

## Helping Students with Homework

As the school year progresses, many parents are finding that the amount of homework required by teachers is increasing. Some parents ask for additional homework to be assigned, while others may question the value of work outside the classroom.

Homework is an opportunity for children to learn and for families to be involved in their children's education. Remind parents that homework helps their children to

- review and practice what they've covered in class
- prepare for the next day's lesson
- learn to use resources such as libraries, reference materials and websites to find information about a subject
- teach them to work independently and
- develop work habits and study skills (homework and assignments provide some students with their first chance to manage time and to meet deadlines).

In addition, homework can help create greater understanding between families and teachers and provide opportunities for increased communication. Here are some tips you can share with parents to help their children develop good study and homework habits:

### Set a Regular Time for Homework

- Setting up a consistent schedule for homework helps students organize their time and finish assignments. The best schedule is one that works for your child and your family, and should take into consideration the amount of homework that has been assigned and your child's extra-curricular activity schedule.

### Pick a Place

- Your child's homework area doesn't have to be fancy. It should have good lighting and be fairly quiet. In some cases, it is best for the child to be close to the parent for monitoring and assistance.
- Make sure all the materials that your child needs (dictionary, calculator, pencil, eraser, tape, scissors, pencil crayons, magazines etc.) are in the homework area, so that time is not spent every night running around to gather these items.

### Remove Distractions

- Turn off the TV, radio and phones if they interfere with your child's ability to concentrate. Discourage your child from texting or using social media during homework time.
- If you live in a small or noisy household, try having other family members take part in a quiet activity during homework time.

## **Set a Good Example**

- Show your child that the skills they are learning are an important part of the things they will do as an adult. Let them see you reading books, newspapers and websites; writing reports, letters, e-mails and lists; using math to balance your cheque book; doing other things that require thought and effort.

## **Be Involved - Appropriately**

- Children are more likely to complete homework successfully when parents monitor their assignments. How closely you need to monitor depends upon their age, how independent they are and how well they do in school.

## **Encourage your child to clarify assignments and due dates prior to bringing them home.**

- Don't do your child's homework for them. Completing assignments for your child won't help them to understand and use information. And it won't help them to become confident in their own abilities.
- Check your child's agenda daily to ensure that all homework has been completed.

## **Give practice tests**

- Help your child prepare for a spelling test by saying the words as they write them. Have them correct their own test as you spell each word. Write a sample math test based on questions in the textbook, or review information that they have taken notes on in school.

## **Talk about the Assignments**

Talking and asking questions can help your child to think through an assignment and break it down into small, manageable parts. Pose some questions for them:

- Do you understand what you're supposed to do?
- Do you need help in understanding how to do this assignment?
- Do you have everything you need to do the assignment?
- Does your answer make sense to you? If they don't know the answers to these questions, they need to seek clarification from their teacher.

## **Assisting Parents**

If your community has a diverse population where assistance by parents is problematic, you may consider the following:

- Establish a homework club at school using senior students and adults from the ethnic or language group of the student to provide assistance.
- Host a parent information night on how to help your child; often, listening to your child read does not have to entail understanding the language of the passage.
- Contact community leaders for suggestions regarding resources, support networks and translation services.
- Consider hosting a literacy event allowing adults and their children to learn together.