



## Parents, Here's How You Can Help with Homework

By Educator Barnes – August 29, 2019

Many students probably think homework is a necessary evil, or maybe they just think it is evil. When I've said "Students, write down this assignment in your agenda," audible groans filled the classroom. Kids don't like doing homework. Who can blame them? They have been in school all day receiving direct instruction. Some concepts are harder than others, and students

need the opportunity to practice and digest the content more. Yes, there is some time allotted at school, but it isn't always enough time. This means there will be homework.



Homework is an opportunity to practice skills students have learned. Without this additional time to practice at home students may not ever fully grasp the concepts being taught. This is why teachers need parents to support them. Helping with homework is a full-time after school job. If you have a plan in place, it will be easy to manage.

First, determine when your children are going to complete

homework. My twin sons are now in the third grade. Homework just got real. They have homework every single night. Since they are now in separate classes, they don't always have the same assignments. Because my sons also stay for aftercare when school ends, I told them I expect them to work on their homework there. I'm not paying all this money for them not to use that as an opportunity to get work done especially when I know there is a homework time scheduled during aftercare.

When my sons come home, I know they are tired especially if I can't pick them up from aftercare until right before it closes at 6 PM. When they enter our house, they do the following: use the restroom, put away their lunch boxes, place the ice packs in the freezer, get a snack and a drink, and then begin homework. While they are doing homework, I start cooking dinner.

Next, your child needs a location to work on homework that is productive and preferably in your line of vision. My sons don't work in the same spots each night, but they have certain spots where they rotate: the kitchen table, the sofa, and the floor. One of my sons likes to stand up with his homework on the wall (as pictured to the left). He is a busy body, and he will sometimes switch from the wall to the floor while completing assignments. I don't care as long as work is getting done.

Since I don't have to monitor the food the entire time while I am cooking, about twice, I leave the kitchen and walk past my sons to let them know I'm keeping an eye on their progress. If I don't, I have found it appears they are doing work, but in reality, they have legos in their hands.

Using proximity to ensure your child is actually doing homework gives you the opportunity to ask questions to help them if they are stuck. A few questions parents can ask are:

- What are you trying to figure out?
- Do you have any notes or the textbook to use?
- What did the teacher say about it in class?
- What parts of the question do you already understand?

The key is to guide your child to the answer and have them do the work of solving the problem instead of receiving the answer from you.

When homework is finished, check it for completion. I am also a teacher, so in addition to checking it for completion, I might read the directions to see if my sons followed them. I also tell them to check capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. At all costs, I don't tell them the answer because it doesn't help them practice or gain good skills of learning they should check their work when they are done.

This might seem obvious, but make sure your child actually places the work in his or her backpack. One of my sons will leave his completed homework at home. I get a little salty about that. After all that time he spent working on it and I spent monitoring him....and then he leaves the work at the house! Since I know that will make me upset, I watch both of my sons put their homework into their backpacks.

Also, no teacher should be sending home any work that hasn't been covered in class; homework is for reviewing skills. If your child claims the teacher did not talk about the concepts covered in the homework, you should follow up with the teacher. There is a chance your child was not paying attention during that time.

Finally, follow the routine each night. Kids will only build good homework habits if there is consistency at home. They need parent support to make this happen.

When children practice at home, it helps teachers move through content more smoothly, and it helps ensure your child is learning.