need to be supervised and held accountable for their work in order to complete it successfully. We've heard the story many times. "When I get home from work, my child tells me that the homework is finished." Parents find it hard to take the time needed to check their child's assignments carefully to see if they are really done. It is worth the investment to establish good habits!
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How can parents actually help?

- Be available if students have questions. Parents can support their children by looking over homework and giving suggestions, but should not do the homework for them ([Paulu, 1998](#)).
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Too tough? Confusing?

- Parents are not expected to be content experts. If a student needs help with content, that's a sign that the homework assignment may be too difficult. Talk to the teacher!
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How much is too much?

- A good rule of thumb is to multiply the grade x 10 minutes to approximate the right amount of minutes per night for students. If your child is spending much more or much less time talk with the teacher(s).
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Speed over quality?

- ❑ Don't underestimate the length of time it will take for students to complete assignments ([Black, 1996](#)).
 - ❑ Include time for gathering supplies and organizing materials in your calculation of how long your children will take to complete an assignment.
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Start early...

- ❑ Start early and leave plenty of time.
 - ❑ Avoid the tail end of the day exhaustion and sleep deprivation.
 - ❑ Studies show that a good night sleep is important to learning and memory function.
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Be patient. Real learning takes time...

- Recognize student uniqueness. Students need time to adapt and shape what they are learning as they practice. As they practice, given time, they will incorporate the new skill into a knowledge base of their own, deepening understanding.
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Thinking about preparing for exams...

- Mastery requires focused practice over days or weeks. After only four practice sessions students reach a halfway point to mastery. **It takes more than 24 more practice sessions before students reach 80 percent mastery. And this practice must occur over a span of days or weeks, and cannot be rushed (Anderson, 1995; Newell & Rosenbloom, 1981).**
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Motivation???

- ❑ Use extrinsic rewards sparingly, if at all. If extrinsic motivators are to be used, they are most effective when rewards are closely related to changing and improving study habits, not the grades.
 - ❑ Giving a prize for minimally successful work sends the message that minimum effort is acceptable, and the reward then becomes meaningless ([Brooks et al., 1998](#)).
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Motivation

- ❑ Avoid linking rewards or punishment to school performance ([Dev, 1997](#)). While it is important for parents to recognize students' achievements, they should avoid external motivators for performance.
 - ❑ Instead, parents should emphasize the value of learning and show they appreciate their child's hard work ([Patton, 1994](#)).
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I am not my grades....

- Fear of punishment, anxiety about meeting parents' expectations, and worrying about being compared to siblings not only cause stress for students, but can also detract from their intrinsic motivation and interest in learning ([Dev, 1997](#)).
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How do we know if it's working?

RebelNet:...

Check with the teachers.....

Communicate!

- Make an effort to communicate regularly with teachers ([Corno, 1996](#)). If necessary, parents should ask teachers to clarify their expectations.
 - It is also a good idea to find out ahead of time what kinds of resources -- such as tutors or services for second language students -- are available to students if they need help.
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Speak up!

- ❑ What one parent views as helping out, a teacher might perceive as interference or cheating.
 - ❑ What a teacher might take for granted that parents can do-such as signing off on homework or checking spelling words-a parent may not have the skills or the time to follow through on.
 - ❑ Two way communication is essential. Speak up!
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It takes a village....

- The involvement of both parents in the education of their children can make a significant difference in overall achievement. A 1996 study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that high parental involvement improves the likelihood that children in grades one to 12 will earn high grades, and reduces the likelihood that children in grades six to 12 will be suspended or expelled from school (NCES, 1996).
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Works Cited:

- ❑ Strong, R., Silver, H.F., & Robinson, A. (1995). What do students want? *Educational Leadership*, 53(1), 8-12.
 - ❑ Woods, E.G. (1995). Reducing the dropout rate. In *School Improvement Research Series (SIRS): Research you can use* (Close-up No. 17). Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved October 2, 2000, from the World Wide Web:
<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/9/c017.html>
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Looking for more ideas....

□ <http://www.nwrel.org/request/march99/index.html>

□ <http://www.nea.org/parents/images/homeworksolutionsguide.pdf> **A SOLUTIONS GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**
