

Parent homework tips

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Parents can become frustrated when their child tells them they haven't been given any homework and when the report card comes home, the results are not up to expectations.

Students have homework every night - even if your child says they haven't been given any.

If there is no set homework to complete, they are required to practice what was covered in class that day and what they will be covered in class the following day. This includes work they believe they already understand and also assignments or other forms of assessment. What is homework?

When we participate in sport, music or other activities we are expected to practice - practice for what we can already do well and practice in the areas we wish to improve.

Often we are motivated to improve our skills and no one is required to make us practice. We do it by choice.

Homework is the practice for our mind. It trains our brain to think, problem solve, read and write - practice for what we can already do well and practice for those areas we wish to improve.

The secret to a student's success is to find the motivation to do homework without being told. However, all parents know this is a very rare and difficult trait to find in our own children.

The best tip we can give when it comes to homework is stop asking your child if they have any! If the answer is always no, why continue to ask? Try something different

Instead, ask your child what they did at school today. Look in their books, ask questions, play dumb and ask for explanations. Praise neat work. Thank them for good explanations.

Advise your child to date their work so you know it was done during that day and contact the school if they continually have no work to show you.

This tactic takes the power of "no" away from them and is very effective. Your child will begin to expect that they are required to show you something at night. They will crave the attention and love your interest in their work. Dads should particularly be encouraged to try this tactic. It promotes positive conversations between children and their parents.

Other tips for parents:

- Set time aside each night for this conversation. Make sure it is the top priority for your family,
- Ensure there is a comfortable, tidy and quiet area in the house for homework to occur. Quiet background music is okay and can promote quality learning. TV is a distraction and promotes "busy work"; not "quality work";,
- Place a copy of their timetable on the fridge so you know which subjects they had that day at school,
- Check their bags in the morning to ensure they have the right equipment for learning,
- Serve morning brain food for breakfast including water, and
- Know their assessment schedule and help them manage their time to meet deadlines. This includes reducing part-time work during exam periods.

Parents often feel they should know all the answers to their children questions. The greatest skills you can give to your children is:

- The ability to seek and find information,
- Perseverance in not giving up, and
- The confidence to ask questions of teachers until they do understand the work.

Parents who tell their children they can't help and that school is so different now or the work is too hard for them, can encourage children to quit and not achieve their full potential.