**HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK**

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For some children, doing their homework can be a struggle. Parents often ask themselves; how can we get Jack to turn off the TV and do his homework? Is Jane supposed to do homework when she has dance practice, piano lessons, choir practice and helps with chores at home- she must be tired? As a Mom, I know that your child's outside activities, such as sports or music lessons can often interfere with a scheduled homework time. We can help our children by structuring a plan to show them that Education and Homework is important. Here are some tips:

**Set a Time for Homework:**

Having a regular time to do homework helps children to finish assignments. The best schedule is one that works for your child and your family. What works well in one household may not work in another household. Taking your child's age and needs into consideration in setting up a time is very important. Some children might want to do homework as soon as they get back from school. Others might need a break, a snack, rest time, or even play time before homework. Catering to these needs “most” times makes for easy homework time. Your child may study after school on some days and after dinner on others if health matter arises. Then there might be need for a flexible homework schedule. However, don't let your child leave homework to do just before bedtime.

**Child involvement in creating schedule:**

It is a good idea getting your **child involved in creating a schedule**. This is especially good for children in grades 1 to 5. An older child can probably make up a schedule independently, although you will want to make sure that it is a workable one. You may find it helpful to write out his schedule, make copies and put it in a place where you will see it often. You can put one on the refrigerator door and maybe in the child’s room.

**Designate a place/ area**

Designating a place is very important. It should be an area in the house with a **desk** and **good lighting.** For some children, the kitchen table works, for others it is their bedroom or an area in the living room. The area picked should be fairly quiet and free from distractions. Watching TV or playing loud music can be distracting. Encourage siblings if any to join in study time. If possible, parents can get busy too. Parents can read a book, the newspaper, emails, letters or even balancing your checkbook. You are basically doing things that require thought and effort. This is showing good example.

**Supplies (Writing and other materials)**

Make sure to have enough supplies that your child needs at the designated place. This can limit distraction and wandering off looking for pencil, pen or other materials.

**Outside Resources:**

Make time to take your child to the library to check out materials needed for homework (and for enjoyment) and read with your child as often as you can. Talk about school and learning activities in family conversations. Help your child to use every day routines to support the skills he is learning-for example, teach him to play word games and math games; help him to look up information about things in which he is interested-singers, athletes, cars and space travel. Talk with him about what he sees and hears as the two of you walk down the street, go shopping at the mall or visit a zoo or museum.

**Be Informed:**

Attend school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences, plays, concerts, open houses and sports events. If you can, volunteer to help in your child's classroom or at special events. Getting to know some of your child's classmates and their parents builds a support network for you and your child. It also shows your child that his home and school are a team.

**Recap:**

* Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.
* **Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available.**
* **Help your child with time management**
* **Be positive about homework.**
* **When your child does homework, you do homework.**
* **When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.**
* **When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.**
* **If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.**
* **Stay informed.**
* **Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework (**Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.)
* **Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration. (**Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.)
* **Reward progress in homework. (**If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.)