

Homework Tips (Helping your child learn)

Homework time can be very stressful for both children and parents. These tips can help you get started or make changes in your approach to daily homework.

General Homework Tips

- Talk to your child's teacher about their work:
 - Ask what you can do to help your child.
 - Ask how much homework will your child have and how often. Decide together if the amount and type of homework is right for your child. Ask what you can do at home to reinforce learning.
- Encourage your child to use a daily assignment book.
- Be positive about homework.
- Set a time for doing homework. Make it the same time each day.
- Children learn best in a calm environment. Be patient with your child.
- Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.
- Make sure your child has the right supplies such as paper, pencils, and a dictionary.
- Have your child start any hard homework first – before they get tired.
- Set a good example during homework time. If your child is reading, you read; if your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.
- If your child asks for help, **help** them find the answer. **Do not do the work** for your child.
- Be clear with your child that the homework belongs to them.
- Watch for signs of frustration – have your child take short breaks.
- Follow your child's progress. Check assignments daily.
- Tell your child that you think school is important. Reinforce that homework is practice.
- Reward progress in homework – celebrate your child's successes.
- Be sure to give specific praise to your child. Use one of the following phrases that fits your child's efforts:
 - “You are a hard worker.”
 - “You did that very well.”
 - “This is hard.”
 - “Good for you, that made sense.”
 - “You figured that out all by yourself.”
 - “You are really on your way.”
- If your child needs more help, ask the teacher if your child can get extra help after class.
- If your child is still having problems, the school principal or guidance counselor may be able to find help.



Reading homework tips

- Before starting, choose a quiet place.
- As your child reads, point out spelling and sound patterns, such as cat, pat, hat.
- When your child gets stuck on a word, **wait** – give your child some time to figure it out. If they are still having trouble with the word help them sound it out.
- If your child cannot figure out a word, tell them. It may be a word they do not know. You can try to have them use part of the word they know to figure it out.
- After helping your child with a word, have them go back and re-read. This will help make sure it makes sense, and will help your child think about the meaning of the story.
- If your child makes a mistake and continues reading, **wait** – let your child discover the error.
 - If they go back and fix it, praise them by saying, “good for you, that made sense.”
 - If they keep going, wait until the end of the page or paragraph. Say, “something was not right there, try that again.” This lets your child problem solve.
- What your child reads out loud to you could be at a level below what they read in class. This reinforces their reading skills. If the reading material seems too hard, talk to your child’s teacher.
- When your child is reading, have them pause from time-to-time. Ask questions about what is happening in the story. This helps your child understand what they are reading.
- Before getting to the end of the story, ask your child what they think will happen next.
- When your child is done ask them to tell you the story in their own words.
- Have your child try to read billboards, menus and food labels. This can help reinforce the need for reading skills.
- When there is time, read for fun. If possible, you and your child can take turns reading out loud each night.



Math homework tips

- Start math homework time by asking your child what they are supposed to do. If your child can explain the assignment, you will have an idea if they understand it.
- Tell your child if you do not understand a math problem. Use your child’s teacher as a resource for extra help.
- Ask the teacher if your child can use a calculator to check the finished work.
- Show your child how math is used in everyday life. Have them count out forks, pour from a gallon of milk or tell the time a favorite TV program begins.
- Talk to your child when driving in the car. Show them how numbers tell us how fast we are driving, how far we have gone and how long it will take to get home.
- Ask the teacher what math skills will be taught during the semester. Ask what you can do to help your child.