

Texas Children's Hospital

Caring for Your Child's Health

Homework Tips for Parents and Students

1. Designate a specific area in the house where your child's homework is to be completed daily. This area should be a low-traffic area that is as distraction-free as possible with no television or radio playing.
2. Your child should have all of the supplies she needs in order to complete homework:
 - All books and homework assignments
 - Agenda book/planner
 - Extra pencils and pens with pencil sharpener
 - Extra paper
 - Calculator if appropriate
 - Dictionary and thesaurus
 - Appropriate lighting
 - Comfortable chair
3. Review your child's Agenda Book in order to know what assignments need to be completed. Allow a specific amount of time for your child to complete each homework assignment. Use a kitchen timer to set time limits for each assignment and give short breaks (5 minutes) between assignments. Set a specific goal of the amount of the assignment to be completed in the allotted time (e.g., 10 addition problems in 15 minutes):
 - Do easiest assignment first. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for child to complete easier, less time-consuming assignments. Reset timer for a 5-minute break between each assignment to redirect attention and release energy.
 - Allow more time for more complicated tasks (e.g., 20 to 30 minutes). Remember to give your child breaks after each task or assignment is complete.
 - Ensure your child respects the timer. If he or she is wasting time instead of completing an assignment, reset the timer.
4. Encourage your child to use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words or a thesaurus to learn synonyms. This will help him understand the assignment better and help build your child's vocabulary at the same time. The dictionary and thesaurus should be kept within the homework area. Your child should keep a small dictionary in his or her backpack to be used for school or at home. Consider the Web sites www.dictionary.com and www.thesaurus.com
5. Encourage your child to check over her homework assignments. This is an important method of teaching your child to self-monitor. Children should be in the habit of checking over their own work and to monitor for mistakes that they need to correct.
6. Encourage independence, but make yourself available to help your child with his assignments. Help your child think through more complicated concepts without giving him or her the correct answer. In this way, you are showing your child support without doing his homework for him. If you are unable to help your child with his homework, ask another family member or neighbor who is competent in the subject to help your child with certain assignments. You may also consider hiring a qualified tutor to be the designated homework helper.

For more homework strategies, consult the Great Schools Web site at www.greatschools.org



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