

REAL LIFE SOLUTIONS

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6 Ways to Beat the Homework Blues

As your child works his way through elementary school, homework will begin to comprise a substantial part of his educational experience. Getting your child to complete his homework often can turn into a frustrating nightly struggle. But there are surefire ways to beat the homework blues and help your child establish solid study skills.

One of the most valuable things you can do is to foster a positive family attitude about homework. If you view homework as a drudgery that takes away from family time, your children will adopt the same attitude. Instead, understand that for elementary school students, homework is necessary to reinforce what has been learned during the day and increase children's confidence as independent workers.

Here are some more steps to overcoming your child's homework blues.

- **Schedule time for an after-school break.** Children need time in their day for play and relaxation. Allow your children to have some free time to spend as they choose, but also have a set time when homework will begin. Similarly, make sure that your children are not overextended with extracurricular activities; this could make them tired and irritable once it is time to start homework.
- **Establish a homework area.** Children should have a routine place to do their homework where they will not be easily distracted. Place school supplies within reach to keep your child from continually taking breaks to sharpen a pencil or get more paper. If background noise is distracting to your child, make sure it is kept to a minimum.
- **Focus on planning.** It's never too early to begin honing your child's time-management skills. Help your child devise a schedule that breaks assignments into manageable tasks and allots time for each subject. It's also important to know your child's homework style. Will he get more accomplished by quickly finishing easier assignments or by beginning with the hardest subjects when he is still fresh?
- **Emphasize the value of proofreading.** Once homework is finished, remind your child to check his work. This will help avoid careless mistakes and teach your child not to rush through things. You can help him proofread, but remember that assignments don't have to be perfect. It's not beneficial for you to do any assignments for your child.
- **Be available during homework time.** Let your child know that you are ready and willing to answer questions and lend assistance while he is working on his homework. A good way to do this is to stay nearby, possibly reading or writing out bills, so that your child sees that you are focused on a quiet, intellectual activity also. When it's homework time, you should stay away from the television or Internet if possible, to prevent your child from becoming distracted by your activity.

- **Communicate with your child's teacher.** Does your child constantly say that no homework is being assigned or come home with assignments that seem excessively difficult? The best way to help your child with homework is by having an open line of communication with his teacher so you know what type of homework is being assigned and approximately how long it should take to complete.

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