

## Helpful Homework Hints

Do you dread homework time? Sometimes, kids think of homework as busy work meant to punish! Some kids will do anything to try to avoid or rush through homework. But homework gives students a change to practice the academic skills they learn at school. It is a parent's responsibility to be involved with their child's education and ensure that homework and study time is planned wisely to maximize its benefit for the student. Here are some helpful hints to get you started:

- **SHOW AN INTEREST:** Ask your child what they did in school each day. If they learned a new skill, ask them to teach it to you. We learned best by teaching. Ask specific questions. "Show me what you learned in math today." "What book are you reading in class?" "What did you like about the main character?" etc.

Asking general questions such as "What did you do in school today?" will result in "Nothing"?

- **SETTING:** Pick a place, any place. Each child is different. A desk in the bedroom works well for some. The dining room table works for another. Provide a study space where your child can work quietly. Find a space that has good lighting and sufficient room for materials and supplies. Keep a box of supplies handy to minimize interruptions. Ensure there is not a lot of traffic or distraction.
- **SCHEDULING:** Pick a good time for doing homework. Consider the amount of homework your child has to do and allow enough time in his or her schedule to complete it. Establish rules against phone use, watching TV, etc. until the assignment is complete. "Chunk", or break down large assignments into smaller ones. For some children, you need to check it, give them positive feedback, and have them continue. Remember, homework before play. Don't let your child procrastinate, or negotiate a later homework time.
- **SPACE:** Give them their own space. Do not sit with them or be on top of them while they are working. Students are expected to work independently in school, even in kindergarten. Be available to help them if they ask. Don't fall for the "I can do it, it's too hard" trap!
- **ORGANIZATION:** Hang up a wall calendar with daily, weekly and monthly events and due dates. Teach your child to plan ahead. Keep a folder handy to keep track of loose papers. Make sure their book-bags and binders are neat and organized. Make sure your child completes his/her agenda book daily. Check it, go over it, sigh it!
- **PRIORITIZE:** Don't overload your child with after school activities. Homework and school should come first. If you have to cut back, prioritize and cut back on activities.
- **REVIEW:** Once the assignment is complete, have your child review it with you. Have them do the explaining. What did they learn? If you find a wrong answer, ask them to show you how they solved the problem. Look at their thinking process! **DO NOT DO THE ASSIGNMENT FOR YOUR CHILD!** It's okay to supervise or answer questions. Don't give them the answer. Provide coaching and guidance. Let them know you found

a mistake, see if they can fix it. Remember, you're not sitting next to them in class. Teach them responsibility for their own assignments.

- **DON'T ENABLE!**... If your child forgets their homework at home, let them handle the consequences. Do not run it to school, or fax it over. Let them learn from their mistakes. Teach them to be responsible.
- **SET AN EXAMPLE:** Take time to turn off ALL electronics and read together as a family. Make this a nightly function. Show the importance of reading. Teach them to LOVE of reading.
- **PRAISE**... the process, not the outcome! Praise them for working hard, for studying, for staying organized.
- **COMMUNICATE WITH THE TEACHER/SCHOOL:** If your child constantly says I don't have homework, check with the teacher. Communicate through the agenda book, or leave a message for the teacher. If you have any concerns, your child's teacher is your first stop. Ask if there are always you can help at home. Set up a parent conference.
- **GET INVOLVED:** Make sure you attend Open House. Curriculum Night and other informative meetings offered by the school. Teachers make an effort to involve and inform parents about their child's curriculum.
- **LOOK IT UP:** If you don't know the answer, help them look it up. Look in the textbook, encyclopedia, Internet. Show them that you are a life-long learner.
- **ENCOURAGE**... you child to develop a positive attitude about homework. The purpose of homework is to practice the skill they learned in school. Just as an athlete practices his skill, students must practice their skill by doing homework. Find a place to post work that shows effort and makes you child proud.
- **DISCOURAGE**... phone calls during homework. However, encourage them to get some classmates phone numbers to call with questions about assignments, etc.
- **DON'T RUSH**... your child when he/she is doing homework. Expect neat work, expect their best work. Just remember to have them take their time and give it their best effort. If your child has a difficult time starting their homework, or perseverates on a task, try using a timer. Do no expect perfection!
- **REWARD:** Let children earn their reward. Set up the expectations with them. Don't give rewards immediately after the homework, as children tend to rush to get it done. Allow them to earn time for privileges such as TV, Nintendo, computer, etc. that can be cashed in later in the evening.