

Helping With Homework *

Homework can be very challenging and potentially frustrating for children with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder. Doing homework requires attention and concentration, motivation, independence, organization, and parental support at a time when the child and family are often most harried or vulnerable. Many times, there are competing activities (watching television or playing with a friend) which a youngster would much prefer to do. Conflict between child and parent about doing homework can expose underlying problems involving low frustration tolerance, parental overprotection or over-control, child noncompliance, etc. It is not uncommon for either the parent or the child to get angry about doing homework or to come to tears during the homework process. In helping parents and children with homework, we would encourage you to consider the following ideas or issues

Consider the role of homework

1. Best assignments are those that allow for family participation or relate to life experiences
2. Practice at home
3. Assignments should help children to be better prepared for the next day's lesson

Discuss homework philosophy with parents and students

1. How much time should be spent?
2. What support is needed
3. Set a routine
4. Be consistent about the amount of weekly homework
5. Allow students to work over the weekend if they wish

Work should be within the student's ability level

1. Student needs to understand the assignment and be able to work independently
2. Have parents review assignment before student begins and during work.
3. Part of the purpose of homework is to build confidence, positive habits, and attitudes toward work.

Parents should work with the child to set goals for how the work will get done

1. Write the goals down
2. Start with modest goals that can be accomplished in a set amount of time

Set guidelines about the amount of time a student should be spending on homework

1. Have the family set the guidelines
2. Keep initial goals short, allow child to decide to stop or continue
3. Be open to more than one session of homework if needed
4. Have children and parents evaluate goals

Discuss with students/class different work environments

1. Non-distracting (bedroom vs living room vs kitchen)
2. Adults present or not present
3. Activity in the room
4. Noise in the room
5. Compare work environments at school and at home
6. Discuss how the work area should be set up, ie materials or supplies needed
7. Encourage students to experiment with different environments and report back results

Have parents review work ahead of time to identify where a student might need help

1. Have students work first on what they **can** do, do not focus on what they cannot do

2. When possible, review more complex assignments with students before sending home

Have parents set goal for amount of time student can work without help

1. Evaluate purpose of student's questions to see if they are "necessary" or "unnecessary"
2. Set aside reward time based on time saved by asking only necessary questions
3. Does a student do better asking questions at the beginning or end of homework time?

Classroom routine for turning in and tracking homework

1. For example, teacher has students write master list of assignments and due dates
2. Master list is also posted on window at school for student or parent reference
3. If parents must drive child to school to check the list, consider charging them for your time, ie you owe me 10 minutes, repay me by _____

Importance of a home routine or schedule

1. Have a regular study time and place based on what works for the child
2. Develop habit of doing work every day, reading, writing, or studying even if there is no homework
3. Avoid arguments by having a set routine
4. Routine helps to develop the child's habits and a positive attitude
5. Parents may need to be nearby to model
6. Some children work better in front of a mirror
7. Auditory reminders (beeps or sounds) keep some children on task
8. Encourage parents to review but not correct child's homework, let them turn in their product

Review assignment completion progress with parent and student

1. Frequent communication avoids too many late/missing assignments
2. Suggest alternatives for getting homework done if it is a battle at home (library or study hall)
3. Homework hassles may be old habits that need to be broken by the child working with someone other than parent such as a tutor.
4. Avoid sending home unfinished assignments
5. Try home projects rather than homework that mirrors the day's work at school

Develop routine for getting homework turned in

1. Have a place to put assignments for the next day, near the door, lunchbox for example
2. This helps parents monitor completion of the work
3. Support students in finding a way to get homework turned in, not lost in a backpack
4. Have a routine in the class for turning in homework assignments
5. Some students will need extra support/practice writing down assignments, including parents or school staff role playing the routine.

Develop reward system for completing homework

1. Choose rewards related to the homework topic when possible
2. Schedule fun time after completing homework
3. Charge for hassles or too many questions by reducing fun time

Develop buddy system for students to get work done and turned in

1. Call a friend to check in on homework
2. Set up a mutual goal/reward for success
3. Parents can coordinate