

Homework:

How can I help without doing the assignment????

- Make homework a priority in your house.
- Decide on a daily homework time. If your child is old enough (second grade and above) sit down at the beginning of the year and decide on a homework time together. Look at the extra curricular activities of everyone in the family to see what time is best—it can always be adjusted throughout the year if required. (In the car on the way to soccer practice, is not the best homework time.)
- Make sure your child has a quiet area to work. No TV, radio, phone calls, or loud interrupting siblings. Hopefully all siblings will be doing homework at the same time.
- Any school-age children that do not have homework should read a book quietly or play away from the homework area.
- Keep supplies close at hand. Please see the attached suggested supply list. Having supplies ready will help eliminate procrastination.
- Have the phone numbers of two other students in your child's class, so that your child can call for last minute clarifications or directions.
- Use a timer or clock to help structure homework time. For children with attention issues, it's often helpful for them to know they will work for 15 minutes and then get a break. If they know a timer will go off, they will focus less on how much time they've been working and be able to focus a bit more on their homework.
- Provide guidance not the answers. Have your child read the directions to you and explain what they think they need to do.
- Decide how much guidance your child actually needs. Children should be able to work on their homework independently at home, unless they are too young to read directions or have special needs. If your child is in kindergarten or first grade, he or she may need help reading and understanding directions and may even require help to complete the assignment. By third grade however, your child should be able to complete all aspects of his or her homework independently.

If your child has a learning disability (or you suspect this is the case), a more hands-on approach with homework may be required. We can work together to come up with a solution that will still allow your child as much independence as possible.

- Make sure you have your child's attention before giving a direction.
- Explain directions if necessary in short, concise steps. If further assistance is needed trying assisting with the first problem only.
- Don't "sit down" (literally) with your child—stand. Sitting down tells your child you're there for the long haul.

Homework—cont'd

- Start the school year off firmly and tell your child that you will not be completing homework together. Assure him or her that you will be there to give guidance and make sure that directions are understood.
- If you are checking homework, do not point out individual mistakes. Instead say, “I’ve found four mistakes on this page. You need to find them and fix them.” This allows you to check work without actually changing any of your child’s work or giving the answers.
- For longer projects, break projects down into parts (if not done so by the teacher) and help your child decide when each part should be completed. For instance, chapters one–three should be read by Friday or the rough draft must be completed by Wednesday, October 15. Helping your elementary age child plan out long-term assignments using a calendar will be beneficial as he or she progresses through the grades.
- Don’t feel that you need to become the homework police. If you feel your child has not put his or her best effort into the assignment, tell your child you think it should be redone. If he chooses not to redo the assignment then (without your child knowing it), contact the teacher and let him or her know your feelings. Together you can create consequences for incomplete homework or rewards for a job well done.
- Breaking the “doing homework together habit” may be a lot like getting your child to sleep through the night. In the beginning you’ll have to ignore a lot of whining, but if you stand your ground your child will begin to complete homework without your assistance.