

# Parents' Corner

## Homework Tips


Homework plays an important part in reinforcing the learning that takes place in class. There are several ways parents can work with their children so that they gain the benefits of doing homework in a supportive home environment.

1. Make homework a routine by scheduling a regular start and end time for homework each day. Choose a time that will not be interrupted by other activities. If your child finishes before the end of the homework time, use the rest of the time for reading. This will help your child become a better reader and reduce the temptation to hurry assignments.
2. Many children need regular breaks scheduled into their homework time, such as 10 minutes of work and then a 5-minute water or body break, then back to work. A timer works well to make sure that everyone keeps to the schedule and the homework session doesn't get long and drawn out or cut too short.
3. A common guideline for homework time is to plan for 10 minutes of homework per grade level, for example, about 30 minutes for a Grade 3 student. Check with your child's teacher if you are unsure about how much homework time is appropriate.
4. Provide a homework space for your child and keep a set of supplies (pencils, erasers, calculator, paper, dictionary, etc.) organized and ready. Make sure there is adequate lighting. Work with your child to find out what he/she needs to concentrate – for some children the kitchen table works; others need a quiet space away from noise and distractions. Turn off the television during homework time.
5. Your child's agenda is an excellent communication tool between school and home. Work with your child and the teacher to make sure that homework assignments are written clearly in the agenda so that you and your child know what needs to be done.
6. Remember that your child, not you, is responsible for the homework. Your role is to help your child get organized and provide encouragement when your child gets stuck. Rather than providing the answer to your child's questions about the work, guide your child by asking questions. Clarifying questions help both of you understand what needs to be done ("Do you need to write in sentences or in jot notes?"), and insightful questions prompt your child to think more deeply about the material ("What was the important idea you were discussing in class?").
7. Encourage your child to divide the homework assignment into "What I can do myself" and "What I need help with." You should help only with that part of the homework your child cannot do independently, such as using flashcards, practicing spelling tests, and clarifying assignments. This builds responsibility and independence in your child.


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**8.** Help your child handle long term assignments by dividing the work into smaller chunks. Talk with your child about the number of days and hours that will be required to do the assignment and plan to work on it for a certain amount of time each day.



**9.** Look over completed homework with your child to make sure there is nothing missing. Check with the teacher before correcting errors – the teacher may want to see what kind of errors the children are making to guide what needs to be taught.



**10.** Help your child get organized to bring home the materials needed. If organization is a problem for your child, work with the teacher. Make sure that your child gets everything ready for school the evening before to avoid the morning rush. Having everything in the backpack waiting by the front door is a good way to help your child stay organized.

