

TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS WITH HOMEWORK

As the school year progresses, many parents are finding that the amount of homework required by teachers is increasing. Some parents ask for additional homework to be assigned, while others may question the value of work outside the classroom.

Homework is an opportunity for children to learn and for families to be involved in their children's education. Homework helps their children to:

- review and practice what they've covered in class,
- prepare for the next day's lesson,
- learn to use resources such as libraries, reference materials and Web sites to find information about a subject,
- teach them to work independently and
- develop work habits and study skills (homework and assignments provide some students with their first chance to manage time and to meet deadlines.)

In addition, homework can help create greater understanding between families and teachers and provide opportunities for increased communication. Here are some tips for parents to help their children develop good study and homework habits:

Set a Regular Time for Homework

- Setting up a consistent schedule for homework helps students to organize their time and finish assignments. The best schedule is one that works for your child and your family, and should take into consideration the amount of homework that has been assigned and your child's extra-curricular activity schedule.

Pick a Place

- Your child's homework area doesn't have to be fancy. It should have good lighting and be fairly quiet.
- Make sure all the materials that your child needs (dictionary, calculator, pencil, eraser, tape, scissors, pencil crayons, magazines, etc.) are in the homework area, so that time is not spent every night running around to gather these items.

Remove Distractions

- Turn off the TV, radio and CD player if they interfere with your child's ability to concentrate. Discourage your child from making and receiving telephone calls during homework time.
- If you live in a small or noisy household, try having other family members take part in a quiet activity during homework time.

Identify Appropriate Resources

- More and more schools are relying on use of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Talk to the teacher about the appropriate use of computers as a learning and homework tool. Check with the school library to identify suitable Web sites and inquire about the use of school computers after school hours. Many public libraries also make computers and the Internet available to students.

Set a Good Example

- Show your child that the skills he is learning are an important part of the things he will do as an adult. Let him see you reading books, newspapers and computer screens; writing reports, letters, e-mails and lists; using math to balance your cheque book; doing other things that require thought and effort.

Be Involved – Appropriately

- Children are more likely to complete homework successfully when parents monitor their assignments. How closely you need to monitor your child depends upon their age, how independent they are and how well they do in school. Encourage your child to clarify assignments and due dates prior to bringing them home.
- Don't do your child's homework for them. Completing assignments for your child won't help them to understand and use information. And it won't help them to become confident in their own abilities.
- Check your child's agenda daily to ensure that all homework has been completed.

Talk about the Assignments

- Talking and asking questions can help your child to think through an assignment and break it down into small, manageable parts. Here are some questions to ask:
 - Do you understand what you're supposed to do?
 - Do you need help in understanding how to do this assignment?
 - Do you have everything you need to do the assignment?
 - Does your answer make sense to you?

If they don't know the answers to these questions, they need to seek clarification from their teacher.