

Homework Tips for Parents (Elementary School)

This article was written by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (www.yic.gov) of the US Education Department and reformatted by the Title I Dissemination Project, Inc.

By applying these three sets of homework tips early in your child's school years, you will help your child establish the habits your child needs to be successful throughout the school years.

HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS: GENERAL

1. Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework. Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.

2. Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available. Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.

3. Help your child with time management. Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.

4. Be positive about homework. Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.

5. When your child does homework, you do homework. Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.

6. When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers. Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him.

7. When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it. Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.

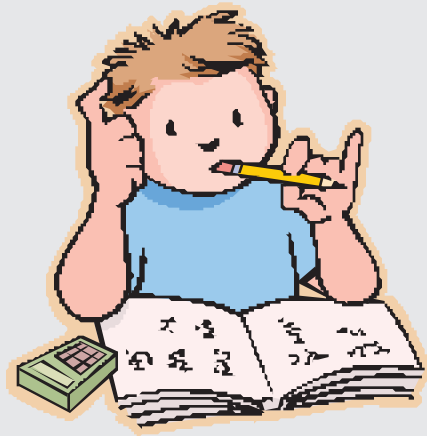
8. If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away. Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.

9. Stay informed. Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.

10. Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework. Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.

11. Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration. Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping their mind on an assignment.

12. Reward progress in homework. If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.



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HOMWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS: MATH



1. Encourage your child to use a daily math assignment book.
2. It is really important to understand the progress your child is making in math. Check with your child daily about his homework.

3. If you don't understand your child's math assignments, engage in frequent communication with her teacher.

4. If your child is experiencing problems in math, contact the teacher to learn whether he is working at grade level and what can be done at home to help improve academic progress.

5. If your child really needs help, request that your child's teacher schedule after-school math tutoring sessions.

6. Encourage the principal to use research-based peer tutoring programs for math. These tutoring programs have proven results, and students really enjoy them.

7. Use household chores as opportunities for reinforcing math learning such as cooking and repair activities.

8. Try to be aware of how your child is being taught math, and don't teach strategies and shortcuts that conflict with the approach the teacher is using. Check in with the teacher and ask what you can do to help. Ask the teacher about online resources that you can use with your child at home.

9. At the beginning of the year, ask your child's teacher for a list of suggestions that will enable you to help your child with math homework.

HOMWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS: READING

1. Have your child read aloud to you every night.
2. Choose a quiet place, free from distractions, for your child to do his nightly reading assignments.
3. As your child reads, point out spelling and sound patterns such as cat, pat, hat.
4. When your child reads aloud to you and makes a mistake, point out the words she has missed and help her to read the word correctly.
5. After your child has stopped to correct a word he has read, have him go back and reread the entire sentence from the beginning to make sure he understands what the sentence is saying.
6. Ask your child to tell you in her own words what happened in a story.
7. To check your child's understanding of what he is reading, occasionally pause and ask your child questions about the characters and events in the story.
8. Ask your child why she thinks a character acted in a certain way and ask your child to support her answer with information from the story.
9. Before getting to the end of a story, ask your child what he thinks will happen next and why.



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