

HOMework

Home or after school work is a common expectation for most primary school children

The nature of the activities will vary between different schools and for different ages so it is best to discuss expectations with your child's teacher.

Homework causes more headaches for parents than it does for children. Some parents worry because their children don't seem to do enough while others are concerned because they do too much. And most parents want to be able to help their children more effectively.

Homework is very much a part of secondary education however primary schools vary in their approach. As a general rule, little formal work is given to children in the first three years of schooling. Parents are encouraged to read and be involved in a variety of informal learning activities at home. Children may gather information for use in school the next day, make entries in a diary, or keep scrapbooks.

There has been considerable disagreement over the last decade about the value of homework for primary aged children. Most educators agree that reading is the most valuable homework that a child can do and should become a daily habit for children.

HELPING KIDS WITH HOMEWORK

- **Establish sound study habits at an early age.** Begin by reading with children each night and gradually change to more formal homework in later years when projects and assignments are set by teachers.

- **Establish a predictable routine.**

If homework is done at the same time each night, getting started is usually less of an issue.

- **Make homework time as enjoyable as possible.**

When sharing a book make yourself comfortable, be involved in the story and enjoy yourself. Don't make reading a test.

- **Establish a good working environment for students.**

Make sure they have a quiet area away from distractions that is well lit and with good ventilation. A table or a desk makes a good work-space, although don't be surprised if they spread their work out all over the kitchen table. Some children just love to be around others.

- **Encourage children to work reasonably quickly and efficiently.**

Have a set time limit which they should stick to. A little work each night is more productive than packing it all into one weekly session.

- **Encourage children to become organised**

by planning homework around their extra-curricular activities. A weekly planner or diary will help older students to organise themselves.

- **Keep explanations simple and practical**

when helping a child. If

you become upset or frustrated and the atmosphere becomes tense, stop helping.

- **If your child has a problem,** talk about the best way to find a solution. Perhaps between the two of you it can be worked out.

- **Be realistic** and don't expect to solve all homework difficulties. When in doubt send a note to your child's teacher letting him or her know the problem. They will appreciate being informed.

If you have concerns about the how much homework your child is set or the level of difficulty of homework contact the teacher and arrange a time to discuss your worries. Such discussion is the basis of true partnership between you and your child's teacher.



Parenting *ideas*
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