

Helping Children with Homework

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To help your students with their homework, first familiarize yourself with the curriculum and find out what is expected of them. To get started, review their textbooks. Also ask your children's teacher about the grade-level expectations and what you can do at home to support them. The following are some tips to guide you in helping with specific areas of homework:

Math

- Be sure your students know their math facts well. If they don't know them thoroughly, encourage them to practice flash cards. With a little creativity you can even make a game out of it. In the same way, older students should know basic theories well and how to apply them.
- Make sure your students are lining up their math problems neatly and are writing their numbers legible to avoid needless mistakes.
- Encourage your children to draw pictures of problems, estimate their answers or check their work to see if their answer makes sense.
- Play games that encourage counting money, finding patterns, or computing numbers.
- Teach your children to look for specific words in story problems that help them determine what operation to use to solve the problem. For example, when a problem asks for the difference, it indicates subtraction.
- To help your students prepare for math tests, encourage them to make practice tests by using problems from their homework assignments.

Reading

- Encourage your children to read by having a family reading time each day. Turn off the television and the ringer on the phone for this special family time.
- Give gift cards to bookstores or magazine subscriptions to your children as gifts. Go to the library often and take advantage of the librarian's knowledge to pick books that interests your child that are at her reading level.
- Encourage your children to read using a variety of approaches, including phonics and figuring out words based on their context in the story. Students can read the same books over and over to help them learn words.
- Some emerging readers become so focused on the task of reading that they don't understand or remember what they have read. To help with this problem, encourage your child to pre-read the story to himself, then read it aloud to you. Another approach would be for you to take turns reading one page, then your child reading the next page and discussing what happened in the story at the end of your reading session.
- Reading a textbook for information requires a separate set of skills. First, have your student skim through the chapter in the textbook and review the pictures and graphs, then have her read one section at a time. Encourage her to talk about what she read after each section. Ask her if there is anything she doesn't understand about what she read. When she is done with the chapter, have her answer the questions at the end of the chapter.

Writing

- The first step in helping your child learn to write is to have him brainstorm all his ideas on paper. Next have him organize the ones he likes in an outline form. The next step is writing the rough draft, then making revisions, and finally, writing the final draft.
- Encourage your child to do the first round of proofreading. Have her check for: accuracy of information, spelling and punctuation, grammar, and the flow of ideas in a logical manner. Once your

child has proofread the writing piece, a parent can also look at the paper if the student asks the parent to do so. Parents should be careful not to rewrite their student's work, but instead, just identify the places where errors are, and let your child figure out how to fix it.

- The final draft should be written in the student's best penmanship and should incorporate all the corrections made in the rough draft.

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