

Special Education Newsletter: September 2018

How To Help Your Children with Homework

SET UP A HOMEWORK SCHEDULE

For some children, the responsibility of deciding when to sit down and do homework may be too difficult. Children may decide to do their homework after school or after dinner. This is a personal choice and has to do with learning style. However, once the time is determined, the schedule should be adhered to as closely as possible.

RANK ORDER ASSIGNMENTS

For some children, the decision as to what to do first becomes a major chore. They may dwell over this choice for a long period of time because everything takes on the same level of importance. Rank ordering assignments means that the parent determines the order in which the assignments are completed.

DO NOT TO SIT NEXT TO YOUR CHILD WHILE HE/SHE DOES HOMEWORK

Employing this technique may create learned helplessness because the same "assistance" is not imitated in the classroom. Parents serve their children better by acting as a resource person to whom the child may come with a problem. After the problem is solved or question answered, the child should return to his/her work area without the parent.

CHECK CORRECT PROBLEMS FIRST

When the child brings the parent a paper to check, mention to him/her how well he/she did on the correct problems, spelling words etc. For the ones that are incorrect say, "I bet if you go back and check these over you may get a different answer."

NEVER LET HOMEWORK DRAG ON ALL NIGHT

The only thing accomplished by allowing a child to linger on their homework hour after hour with very little performance is increased feelings of inadequacy. If this occurs, have the parent end the work period after a reasonable period of time and write the teacher a note explaining the circumstances.

DISCUSS HOMEWORK QUESTIONS BEFORE YOUR CHILD READS THE CHAPTER

Discuss the questions to be answered before your child reads the chapter. In this way, he/she will know what important information to look for while reading.

CHECK SMALL GROUPS OF PROBLEMS AT A TIME

Many children can benefit from immediate gratification. Have the child do five problems and then come to you to check them. Additionally, if the child is doing the assignment incorrectly, the error can be detected and explained, preventing your child from doing the entire assignment incorrectly.

PLACE TEXTBOOK CHAPTERS ON TAPE

Research indicates that the more sensory input children receive, the greater the chance the information will be retained. For instance, parents can place science or social studies chapters on tape so that the child can listen while reading along.

BE AWARE OF NEGATIVE NON-VERBAL MESSAGES DURING HOMEWORK

Many messages, especially negative ones, can be communicated easily without a parent's awareness. If children are sensitive, they will pick up these messages which can only add to their tension. e.g. raised eyebrows, inattentiveness.

AVOID FINISHING ASSIGNMENTS FOR YOUR CHILD

Children tend to feel inadequate when a parent finishes their homework. If children cannot complete an assignment, and they have honestly tried, write the teacher a note explaining the circumstances.

BE AWARE OF POSSIBLE SIGNS OF MORE SERIOUS LEARNING PROBLEMS

Parents should always be aware of symptoms indicating the possibility of more serious learning problems. Many of these symptoms may show up during homework. If these symptoms present a pattern, contact

the psychologist or resource room teacher for further assistance. Such symptoms may include, constant avoidance of homework, forgetting to bring home assignments, taking hours to do homework, procrastination of class work, low frustration tolerance, labored writing, poor spelling etc.

CHECK HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AT THE END OF THE NIGHT

This procedure will reduce the child's concerns over the thought of bringing incorrect homework to school. This also offers children a feeling of accomplishment, a source of positive attention and a sense of security that the work is completed.

Adapted from Pierangelo, R. (2003). *The Special Educator's Book of Lists* (2nd edition), pp. 542-543). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.