
Helping Children With Homework

When parents support learning at home, children succeed in school. Even if you do not speak English, you can help your child with homework.



Structure Your Home for School Success

- Set up a study area for your child that has all the supplies needed for homework.
- Establish a daily study time that works for both you and your child.
 - Some children need a break when they get home from school; others like to work on homework right away so they can enjoy free time.
 - If children have no homework due the next day, they can read books, study for upcoming tests, or work on long-term projects.
- Let your child choose where to study.
 - Some children work best in a quiet room on a desk or table. Others can work with people close by.
- Establish limits for phone calls. Encourage children to call friends when homework is completed.
- Set rules for computer use. During homework time, the computer should be used for writing and research, not games, instant messages, or e-mail to friends.
- Limit TV watching to no more than two hours on school days. Help your child plan when to watch favorite programs. Turn off the TV during study time.
- Visit the library with your children each week or as often as you can.

Encourage Children to Complete Homework

- Explain that doing homework will help children succeed in school.
- Let children know you expect them to turn in all assignments on time.
- Ask to see assignment notebooks. Look over books, notebooks, and completed homework whenever you have the chance.
- Tell children to put completed homework in their backpacks so they are ready for school in the morning.
- Avoid criticizing your children's work. Find something positive to comment on.
- Ask children to show you work they are proud of and display their work in your home.

Provide Guidance When Needed

- Homework is supposed to be practicing what children have already learned, but sometimes children need help. You can ask questions to guide your child even if you do not understand English:
 - Where in your book can you look up the answer?
 - Tell me in your own words, and then write it down.

- That did not work, what else can you do?
- What steps did your teacher follow?
- Why do you think it did not work?
- Have you thought about. . .?
- Show me what you have done so far.
- Praise children for the effort they make not just when they get all the answers right.



Contact the Teacher When Children Need Extra Help

- Encourage children to go to the teacher if they do not understand what is expected or have not learned the material. Teachers might be able to offer extra help.
- Contact the teacher yourself if you are concerned about your child. When is it time to call the teacher?
 - When children consistently have trouble doing the homework assignments;
 - When children consistently do not bring homework home;
 - When children tell you they never have homework or always finish it at school;
 - When children feel overwhelmed by the amount of homework or have difficulty getting organized.
- How to contact teachers:
 - Phone the school and leave a message for the teacher.
 - Send e-mail to the teacher.
 - Public libraries offer free Internet service if you do not have access to a computer. Teachers can sometimes answer e-mail more quickly than they can return phone calls.
 - Share your concerns with the teacher during parent-teacher conferences. Request a conference if needed.

If you need an interpreter who speaks your language, request one from the school. The interpreter will call the teacher for you and arrange a meeting if needed.

Use Resources in the School or Community

- Your school may offer homework clubs after school where children can get help.
- School guidance counselors may offer classes to teach organization and study skills.
- Computer labs are available in some schools and community centers.
- Fairfax County public libraries offer computers with free Internet access.
- The library web site offers homework resources and help. The web address is <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/homework/>
- Click on “Live Homework Help” to talk online with a free tutor.