

Homework Tips

Parents have a strong influence on their child's success in school. By supporting and praising your child's academic efforts and creating an atmosphere at home that encourages learning and doing homework, you can help your child do well in school.

Children have a wide range of approaches to doing homework. The following hints can be adapted to your child's homework style and pace.



- Respect your child's need to "recharge" himself after school, before starting homework. Some children want to have a snack, whereas others prefer to draw, do something physically active, play with a friend, read, listen to music, or watch a videotape.
- Establish a regular time and place to begin homework.
 - Make family activities that precede or follow homework—such as playing a game, cooking, or making crafts—a regular part of the homework routine. Shared activities assure the child that she will have time with parents, making it less likely that she will seek their attention while she is doing her homework.
 - During homework time, make sure siblings are not engaged in distracting activities (e.g., playing computer or video games, watching television).
- Recognize that an occasional break from steady concentration on homework helps some children stay on task.
- Be available to interpret assignments and questions, explain the meaning of unfamiliar words, review spelling or multiplication tables, or otherwise assist your child with his homework.
- Discuss topics for "show and tell," and preview talks that your child is preparing. If your child asks you for ideas for a presentation or project, try to build on her interests. Support her ideas even if she decides not to accept your suggestions.
- Parents' approaches to doing their own "homework" can serve as positive examples for their child. For example, do your own work reports, reading, bill paying, or letter writing while your child is doing his homework. This will demonstrate to your child the importance of responsibly completing work, while allowing him to enjoy your presence and turn to you with questions about his assignments if necessary.
- Help your child develop good organizational skills, such as keeping an assignment book and placing completed homework in a book bag ready to be taken to school each day.
- Comment on the schoolwork your child brings home, posting it on the refrigerator door, proudly telling other people about your child's accomplishments, and praising your child for her effort and success.

Source: Adapted, with permission, from Green M, Sullivan P, Eichberg C. 1999. Homework conflicts, skirmishes, and wars. *Contemporary Pediatrics* 16(9):54-73.