

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

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Helping with Homework

REMEMBER:

- *Create conditions that encourage homework*
- *Focus on strengths rather than mistakes*
- *Provide enough help to get the work done, but do not give them the answers*
- *Notice their efforts and praise them*
- *If problems continue, talk to your child's teacher*

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Many parents experience difficulty from time to time over homework with their children.

Some children refuse to do homework, or their work is poorly done. This can lead to emotional situations where stress can easily turn into arguments. Nevertheless, parents do have an important role in helping their children with their homework. Listed below are some suggestions.

Focus on Strengths

Remember that children's learning and their performance is very influenced by motivation as well as their ability. One of the best ways to encourage better motivation is to focus on your child's successes - the things she does right rather than wrong! Nagging can often have a negative effect.

Relax

Let your child relax after school for a short time before they start their homework. Give them a snack and try and spend some pleasant time together. Try and set up a routine after school and make homework a part of it.

Find the Right Place

Organise a place to sit and do homework free of distractions. This is most likely to be at a desk or table in a room away from interruptions. Turn the TV off until homework is done.

Let Them Do It

All children are different and some will require more support than others. Help your child get started and be near enough to help and provide guidance if needed. But only provide enough assistance to help them do it.

For example if your child asks 'what is 2 multiplied by 6' you might reply by asking 'what is 2 multiplied by 5, - then add 2 more'. Don't end up doing their homework for them, but do give help where it is needed.

Encourage

Offer praise and encouragement whilst your child is working. Comments such as "you're working well tonight" or "that's great," are often very useful in the early stages of motivating a child to persist with homework.

If your child is young, you may wish to check your child's homework. Try to concentrate on noticing the good points. If there is an error, gently point it out but try to avoid criticism.

Setting up a special homework / reward chart may work to encourage a child who has had problems with homework in the past.

Let Them Learn From Consequences

Allow your child to experience the consequences of handing in work to the teacher that is not perfect, or even late. Your child may then learn from their mistakes. It is their homework, not yours.

Monitor the Situation

Keep an eye on how long it takes. Talk to other parents if you feel your child's homework seems to be taking too long to complete. Remember they have already had 6 hours at school and many play activities can be good for their development as well.

Check with the teacher if your child is having problems. Arguments about homework must be avoided if possible as this can give rise to greater problems later. It is worth checking with the teacher as to what their expectations are about homework.

Don't make homework time a family feud time. Remember your job is to be a parent, not a teacher.

NEED MORE HELP?

Call Parent Line on 1300 1300 52 for professional support tailored to your situation.