

HOMWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

An obvious aim of assigning homework is to get your child to practice and strengthen academic skills. By devoting the proper time to homework, your child stands a much better chance of being successful in school. Homework has other important values. It can help develop emotional and behavioral skills needed in the adult work. John Rosemond, in an article in the magazine *Parenting*, called these attributes homework's "Seven Hidden Values."

responsibility a parent assumes for a child's homework, the less the child assumes and the more the child develops feelings of helplessness.

Now here are specific tips for accomplishing the "seven hidden values of homework:"

- 1. Responsibility:** Homework is the child's responsibility. When parents get too involved, they confuse the process. The school lessons get done, but the real lessons don't get learned.
 - 2. Independence:** Because it's the first time someone other than a parent assigns frequent tasks to the child, homework breaks new ground. How this golden opportunity is managed will either enhance or obstruct the child's progress toward self-direction.
 - 3. Perseverance:** There is no point to a child's doing homework if every time the child becomes frustrated parents step right in and make it all better. It's okay to let the child struggle a little with a problem.
 - 4. Time Management:** Children need a routine of when they do their homework each day. A clock or timer might help to develop an awareness of the time spent on each task. Children should soon be able to predict the needed time for each type of assignment and persevere to its conclusion. That way, instead of learning to waste time, the child learns to manage it.
 - 5. Initiative:** Like a muscle, the ability to be a self-starter strengthens with exercise. That's why it's beneficial to have the child preview homework tasks and develop a plan of what comes first, second, etc.
 - 6. Self-reliance:** Homework can affirm a child's feeling of confidence. Mismanaged, it deflates that feeling. Unfortunately, there is no in-between.
 - 7. Resourcefulness:** The ability to be inventive in the face of problems is the very stuff of being human. Homework provides a wonderful setting for the child to practice such cleverness. Although many educators encourage parents to get involved with their children's homework, parents should actually stay at a respectful distance. It stands to reason that the more
- Have a regular place for your child to do homework. Use a desk or table in a quiet room. Be sure there's plenty of light. Have all supplies (pencils, markers, scissors, etc.) nearby so a search is not necessary.
 - Find a regular time for homework. You may want to make a rule, "No television until homework is finished."
 - During homework time, turn off the television and radio.
 - Before your child begins, talk to him/her about the assignments. Help your child plan how she or her will use the time.
 - Set a good example. While your child is doing homework, spend some time reading or working yourself. Then when homework is done, you can both talk about how much you've accomplished.
 - Call it quits after a reasonable time. If your child is struggling or truly doesn't understand the directions, you can certainly lend some assistance...but don't do the assignment for her/him. Let the teacher know of this difficulty, so the teacher can then go over the material with your child.