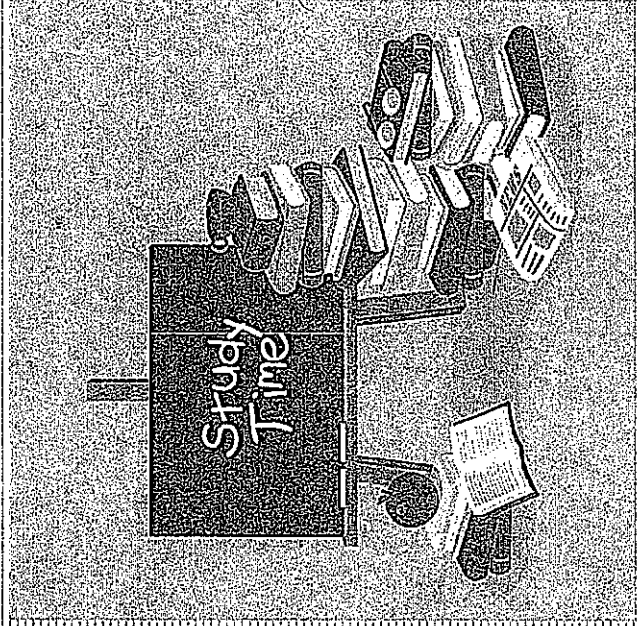


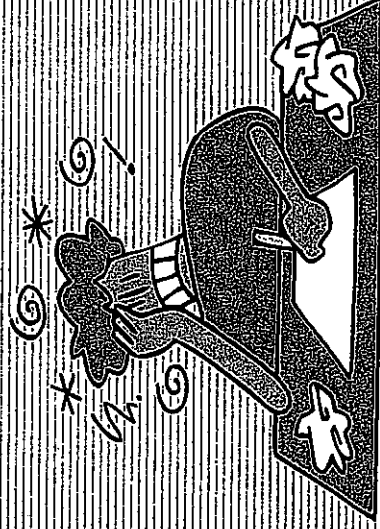
Empowering Parents: Practical Strategies for Homework and Studying

Presented by Courtney Bell Mislán, M.Ed, BCBA

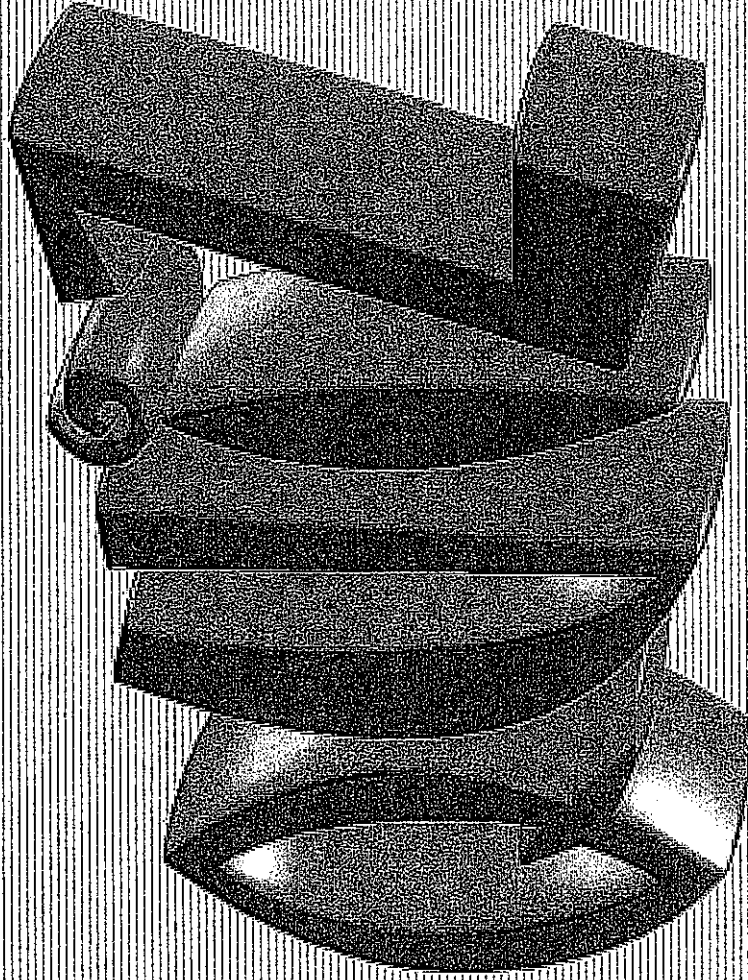


Objectives

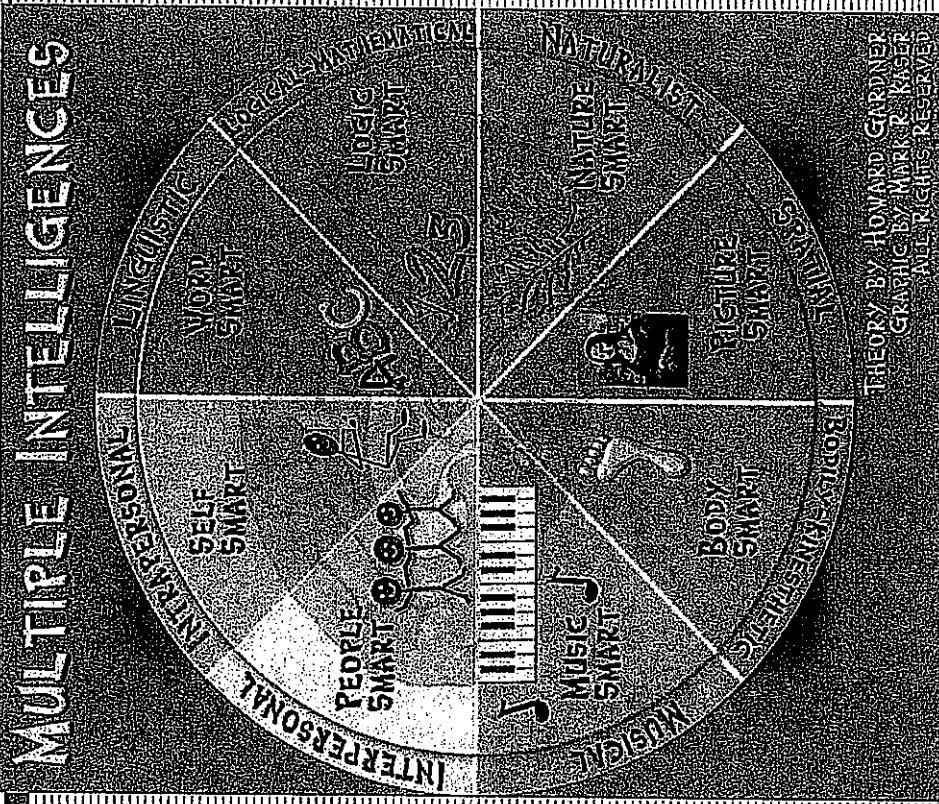
- Learning Styles
- Homework Routines
- Study Skills
- Strategies for Success



Learning Styles



Learning Styles



Find your strengths! Take a Multiple-Intelligences Quiz....
<http://literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html>

The **Theory of Multiple Intelligences** helps us to know that each of us learns differently and needs a variety of strategies, techniques, and methods to learn effectively.

□ Visual	□ Auditory	□ Tactile
■ Class notes	■ Listen	■ Use globes
■ Read book	■ Study out loud	■ Maps
■ Write		■ Pictures
■ notes	■ Talk out loud	■ Move
■ Charts	■ Become the teacher	■ Feel
■ diagrams	■ Tape recorder	

Example: Spelling Words

□ Visual

- Rainbow words
- Read words
- Write words
- Visualize while spelling
- Flashcards
- Make letters into pictures
- Write using a variety of materials (chalk, marker, board, paint, etc)

□ Auditory

- Spelling out loud
- Tape record your child spelling to review
- Teaching them to someone else
- Saying the words out loud while reading
- Set words to music

□ Tactile

- Rainbow words
- Jump the letters
- Spell with your body
- Incorporate physical activity ie kicking a soccer ball, pacing, etc.
- Write in shaving cream or jello

Crossing Modalities

□ Visualization and Verbalization technique from Lindamood-Bell

- Used with children with dyslexia
- Trace and say letters on index card.
- Trace in air.
- Visualize the letters as you air write and say them
- Spell the word forward twice.
- Ask student, "What is the 3rd letter? The 5th letter?"
- By the end, most can spell the word forward and backwards!



Left vs. Right

Color Chart

- Look at the color chart and say the color, not the word.
- For example, if you saw BROWN you would say BLUE not BROWN.
- You're goal is read through them quickly and fluently, can you do it?

Color Chart

GREEN YELLOW GREEN

RED ORANGE BLACK GREEN

YELLOW BROWN ORANGE BLACK

GREEN BLUE PINK BROWN

BLUE ORANGE PINK PURPLE

BLACK GREEN BLUE BROWN

ORANGE YELLOW RED BLACK

Left vs. Right

□ So, what type of brain do you have?

■ Your right brain will try to say the color while your left brain will read the word.

■ If you can complete the test easily then your right brain is dominant!

■ If it was more difficult for you then you're left brained!

Left vs. Right

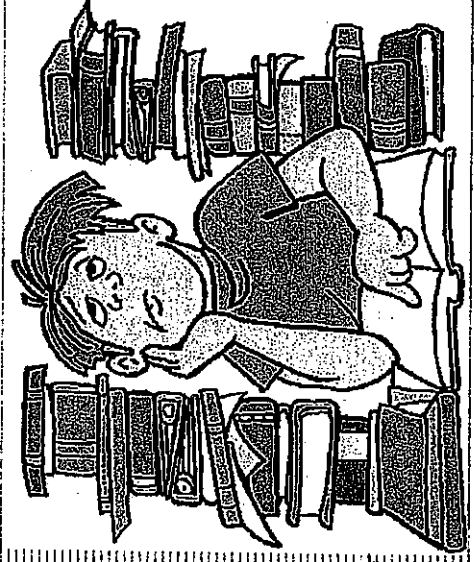
☐ Left

- ☒ Verbal
- ☒ Recalls facts, dates
- ☒ Sequential
- ☒ Processes information linearly
- ☒ Trusts logic
- ☒ Tidy, organized
- ☒ Plans ahead
- ☒ Punctual
- ☒ Recalls people's names
- ☒ Speaks with few gestures
- ☒ detail oriented
- ☒ math and science
- ☒ Past and present
- ☒ Learns linear

☐ Right

- ☒ Visual, tactile, kinesthetic
- ☒ Responds to word pitch, feeling
- ☒ Recalls images, patterns
- ☒ Random
- ☒ symbols and images
- ☒ present and future
- ☒ Processes information in chunks
- ☒ Responds to emotional appeal
- ☒ Trusts intuition
- ☒ Looks disorganized
- ☒ Spontaneous
- ☒ Less punctual
- ☒ Impulsive
- ☒ Recalls people's faces
- ☒ Gestures when speaking
- ☒ Learns chunking

❑ Think about your child's personality and the best way to support his/her learning style. What works for one of your children may not work for another one!

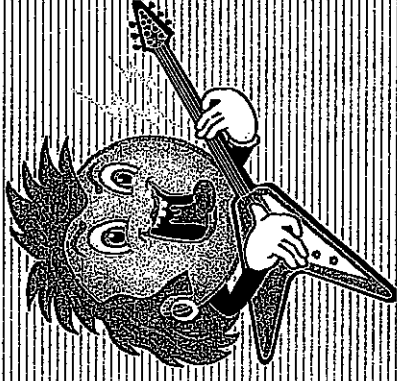


Homework Routine

- ☐ Consistency
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Organization
- ☐ Visual Supports
- ☐ Reinforcement

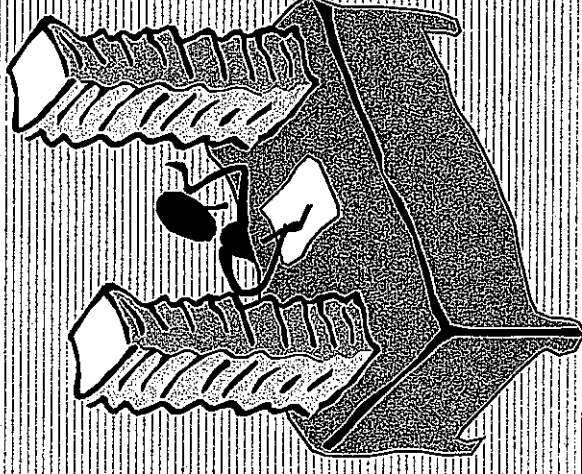
Environment

- ☐ Study Space – consistent area
- ☐ Background Noise
- ☐ Lighting
- ☐ Posture
- ☐ Box of supplies
- ☐ A clock or timer
- ☐ Routine



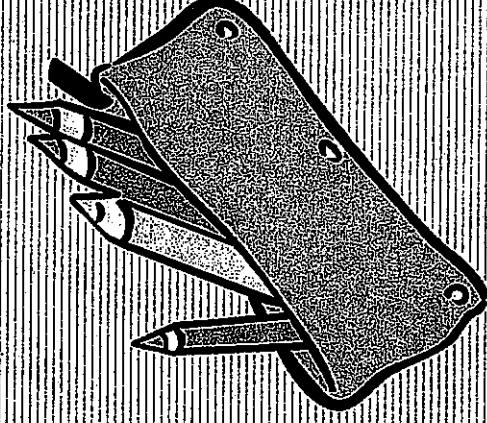
Organization

- ❑ Area free of clutter
- ❑ Proper tools try a Magic Box
- ❑ Colored folders
- ❑ Special place for papers
- ❑ Consistent routine
- ❑ Place for bookbag



Magic Box

- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Pencil grippers
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Scissor
- ☐ Glue stick
- ☐ Permanent marker
- ☐ Ruler
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Erasers
- ☐ Calculator

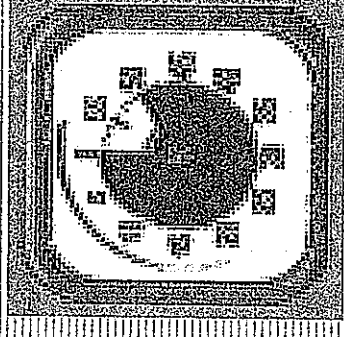


Visual Organization

- Visual organization helps students:
 - Stay on task
 - Reduce distractions
 - Organize belongings, work, and assignments

- Some visual organization strategies:

- Timers
- Borders/boundaries
- Color-coding
- Checklists



Schedules

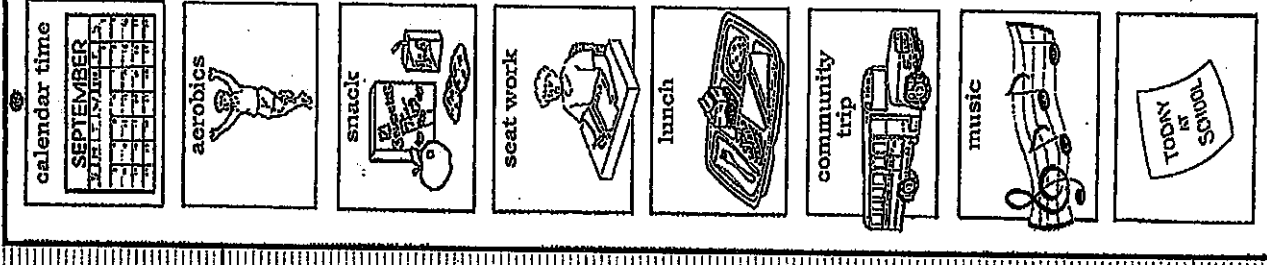
□ Some types of schedules:

- Daily schedules
- Activity-schedules
- Calendars

□ Schedules help students with:

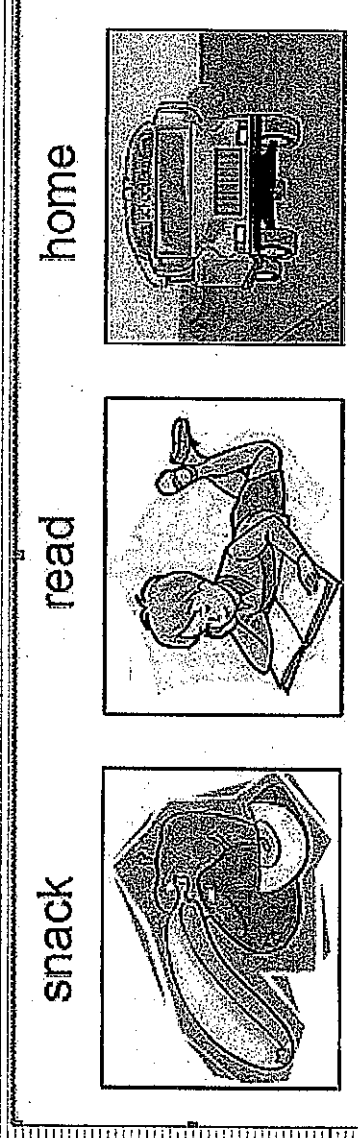
- Structure and predictability
- Sequential memory
- Time management/organization
- Understanding expectations
- Independence!

- Graphic from www.usevisualstrategies.com



How to set up a Schedule

- Padding the Schedule
- Behavioral Momentum
- Chunking
- Schedules of Reinforcement
- Breaks

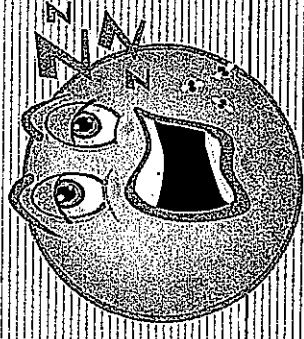


Example Written Schedule

- 10 minutes computer time
- Spelling HW
- Math HW
- Snack
- Science HW
- Read for 20 minutes
- Reward: 20 minutes of video games!

Fighting Fatigue

- ☐ Provide a break – such as movement
- ☐ Provide a visual break to help relax eye muscles (looking out the window)
- ☐ Short snack
- ☐ Prioritize tasks – does your child perform better with the harder task first? Or easier task?
- ☐ Finger stretching
- ☐ Break down assignments



Reinforcement

☐ Remember...

☐ Immediately

☐ Frequently 4:1

☐ Enthusiastically

☐ Eye Contact

☐ Descriptively



I Can Do It!

I'm working for:

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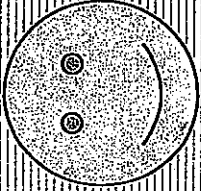
My name:

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Examples

- Once his homework is completed, Chase can play 15 minutes of xbox.
- Mara earns a star for every 10 minutes she studies. After 3 stars, mom will play a game of cards with her to take a break.
- Every time Jason shuts down while doing his homework, his dad offers him snack or to shoot some hoops.

Example Task List

1	Math WB page 24	
2	Write spelling words 3x's	
3	Study for Social Studies Test (15 minutes)	

When I complete my tasks I will earn: Basketball

Homework Time

General Guide

- Grades K-2, about 10-20 minutes.
- Grades 3-6, about 30-60 minutes.
- Grades 7-12 will vary considerably, depending on subjects, projects due, tests, etc., but a reasonable average is about two hours, with more on weekends, as needed, for major projects and exams.

If your child spends considerably more than this on homework, look into the cause...

Study Skills

- ☐ Teach your child to prioritize
- ☐ Make a study plan, break down the material over a few days
- ☐ Find your child's peak study time; study challenging topics when your child is most awake
- ☐ Take breaks during long study sessions –just make sure it's easy to come back from those breaks
- ☐ Reflect on the study sessions—what worked, what didn't?
- ☐ Get involved! Ask questions, quiz your child...
- ☐ Help your child learn how to find answers...don't find the answers for them.
- ☐ Practice makes perfect! Set up practice tests that are timed, just like they are in school.

Flashcard Technique

- ❑ Facts/Questions on the front
- ❑ Definitions/Answers on the back
- ❑ When studying, put the flashcards in 2 piles. If you get them correct, put on the left, if you get them wrong, put in another pile on the right. This way you can continue to study the information that you don't know.

Quizlet.com

- ❑ Study website
- ❑ Students can create their own study sets
- ❑ Can also share study sets with others!
- ❑ Uses a variety of methods to study the information

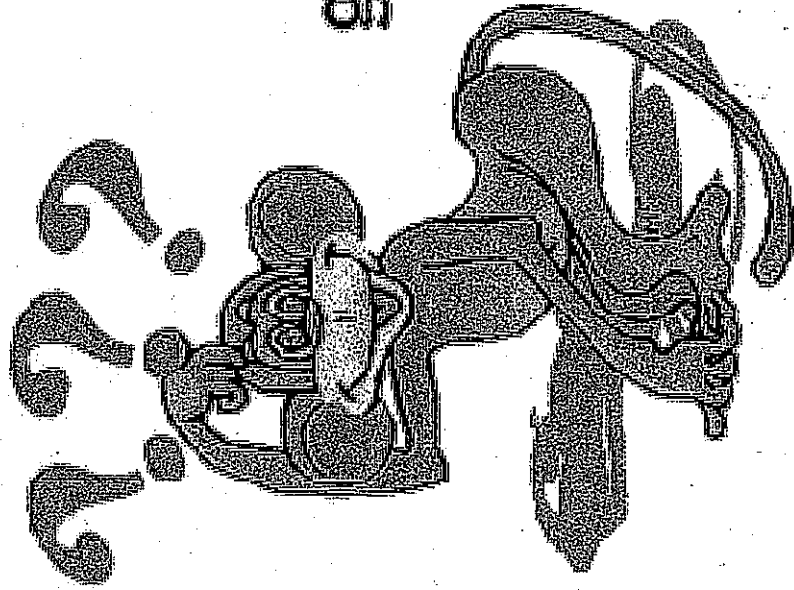
What do you do if it's just too difficult?

- ❑ Homework should be reinforcing skills that have been taught in school
- ❑ Look at underlying cause
- ❑ Talk to your child's teacher about strategies they are using in school

Last Minute Tips

- ☐ **Don't do the homework for your child.**
- ☐ **Don't take over your child's projects**
- ☐ **Don't hover — but stay close by.**
- ☐ **Limit media exposure.**
- ☐ **Let the teacher know if you gave your child a lot of homework help.**
- ☐ **Don't always try to have a rational conversation**
- ☐ **Let your child make his own mistakes**

Questions???



Questions
are
guaranteed in
life;
Answers
aren't.

Community Resource

□ Glassboro Family Success Center

- Free HW help-Wednesday's 3-5, must sign up in advance

■ fsgloucester@gmail.com

□ Testtakingtips.com

Resources

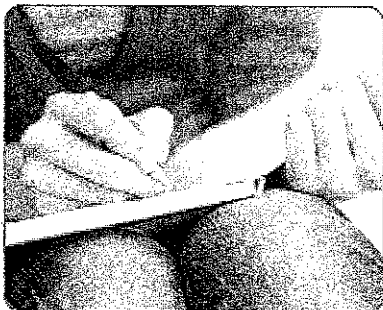
- ☐ <http://www.teachersandfamilies.com/open/parent/studyskills1.cfm>
- ☐ <http://www.greatschools.org/students/academic-skills/study-and-test-taking-strategies-for-kids-with-learning-difficulties.gs?content=627>
- ☐ <http://www.additudemag.com>
- ☐ http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.php
- ☐ http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com/reward_certificates.htm
- ☐ <http://www.behaviorcharts.printables.com>
- ☐ "Positive Reinforcement." Created and presented by Tracy Ruff, BCBA, November 2007.
- ☐ "Handling Behavior Problems at Home and in the Community." Created by Mark Sundberg, Ph.D., BCBA and Cindy Sundberg
- ☐ "Educational Interventions." Created and presented by Dana Lamonica, LDT-C.

7 Ways to Stop the Parent-Child Power Struggle Over Homework-EmpoweringParents.com

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7 Ways to Stop the Parent-Child Power Struggle Over Homework

by Debbie Pincus MS LMHC



Do you find yourself in full-on homework battles most nights of the week? It's no surprise that most children and teens will dig in their heels when it comes to doing schoolwork. Think of it this way: How many kids want to do something that isn't particularly exciting or pleasant? Most would prefer to be playing video games, riding their bikes or driving around with friends, especially after a long day of school and activities.

As long as you believe you are accountable (or to blame) for your child's outcome, you are under her control.

The underlying truth here is that you and your child might already be caught in a power struggle over this. Like most parents, you probably want your children to do well and be responsible. Maybe you worry about your child's future. After all, doing homework and chores are your child's prime responsibilities, right? Let's face it, it's easy to get anxious when your kids are not doing what they're supposed to be doing—and when you know how important doing schoolwork is. And when you believe you are ultimately responsible for the choices your child makes (and many of us do, consciously and unconsciously), the ante is upped and the tug of war begins.

Related: Nightly fights over homework?

Nagging, Lecturing and Yelling—But Nothing Changes?

If you're in the habit of threatening, lecturing, questioning your child, nagging or even screaming at them "do the work!" (and trust me, we've all been there), you probably feel like you're doing whatever it takes to get your kids on track. But when you're in your child's head, there's no room for him to think for himself. And unfortunately, the more anxious you are, the more you'll hold on in an attempt to control him and push him toward the task at hand. What happens then? Your child will resist by pushing back. That's when the power struggle ensues. Your child, in essence, is saying, "I own my own life—stay out!" Now the battle for autonomy is getting played out around homework and chores, and exactly what you feared and hoped to avoid gets created.

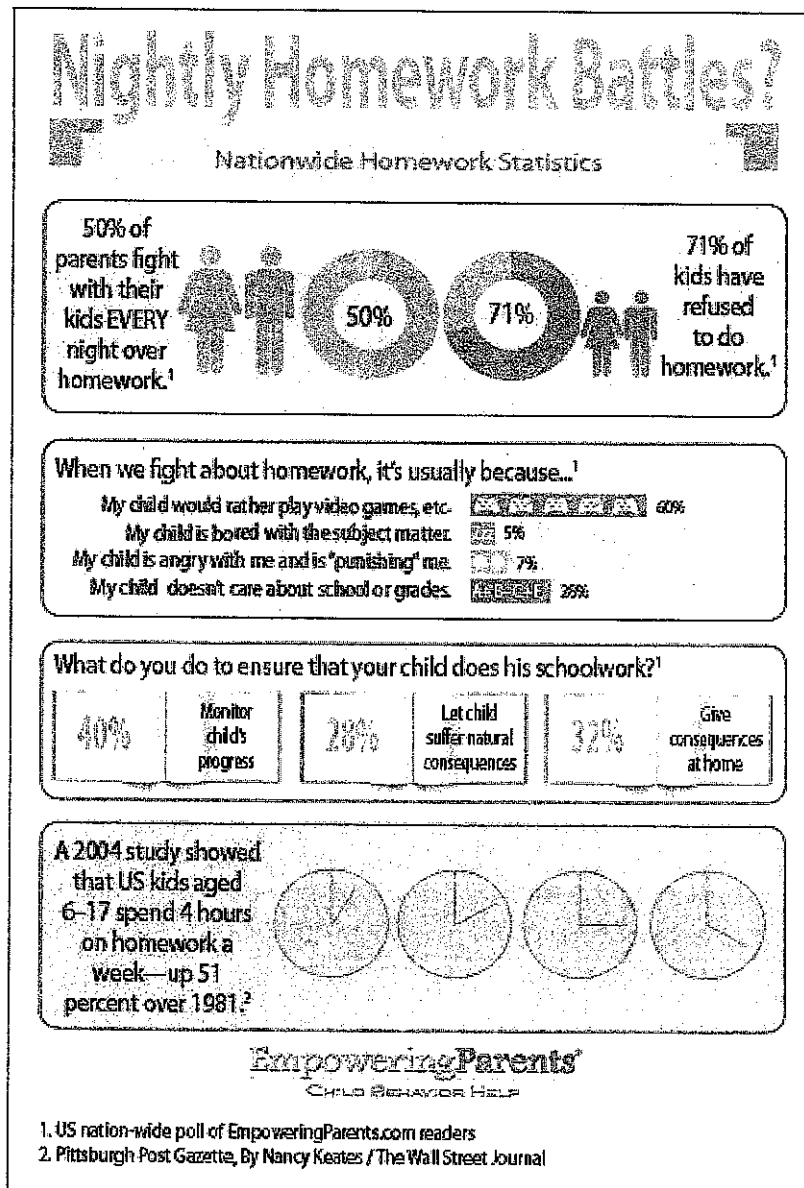
This is very aggravating for parents to say the least. Many of us get trapped into thinking we are responsible for our child's choices in life. As long as you believe you are accountable (or to blame) for your child's outcome, you are under their control. This is because you will need your child to make those good choices—do the work—so you will feel that *you're* doing a good job. Your child's behavior becomes a reflection of you. You are now at your child's mercy as you try to get him to do what you want him to do so you can feel validated as a good parent. Your child does not want to be taking care of your emotional well-being, so he will naturally resist.

Related: Do you feel responsible for your child's choices—and behavior?

When kids are not following through on their responsibilities, it can easily trigger a number of feelings in parents. Note that your child did not cause these feelings, but rather *triggered* feelings that already belong to you. You might be triggered by a feeling of anger because you feel ineffective or fear that your child will never amount to anything. Or you might feel guilt about not doing a good enough job as a parent. Here's

the truth: You have to be careful not to let these triggered feelings cause you to push your kids harder so that you can feel better. One of the toughest things parents have to do is learn how to soothe their own difficult feelings rather than ask their children to do that for them. This is the first step in avoiding power struggles.

Why are power struggles important to avoid? They inadvertently create just what you've feared. Your child is living his life in reaction to you rather than making his own independent choices. Learning how to make those choices is a necessary skill that develops self-motivation. How can you avoid ending up in these battles? Here are 7 tips that can really help.



1. You are not responsible for your child's choices. Understand that you are not responsible for the choices your child makes in his life. It's impossible to take on that burden without a battle for control over another human being. Measure your success as a parent by how you behave—not by what your child chooses to do or not do. Doing a good job as a parent means that you have done all that you can do as a responsible person. It does not mean that you have raised a perfect person who has made all the right choices. Once you really get this, you won't be so anxious about your child's behaviors, actions, and decisions. You will be able to see your child from objective, not subjective, lenses and therefore be able to guide their behavior, because you'll have seen what he actually needs.

2. You cannot make someone care—but you can influence them. You cannot get a person to do or care about what they don't want to do or care about. Our kids have their own genetics, roles, and ultimately their own free will. So focusing on getting your child to change or getting something from her will not work long-term and will most often turn into a power struggle. What you can do is try to influence your child using only what is in your own hands. For example, when it comes to homework, you can structure the environment to create the greatest probability that the work will get done.

Related: How to stop doing too much for your child and start parenting more effectively.

3. Think about the “fences” you’d like to create for your child. Take charge of your own best thinking and decisions rather than trying to control your child’s. Pause, think and decide what fences you want to create for your child. What are your bottom lines? Know what you can and can’t do as a parent. Recognize that what will make the biggest difference to your child (and helping him become a responsible kid who makes good choices) will be learning how to inspire him, not control him. Building a positive relationship with your kids is your best parenting strategy. Children want to please the people in their lives that they have loving feelings toward. You cannot ultimately make them accept your values, but you can inspire them to do so. Getting a child to listen to you is primarily about setting up the conditions under which they choose to do so. In order to do this, make a conscious effort to sprinkle your relationship with more positive interactions than negative ones. Hug, show affection, laugh together, and spend time with one another. Point out your appreciations most instead of constantly correcting, instructing, teaching, yelling, complaining, or reprimanding. Don’t get me wrong, you need to correct and reprimand as a parent. But make a conscious effort so that every time you do this, you will follow it with many positive interactions. The human brain remembers the negatives much more than the positives. Most kids will be happy to listen and be guided by the people in their lives who they like and respect. 時計コピー 時計コピー

4. Should you give consequences when kids don’t do homework? Parents always ask whether or not they should give consequences to kids if they don’t do their homework—or instead just let the chips fall where they may. I think you can give consequences, and that might work temporarily—maybe even for a while. Perhaps your child will learn to be more responsible or to use anxiety about the consequences to motivate themselves. You can’t change someone else, but consequences might help them get some homework done. You can’t “program” your child to care about their work, but you can create a work environment that promotes a good work ethic. Kids who regularly get their homework done and study do better throughout school and overall in life.

Related: How to give consequences that will work.

5. How structuring the environment can encourage studying. Again, you can’t make a child do anything that he doesn’t feel like doing, but you can structure his environment to create the greatest probability that the work will get done. When your child’s grades slip, or you find that he’s not getting his work in on time, you are automatically “invited in” to supervise and help him get on track. You can make sure that for certain periods of time, he will not be able to do anything other than schoolwork. The rule is during that time, no electronics are allowed—just homework and studying. By doing this, you are providing a structure to do what your child probably can’t do yet for himself. The hour and a half that you set aside should be a time when you will be around to enforce the rules that you have set. Give a fixed amount of time and once that time is up, your child is free to go elsewhere, homework done or not. Stay consistent with this plan, even if he fights you on it. This plan will accomplish the possibility that your child will get some homework done and maybe over time, create some better work habits. That’s all. This plan should be in place, whether or not he has homework. He can read, review or study if he doesn’t have any during that time. Let him know that these rules will change when his grades begin to reflect his potential and when you are not getting negative reports from teachers about missing homework. When he accomplishes this, tell him you will be happy to have him be fully in charge of his own homework. 時計コピー 時計コピー

6. Parents of Defiant kids. Extremely defiant kids who don’t seem to care about consequences really try their parents. Some of these kids suffer from ADHD, ODD, learning disabilities, emotional issues and many other issues. Defiance has become a way for them to try and solve their problems. With defiant kids, parents need to be very cognizant of working to develop positive relationships, no matter how difficult. Above all, work to avoid getting pulled into a power struggle. Your child will need many more learning opportunities and more rewards and negative consequences—and more time to learn these lessons than less defiant child. And if nothing changes, and your child continues to be defiant, you must continue to work on your own patience and be thoughtful about your own bottom line. Most important, continue to love your child and keep showing up.

Related: How to parent your defiant child without going crazy.

7. Your simple message to your child. Be clear, concise and direct. Your simple message to your kids, which does not require lectures or big sit down conversations is, "Your job is to take care of your responsibilities, which includes getting your homework done and helping out in the house. That's my expectation for you. Once you've done that each day, you are welcome to do what you'd like." Remember, as a parent your job is to essentially help your child do *her* job.

The Homework Battle: How to Get Children to Do Homework-EmpoweringParents.com <

The Homework Battle: How to Get Children to Do Homework
by Debbie Pincus, MS LMHC



Parents often feel it's their *job* to get their kids to do well in school. Naturally, you might get anxious about this responsibility as a parent. You might also get nervous about your kids succeeding in life—and homework often becomes the focus of that concern. But when parents feel it's their responsibility to get their kids to achieve, they now *need* something from their children—they need them to do their homework and be a success. I believe this need puts you in a powerless position as a parent because your child doesn't have to give you what you want. The battle about homework actually becomes a battle over control. Your child starts fighting to have more control over the choices in his life, while you feel that your job as a parent is to be in control of things. So you both fight harder, and it turns into a war in your home.

The truth is, you *can't* make him care. Instead, focus on what helps his behavior improve. Don't focus on the attitude as much as what he's actually doing.

Over the years, I've talked to many parents who are in the trenches with their kids, and I've seen firsthand that there are many creative ways kids rebel when it comes to school work. Your child might forget to do his homework, do his homework but not hand it in, do it sloppily or carelessly, or not study properly for his test. These are just a few ways that kids try to hold onto the little control they have. When this starts happening, parents feel more and more out of control, so they punish, nag, threaten, argue, throw up their hands or over-function for their kids by doing the work for them. Now the battle is in full swing: reactivity is heightened as anxiety is elevated—and homework gets lost in the shuffle. The hard truth is that you cannot *make* your children do anything, let alone homework. Instead, the idea is to set limits, respect their individual choices and help motivate them to motivate themselves.

[Related: Learn how to set limits and get results with your child](#)

You might be thinking to yourself, "You don't know my child. I can't motivate him to do anything." But you can start to do it by calming down, slowing down, and simply observing. Observe the typical family dance steps and see if you and your mate contribute to your child's refusal, struggle and apathy. If you carry more of the worry, fear, disappointments, and concern than your child does about his work, ask yourself "What's wrong with this picture and how did this happen?" (Remember, as long as you carry their concerns, they don't have to.)

Guide Your Child—Don't Try to Control Him

Many parents tell me that their children are not motivated to do their work. I believe that children are motivated—they just may not be motivated the way you'd like them to be. Here are some concrete tips to help you guide them in their work without having to nag, threaten or fight with them.

Ask yourself what worked in the past: Think about a time when your child has gotten homework done well and with no hassles. What was different? What made it work that time? Ask your child about it and believe what he says. See what works and motivates *him* instead of what motivates *you*.

Stop the nightly fights. The way you can stop fighting with your kids over homework every night is to stop fighting with them tonight. Disengage from the dance. Choose some different steps or decide not to dance at all. Let homework stay where it belongs—between the teacher and the student. Refuse to get pulled in by the school in the future. Stay focused on your job, which is to help your child do his job.

Take a break: If you feel yourself getting reactive or frustrated, take a break from helping your child with homework. Your blood pressure on the rise is a no-win for everyone. Take five or ten minutes to calm down, and let your child do the same if you feel a storm brewing.

Set the necessary structures in place: Set limits around homework time. Here are a few possibilities that I've found to be effective with families:

- Homework is done at the same time each night.
- Homework is done in a public area of your house.
- If grades are failing or falling, take away screen time so your child can focus and have more time to concentrate on his work.
- Make it the rule that weekend activities don't happen until work is completed. Homework comes first. As James Lehman says, "The weekend doesn't begin until homework is done."

Related: How come the consequences I give my child don't work?

Get out of your child's "box" and stay in your own. When you start over-focusing on your child's work, pause and think about your own goals. What are your life goals and what "homework" do you need to get done in order to achieve those goals? Model your own persistence and perseverance to your child.

Let Your Child Make His Own Choices—and Deal with the Consequences

I recommend that within the parameters you set around schoolwork, your child is free to make his own choices. You need to back off a bit as a parent, otherwise you won't be helping him with his responsibilities. If you take too much control over the situation, it will backfire on you by turning into a power struggle. And believe me, you don't want a power struggle over homework. I've seen many kids purposely do poorly just to show their parents "who's in charge." I've also seen children who complied to ease their parents' anxiety, but these same kids never learned to think and make choices for themselves.

I'm a big believer in natural consequences when it comes to schoolwork. Within the structure you set up, your child has some choices. He can choose to do his homework or not, and do it well and with effort or not. The logical consequences will come from the choices he makes—if he doesn't choose to get work done, his grades will drop.

When that happens, you can ask him questions that aren't loaded, like,

"Are you satisfied with how things are going?"

"If not, what do you want to do about it?"

"How can I be helpful to you?"

The expectation is that homework is done to the best of your child's ability. When he stops making an effort and you see his grades drop, that's when you invite yourself in. You can say, "Now it's my job to help you do your job better. I'm going to help you set up a plan to help yourself and I will check in to make sure you're following it." Set up a plan with your child's input in order to get him back on his feet. For example, the new rules might be that homework must be done in a public place in your home until he gets his grades back up. You and your child might meet with the teacher to discuss disciplinary actions should his grades continue to drop. In other words, you will help your child get back on track by putting a concrete plan in place. And when you see this change, then you can step back out of it. But before that, your child is going to sit in a public space and you're going to work on his math or history together. You're also checking in more. Depending on the age of your child, you're making sure that things are checked off before he goes out. You're adding a half hour of review time for his

subjects every day. And then each day after school, he's checking with his teacher or going for some extra help. Remember, this plan is not a punishment—it's a practical way of helping your child to do his best.

Related: Homework battles? Get on the same page with your spouse and present a united front

When Kids Say They Don't Care about Bad Grades

Many parents will say that their kids just don't care about their grades. My guess is that somewhere inside, they do care. "I don't care" also becomes part of a power struggle. In other words, your child is saying, "I'm not going to care because you can't make me; you don't own my life." The truth is, you *can't* make him care. Instead, focus on what helps his behavior improve. Don't focus on the attitude as much as what he's actually doing.

I think it's also important to understand that caring and motivation come from ownership. You can help your child be motivated by allowing him to own his life more. So let him own his disappointment over his grades. Don't feel it more than he does. Let him choose what he will do or not do about his homework and face the consequences of those choices. Now he will begin to feel ownership, which may lead to caring. Let him figure out what motivates him, not have him motivated by fear of you. Help guide him but don't prevent him from feeling the real life consequences of bad choices like not doing his work. Think of it this way: It's better for your child to learn from those consequences at age ten by failing his grade and having to go to summer school than for him to learn at age 25 by losing his job.

When Your Child Has a Learning Disability

I want to note that it's very important that you check to see that there are no other learning issues around your child's refusal to do homework. If he is having a difficult time doing the work or is performing below grade level expectations, he should be tested to rule out any learning disabilities or other concerns.

If there is a learning disability, your child may need more help. For example, some kids need a little more guidance; you may need to sit near your child and help a little more. You can still put structures into place depending on who your child is. Oftentimes kids with learning disabilities get way too much help and fall into the "learned helplessness" trap. Be sure you're not over-functioning for your learning disabled child by doing his work for him or filling in answers when he is capable of thinking through them himself.

The Difference between Guidance and Over-Functioning

Your child needs guidance from you, but understand that guidance does not mean doing his spelling homework for him. Rather, it's helping him review his words. When you cross the line into over-functioning, you are taking on your child's work and putting his responsibilities on your shoulders. So you want to guide him by helping him edit his book report himself, helping him take the time to review before a test, or using James Lehman's "Hurdle Help" to start him on his homework. Those can be good ways of guiding your child, but anything more than that is taking too much ownership of his work.

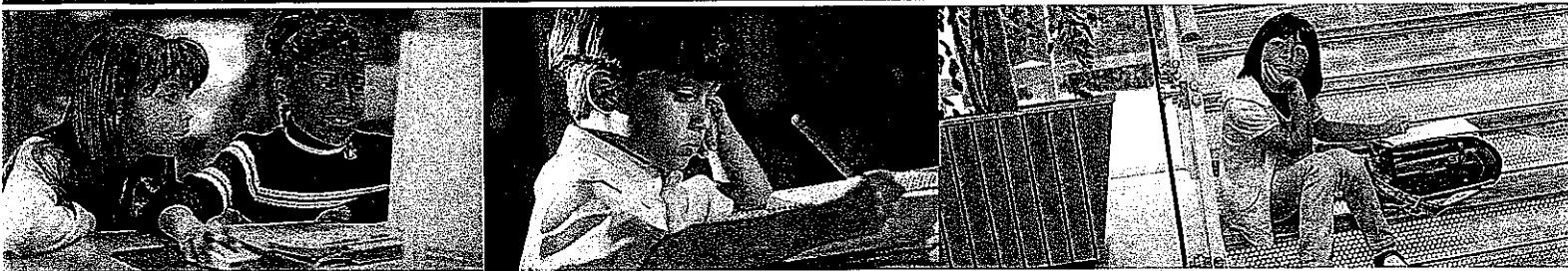
If your child asks for help, you can coach him. Suggest he talk to his teacher on how to be a good student, and teach him those communication skills. In other words, show him how to help himself. So you should not back off all together—it's that middle ground that you're looking for. That's why I think it's important to set up a structure; just put that electric fence around homework time. And within that structure, you expect your child to do what he has to do to be a good student.

Related: How to set up a structure in your home that will help your child succeed

I also tell parents to start from a place of believing in their children. Don't keep looking at your child as a fragile creature who can't do the work. I think we often come to the table with fear and doubt; we think if we don't help our kids, they're just not going to do it. But as much as you say, "I'm just trying to help you," what your child actually hears is, "You're a failure." There's an underlying message that kids pick up that is very different than what the parents intended it to be. And that message is, "You're never enough," and "You can't do it." Instead, your message should be, "I know you can do it. And I believe in you enough to let you make your own choices and deal with the consequences."

TIPS For Living Life To Its Fullest

IS YOUR CHILD POSITIONED FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS?



SCHOOL SUCCESS can be measured by both academic performance and social participation. Your child must be ready to manage the demands of classroom instruction as well as demonstrate appropriate behavior on the playground, in the cafeteria, and other areas.

Occupational therapy practitioners help students succeed in all school activities throughout the day. They are important members of the school team to help children learn, make friends, and play. The following tips are from occupational therapy practitioners who work with elementary school age children.

If you want your child to:

Consider these activity tips:

An occupational therapy practitioner offers expertise to:

Complete homework successfully

- Set up an area for homework with good lighting, away from TV and other distractions.
- Keep track of how long it takes your child to complete homework assignments, and share this information with the school team as needed.
- Recognize the unique learning style of your child and adjust homework completion as needed. For example, some children learn best by reading, whereas others learn best when they hear information.

- Make it easier for your child to learn by modifying assignments, changing desk heights or positions, and offering additional assistance.
- Address underlying sensory components (taste, smell, touch, and/or sounds) that affect learning and behavior.
- Work with the teacher to modify the way he or she presents materials to address different learning styles.

Use computer time effectively

- Create a computer workstation with the top of the screen at eye level and the feet flat on the floor.
- Use parental controls to block Web sites that have inappropriate content.
- Encourage stretching breaks during computer or homework time to increase concentration and decrease irritability or fatigue.

- Perform an ergonomics evaluation of your child's computer workstation to minimize posture and repetition injuries.
- Provide assistive technology to help your child use materials in a different way if necessary (e.g., convert typed words to voice; suggest a different mouse or keyboard; use voice recognition software; introduce helpful apps).

Use school materials properly

- Provide your child with a variety of school materials and supplies in different shapes and sizes. For example, writing may improve when using a mechanical pencil or a ballpoint pen.
- Be sure your child's backpack is no heavier than 10% of his or her weight, and use the waist straps to secure it.

- Provide adaptations such as special paper, zipper pulls, scissors, or built-up pencils to help children with fine motor activities such as zipping and handwriting.
- Screen children for proper backpack size and weight to prevent injury.
- Collaborate and consult with the school team to address proper positioning and tool use throughout the school day.

If you want your child to:

Develop appropriate social skills
and behavior necessary for
learning.

Consider these activity tips:

- Demonstrate good manners and cooperation at home. Establish a regular dinner time for all family members to interact.
- Encourage extracurricular activities based on your child's interests and abilities.
- Play board games that require good sportsmanship, concentration, and rule-following.
- Build your child's sense of responsibility and being part of a team by asking him or her to assist in household chores.

An occupational therapy practitioner offers expertise to:

- Work with school staff to include more physical activity throughout the school day to help improve attention and behavior.
- Recommend after-school activities individualized to your child's abilities and goals.
- Lead activity groups at lunchtime to address school initiatives such as anti-bullying or obesity prevention.
- Collaborate with parents by conducting in-services and providing home programs that address social skills.

Want More Information?

If you would like to consult an occupational therapist about positioning for school success, talk to your child's teacher about whether a referral to occupational therapy is appropriate. Your physician, other health professionals, and your school district's director of special education may also be able to help. Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are trained in helping children succeed by addressing both physical and mental issues. You can find additional information through the American Occupational Therapy Association at www.aota.org.

Occupational therapy is a skilled health, rehabilitation, and educational service that helps people across the lifespan participate in the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations).

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Building Play Skills for Healthy Children & Families



What is play, and why is it important?

Play is can be defined as “any spontaneous or organized activity that provides enjoyment, entertainment, amusement or diversion” (Parham and Fazio, 2008, p. 448). Play is one of children’s major occupations—how they occupy their free time and learn. It is an important activity for your child because play helps to facilitate positive growth and development. Physical health, social and emotional well-being, and positive mental health are promoted through play. When a child plays, he or she experiences new ways to solve problems and learn skills needed to become a healthy adult. Research has shown that children who participate in play frequently grow quickly, experience higher achievement in school, and develop healthy habits for adulthood. A comparative study of 11,000 third graders found that those who participated in more than 15 minutes of recess per day behaved better in the classroom and were more likely to learn than their peers who had little to no recess opportunities. (Barros, Silver, & Stein, 2009). Using daily routines and activities throughout the day, encouraging the happiness and joy that can be experienced through play, and simply allowing children to be playful can enhance their health and well-being.

How can families develop play skills to promote health and well-being?

Early childhood

Play teaches infants, toddlers, and preschoolers about their bodies and about the effects of their actions on the world around them. Play promotes growth and development through movement and exploration. Family members are the child’s first playmates.

- During their first few months, babies enjoy colorful mobiles, rattles, vocal play such as talking and singing, and games involving moving their arms and legs. Encourage your baby to participate while lying on his or her back, belly, or side, or while supported on your lap.

- As babies learn to reach, grasp, and sit on their own, they enjoy mirror play, balls, and toys that involve squeezing, stacking, and pulling apart. Babies also enjoy interactive games like peek-a-boo, music, and books. Water play with toys that float and plastic letters to stick on tile walls provides bathtime fun.
- Because babies enjoy and learn through putting toys in their mouths, make sure they play with toys that are age specific and are made without small parts.
- As children learn to walk and run, they enjoy chasing and hide-’n-seek, climbing, and pull toys.
- Toddlers develop hand skills by dropping shape toys into slots and scribbling with crayons. They also enjoy books and toys that make sounds. They begin to imitate by using, for example, a toy telephone or hammer.
- Imitation and pretend play increases during the preschool years, through use of dress-up, puppets, and toy cars and trains. Preschoolers enjoy construction games such as building toys and puzzles, which further develop their coordination skills. They enjoy playground time and riding toys. They play with materials with different textures such as finger paints and sand. Games during the preschool years teach turn-taking and getting along with others. These activities also help children develop language skills.

Elementary school

The elementary school years are an important time for learning to play by rules and participating in cooperative activities such as sports teams. Motor skills are being fine tuned, and there is an increased interest in developing hobbies. Play often serves as a way of developing friendships and expressing one’s unique personality. Finding a balance between formal play (e.g., participating on a sports team) and informal play (e.g., participating on the playground) allows for play time to be both active and creative.

continued on page 2

Try these ideas to build skills and expression:

- Participate in board games and sports activities with your child; this helps your child to learn to follow rules.
- Have various craft materials readily available to spark creativity and interest.
- Offer options for extracurricular activities that include both physical and creative exploration (e.g., sports teams or performing arts experiences).
- Provide play opportunities that include both structured and less structured choices (e.g., being on a school team or playing soccer in the backyard with neighborhood friends).
- Encourage your school to support recess as a necessary part of every child's day. This is a good time for physical movement that can promote learning and positive behavior.
- Like recess, active play before homework time can prepare your child for learning.
- Don't forget to keep play activities fun! If you lose that element, it is no longer play.

Middle School

The early teen years mark a time of exploring social relationships. This is teens' form of play. Teens tend to like group activities, such as spending time with friends, listening to music, talking, and going to the mall. This time with friends allows them to improve social, movement, and mental skills; gain an understanding of themselves as individuals; and practice new skills in different environments without continuous parental supervision. These opportunities can promote a sense of well-being. Young and older teens also enjoy after-school activities, such as clubs (drama, music, art, athletics) and work (volunteer and paid).

- Encourage your child to join school and community-based clubs and after-school activities.
- Participate in leisure activities with your teen, such as table tennis or biking, to help strengthen family ties and offer opportunities to build communication.
- Ask questions about your child's preferences in movies or music to indicate your interest and to spark conversation.
- Consider your own habits and routines of leisure and whether they include physical activities and model a balanced lifestyle of work and play. You are a role model for your teen.

High School and Beyond

During the high school years, play promotes cooperation and opportunities for teamwork. Through play, older teenagers are able to get to know themselves better and pinpoint their inter-

ests and strengths. As school and social pressures increase at the high school level and beyond, leisure activities can reduce stress, and offer a sense of belonging and a chance to develop their goals. Encourage your teen to balance homework with leisure time to promote a healthy lifestyle addressing both mental and physical wellness.

- Encourage limited screen time (TV, computers, MP3 players) and increased physical activity to help prevent or reduce problems associated with obesity and depression.
- Find a good fit between the demands of the leisure activity and the skills and interests of your teen. For example, depending on your child's personality, physical abilities, and interests, he or she may prefer more physically demanding activities like swimming, whereas other children may prefer debate or drama clubs that challenge verbal and other cognitive skills.
- For all age groups, offer healthy, balanced meals as the fuel needed for physical activity.
- To prevent injury for all age groups, be mindful about the use and proper maintenance of appropriate safety equipment, such as helmets for biking. Know the signs of concussion. Encourage stretching before and after vigorous exercise.
- Low-cost, easily accessible leisure pursuits such as chess and basketball offer lifelong participation through community leagues and recreational centers.

Play helps to build coordination and strength as well as creativity and social skills. Play also helps to develop emotional well-being and increases a child's ability to explore, problem solve, and create. Occupational therapy practitioners are important health care providers who value play in families, schools, and communities. They assess all areas of activity to promote health, growth, and development. They are skilled at observing, identifying, and developing play strategies and healthy habits for children and their families and building towards successful participation in adulthood. Occupational therapy services help babies, children, and adolescents live life to its fullest. ■

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School Tips for Parents: Academic Success & Social Participation



Occupational therapy can help students succeed in academic performance and social participation. Occupational therapy practitioners use their unique expertise to help children with and without disabilities be prepared for and perform important learning and school-related activities to fulfill their roles as students. In the school setting, occupational therapy practitioners support academic and non-academic outcomes, including social skills, math, reading, writing, recess, participation in sports, self-help skills, prevocational or vocational participation, and more. They are particularly skilled in facilitating access to curricular and extra-curricular activities for all students through support, design planning, promoting healthy routines, and other methods. The goal is for students to build upon their strengths while developing academic and social skills necessary for future independent living.

Tips for Academic Success

- Establish a homework buddy system with another student in the same class to promote good study habits and monitor missed work due to absences.
- Monitor the amount, intensity, and length of time that completing homework requires to assess stress levels and maintain a healthy balance of schoolwork and leisure time.
- Consider your child's posture and position when using homework tools such as backpacks, computer stations, classroom materials, and desks. Refer to "Backpack Strategies for Parents and Students" to analyze weight, size, and high for proper fit.
- If sensory components inherent within school environments such as lighting, smells, and sounds affect your child's school performance, consult an occupational therapy practitioner.
- Help your child develop self advocacy skills necessary for independence by encouraging him or her to ask questions and express his or her needs in school.

Tips for Social Participation

- Participate in community resources such as PTA, school-sponsored activities, and recreational facilities that strengthen your child's sense of belonging and build friendships.
- Communicate regularly with educators, administrators, paraeducators, and other support staff to share feedback. Keep a journal or log to organize your ideas while monitoring your child's progress.
- Identify and build on the strengths and abilities of your child as well as the family as a whole by incorporating individual and shared activities that are both achievable and realistic.
- Promote extracurricular activities that interest your child and use his or her strengths.
- Provide leadership opportunities for your child that make a notable contribution such as completing chores for neighbors or reading to a younger student.
- Ask for help when needed. The school team is ready to listen and will answer your questions.
- Model positive behavior by listening to your child's concerns, demonstrating problem solving, and making healthy lifestyle choices for you and your child.
- Monitor your child's habits and routines in sleep, diet, and activity. Note any significant changes, and share this information as appropriate with school medical professionals.

Occupational therapy is a science-driven, evidence-based profession that enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent—or live better with—illness, injury, or disability.

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Occupational Therapy Tips for Homework Success



Homework. The term often instills dread among students. Back-to-school time is a good opportunity to review work and study habits that promote academic success. Occupational therapy practitioners are a valuable resource in schools to support students, teachers, and parents as classroom routines and demands are established. The goal is for students to be as independent as possible throughout the school day, which includes successful completion of homework. Consider these tips to help your child establish good habits and reduce the stress of homework.

- Set up a work station at home that is designated for homework. The station should be clear of clutter and extraneous noises such as TV, video games, and radio. This structured area limits distractions and provides a well-organized environment for work.
- Encourage your child to sit in a firm chair with his or her feet planted on the ground or on a foot rest. Consider using an office chair in order to adjust the chair height. The child's back should be supported against the backrest. Good posture prevents back and neck stress and promotes ease in completing assignments. Stretching exercises can also support a healthy back. Encourage your child to take a stretch break from sitting every 20 minutes.
- Promote active play and physical activities that are alternated with more sedentary activities such as homework and computer tasks. Carefully placed homework breaks reduce fatigue and support students' attention and concentration.
- Create a system to monitor homework assignments and their completion. Your child should be encouraged to manage his or her schedule by using a planner to organize activities.
- Monitor your child's level of frustration and amount of time necessary to complete assignments. Seek advice when appropriate from school personnel, including occupational therapy practitioners, about your child's performance in school. Work as a team to support his or her academic and emotional needs.
- Develop a homework plan that best meets the needs of your child. Consider sensory needs or distractions, like hunger fatigue or noise, as well as habits and preferences to determine the best times to complete homework assignments. Some children work best before dinner time, and others need a rest break after school before completing homework assignments.
- Work in an area with proper lighting that avoids glare and reflections. Limit eye strain by following the "20/20/20" rule: take a break every 20 minutes, stop for 20 seconds, and look at least 20 feet away from the homework or computer monitor.
- When using a computer, encourage the child to work comfortably and shift position often. If your child uses a notebook computer, set it up with a separate keyboard and mouse and adjust the notebook to be used only as a monitor.

These tips were provided by occupational therapy practitioners who work with America's school children every day.

Occupational Therapy Tips for Health & Success in School



Occupational therapy practitioners help people with a broad range of health and wellness issues that affect their ability to participate in and enjoy everyday activities. They work in schools to help students learn, play, and interact with others. Here are just a few tips from occupational therapists to help you stay healthy and succeed in school:

Organize Yourself

Occupational therapy practitioners look at how individuals, tasks, and settings fit together. They provide guidance on doing whatever you want to do in the best and easiest way possible.

- Keep your physical environment—your desk, locker, or room—neat so you can find things easily. Less time spent searching allows more time to study, so you'll do well on tests.
- Planning time for homework, sports, and friends helps prevent worry about fitting everything in and helps you stay focused.
- Getting adequate rest every day helps you learn, grow, and stay healthy. It also increases concentration and a feeling of well-being.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before a test. Eat a good breakfast to concentrate and stay alert. If you have trouble finishing your tests on time, talk to your teacher or schools occupational therapist about ways to help you improve your testing skills.

Having Good Friends Is Important

Occupational therapy practitioners study what makes people happy, including how people can help and understand each other.

- When it comes to friends, one good one can make all the difference.
- You probably have a lot in common with your classmates. Introduce yourself to new people and get to know them.
- Making friends will make learning fun! Planning projects and studying together is more enjoyable and can help keep you engaged in school.

Use Proper Positions To Stay Healthy When You Use a Computer

Occupational therapy practitioners understand how the body and mind work together. They can help you be pain-free and comfortable when using a computer.

- Your head should be level with the monitor, with the top of the screen at eye level.
- Your forearms should be parallel to the keyboard and held only slightly above it.
- Your lower back should be supported while sitting in front of a computer. If your chair doesn't allow this, place a small pillow or rolled up towel between your lower back and the chair for back support.
- Your feet should rest flat on the floor or on a footrest. If you cannot reach the floor, stack boxes or telephone books so you can rest your feet comfortably.
- Take a 2-minute stretch break away from the computer every 30 minutes.

Occupational therapy is a science-driven, evidence-based profession that enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent—or live better with—illness, injury, or disability.



How to Help Kids With Tricky Math Homework

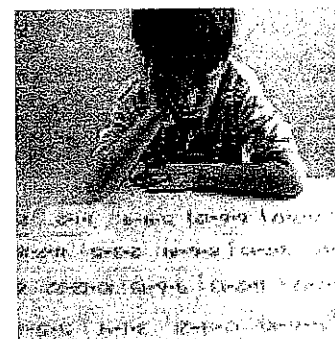
By Bob Cunningham, Contributing Writer

4 Comments



At some point in our children's education it happens to all of us: "Sorry, but I can't really help you with that assignment because I don't know how to do it myself." For many parents, this "uh-oh moment" happens first with math—but you don't have to panic. Just because you don't know how to do the math doesn't mean you can't help your child figure it out *and* get a lot out of the process along the way.

As kids get older, parents eventually have to shift their support from technical to logistical. Which is to say that you move from, "Let me show you how to do that problem," to "Let's think this through together." Here are some suggestions for making the most of the situation and helping your child get the homework finished...even when you don't understand how to do it yourself.



What to Avoid When Helping Your Child With Homework

Let's start with three things *not* to do when your child asks for math homework help.

1. Don't begin by asking your child what the teacher said to do. If kids were good at remembering what they're supposed to do and then applying that information, they likely wouldn't have asked for your help in the first place.
2. Don't contact the teacher right away. It's important for kids to learn how to approach situations in which they're not sure what to do—and this is an excellent opportunity for you to model a good approach.
3. Don't just write a note that says your child didn't understand the assignment. Giving the teacher more specific information will allow the teacher to be of more help to your child in school.

Five Things You Should Do When Helping With Homework

So, now, what should you do?

1. Start by acknowledging to yourself and to your child that not understanding what to do is a stressful and anxiety-provoking experience. You can diffuse some of these feelings by acknowledging some successes right off the bat. Let kids know that you're really proud that they know what the homework is and brought home the proper materials. Having both of these things in place is no small accomplishment, and your child's preparedness will allow you to move forward together to meet the homework challenge.

2. Now you're ready to tackle the homework. Instead of asking kids how the teacher said to do it, ask kids to show you an example, which could include a math problem they did in class or a sample math problem from a worksheet or textbook that includes the answer.
3. If your child can't access an example problem, try typing one of the homework problems into an internet search box (like Google, Bing or Yahoo). If the homework involves word problems, you should first figure out what math concepts and operations your child is studying. Look at the worksheet, textbook or your child's notebook for a title or math term. Type that term into a search box. Whether you enter a math term or an actual problem, your search will produce a list of websites designed to help with math. Discuss with your child which site you'll try and why you're choosing that site. Try a few sites if the first one doesn't help. This will help your child to understand how to use the internet as a resource and also how to determine which sites are likely to be the most helpful and reliable.
4. Once you've found a sample problem either from your child or online, ask how the teacher said to do the problems. Having a concrete, completed example in front of them will help kids more accurately and thoroughly recall any instructions and class discussions.
5. Use the sample problem and anything kids recall from the instructions or discussions to help them identify the step-by-step process that should be followed to solve the homework problems. Make notes of each step they recall as you work your way through the first problem together. This will help in several important ways:

It will reinforce to your child that math is a process.

Your child can use the process to solve the homework problems if it works.

The list you create will provide kids with something to take to the teacher to show their efforts—even if you don't figure out how to arrive at the correct answers.

The teacher can then use the list to correct the process so that your child will have more success the next time.

The Most Important Tip for Math Homework

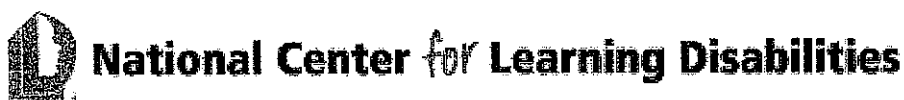
Now, the essential note at the end of the advice: You should spend no more than 10 to 20 minutes working through math homework that neither you nor your child knows how to do. Acknowledge that it will take more instruction from a teacher before your child is ready to do this math for homework. If you haven't figured out the math, let kids know that the math won this round, but the process list they're taking to the teacher tomorrow will help the teacher to make sure they (and you) will win the next one.

Bob Cunningham, the former Head of School for The Gateway Schools in New York City, has been an educational evaluator and a teacher in general education and special education at both the elementary and secondary levels in several school districts. He was also an instructor in the Learning Disabilities program at Columbia University's Teachers College. Follow him on Twitter at @tfc minds.

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4 comments

1



What Counts as Homework?

By Sheldon H. Horowitz, EdD

0 Comments

Listen

It's an interesting phenomenon. Ask a preschooler to name one thing that they most look forward to when they move on to grade school and you're likely to hear "getting homework" somewhere toward the top of the list. Ask a student in middle school to list the things they like most about school and the response is likely to be "lunch, recess and not getting homework." Pose the question to a high school student, and homework is rarely mentioned. Why the difference in responses? What does the research tell us about homework at different times in a student's educational career? And what should parents and educators do to ensure that homework is a positive and productive ingredient in a child's school experience?



In Search of a Definition

Look for a definition of the word "homework" and you're likely to find descriptions that include:

Preparatory school work done outside school (especially at home)

Work that is planned or approved by the teacher but that is to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom

Work assigned to students that is to be completed while not directly supervised by the teacher

Interestingly, when I did a cursory search for definitions online, none of the sources mentioned anything about parents. Now think for a moment about the conversation that takes place in virtually every household where parents and school-age children cohabitate: "How was your day in school?" "How did you do on your test?" and "What do you have for homework?". Why is it that parents are conspicuously omitted from this definition? Is it because they have no role in the homework process? Read on.

The Research Says...

As might be expected, there is no definitive body of knowledge about the benefits of homework, how much is enough (or too much), how frequently it should be assigned, and for which students and in what subject areas it is most helpful. There is, however, a strong literature to suggest that homework serves a number of different purposes:

Practice: rehearse and re-learn skills and information taught in class

Preparation: introduce material that will be formally taught in future lessons

Extension: apply already learned skills to new problems and situations

Integration: use many different skills to complete a single task (i.e., book report, science project)

The Homework Debate

Here are some of the plusses and pitfalls to homework that are derived from current research:

Plusses

There is, over time, a powerful positive link between homework and academic achievement.

Homework is an effective tool for teaching students to work independently.

Well-designed homework encourages good study habits (whether student initiated or modeled by teachers and parents).

Homework can effectively prepare students to identify and use resources such as the library, Internet, research texts and other informational sources.

Homework can strengthen school-home communication.

Doing homework is a highly cost effective way to have students revisit, remember and understand material taught in school and prepare for the next day's lesson.

Doing homework can impress upon students that learning can (and should) take place outside the classroom.

Engaging in homework can help students learn and practice organization and time management skills, and serve to create important early linkages between adults in the home and school personnel.

Pitfalls

Homework has shown to provide different benefits at different stages in school, and a mismatch in homework assigned and student readiness can result in frustration and a student's reluctance to keep trying.

Most homework should not be graded, nor should it be viewed as a test; doing so discourages students to reflect upon their work and evaluate their understanding of material taught in class.

It is unfair to students to use material as a vehicle to teach new skills.

Despite the temptation, homework should not be assigned as a punishment.

Assigning too much homework may result in disinterest and fatigue; students overburdened with homework assignments will also begin to view their assignments as punitive and will do what they can to either avoid doing it, and yes, even cheat, to get it done.

Some Guidelines

It should be clear by this point that homework can be an effective way for students to improve their learning and for parents and educators to work cooperatively in support of a student's progress. Here are some informal homework guidelines for students throughout the grades:

For young children (Pre-K–Grade 2)

Homework is most effective when it does not exceed 20–30 minutes per day.

The benefits of homework may not be immediately apparent; it does, however, set the right tone for students to reflect on their school day and begin to develop good study habits.

For students in grades 3–6

Students can benefit from 30–60 minutes of homework per day.

Ideally, homework should focus on providing opportunities for practicing newly learned skills and applying concepts in a way that helps parents and teachers isolate problems and provide individualized instruction and support.

For junior and senior high school students

There is no recommended timeframe for homework, and it is not unusual for students to spend as long as 2 ½ hours or more per day on after school assignments.

The focus of assignments should be on building upon skills, taking ownership of new ideas and helping students incorporate new information into their repertoire of general knowledge.

Recommendations for Parents (and Teachers)

It is important to consider that the effectiveness of different types of homework will vary according to a student's age and ability, and that more time spent on homework does not necessarily lead to higher achievement. That said, here is a list of recommended practices that can help to make homework more productive (and maybe even fun?) for students, parents and educators:

Be consistent: Try to determine your child's regular pattern of homework so it can be easily incorporated into a daily routine. Offer assistance without being intrusive. Remember whose work it is, and allow your child the opportunity to take charge.

Define expectations: Teachers need to let students know if/when homework will be assigned, collected, reviewed, or graded, and how they expect parents to support the completion of homework assignments. Parents need to know, in advance, if/when signatures are required, and need to have easy and ongoing access to teachers when questions and problems arise.

Avoid busy work: There's nothing worse than asking a child complete 50 math problem when 10 will do the trick. Parents and teachers should be vigilant to ensure that assignments are interesting, challenging and varied in format.

Keep an eye on the clock: More is not better when it comes to homework. Be sure to spread the burden of homework over time, and be sensitive to the set up and clean up time that is often needed for students to complete their work. Remember also that homework is likely to be assigned in a number of classes, so efforts to coordinate a calendar of demands would be very helpful. Parents can be very helpful by assisting their child to anticipate challenges with scheduling (i.e. many assignments due at once, juggling extra-curricular activities) and identifying the resources and possible accommodations needed to complete assignments.

Guarantee success: Homework should be designed so students can complete most (if not all) of the tasks successfully. And in every instance, their efforts should be acknowledged (even when they struggle and make mistakes).

Provide feedback: Homework without feedback will quickly be perceived by students as meaningless and unnecessary. Providing feedback that is explicit and well-targeted has been shown to improve overall student performance.

Additional Resources

Homework Tips for Parents

Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS)

The Great Homework Debate Teacher to Teacher: Issues Effecting the Classroom Teacher

Increasing Student Engagement and Motivation: From Time-on-Task to Homework

The Homework Dilemma

Research Shows Homework Does Boost Academic Achievement

Homework Research and Policy: A review of the Literature

Parental Involvement in Homework: A Review of Current Research

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