

One way that parents and caregivers can help students succeed in school is to support them as they do homework.

What is homework?

Types of work that students may bring home:

- Finishing assignments that were started in class
- Working on a research project
- Studying for tests and exams
- Practicing new skills learned in the classroom
- Organizing binders or workbooks
- Reading assigned parts of a novel or text book

Where and when should homework be done?

- Not all students study in the same way. Some like to work in a quiet place, some like to work with music in the background and other students find it is helpful to study with friends. You know your child best. Help him or her choose the best place to do their homework.
- It may help to have a regular time for homework. Students may try to put off homework while parents push to get it done, often ending in arguments. By having a regular homework time, it becomes part of the routine.
- Try to get the homework done earlier in the evening, when students have more energy. Allow time for them to relax before bed.

How much time should students spend on homework?

- There is no established “right” amount of homework. Researchers and educators agree that there should only be limited homework in the early grades, with the amount gradually increasing as students move into high school.
- Students work at different speeds, so the amount of time spent on homework will vary.
- Students should be able to do their homework and have time to participate in other activities, including sports, music lessons, religious activities, language classes, volunteer work, and free play.
- If you are concerned that your child is getting too much or too little homework, you should speak to the classroom teacher.

How can parents help with homework?

- Encourage older children to use their school agenda to keep track of assignments and tests. Help set up a work schedule or even a big calendar for larger projects.
- Unless it is a project, homework should be a review of what students are learning in class, so students should be able to do their homework on their own.
- While your children are doing their homework, you might do your ‘homework’, like paying bills, reading a book or writing a letter. It gives them company and keeps you close at hand. But only offer help if asked.

- Read together (in any language) with younger children, and encourage older students to spend some time each day reading by themselves.
- Talk to your children about school every day. Even if you don't understand the topic, and even if English or French is not your first language, you can be a good listener. Research shows that just by talking about school, parents can improve students' chances for success.
- Make sure students have all the homework supplies they need – pencils, rulers, markers, paper.

What if a student is having difficulty with homework?

- Encourage students to speak to the teacher if they need help. Let your child know that it is okay to ask for assistance if they don't understand something.
- If your child doesn't understand the homework, ask how the teacher taught the lesson. This may help the child to remember what was learned earlier and how to get to the answer.
- If your child is getting frustrated or upset, have them take a break, and try again a bit later.
- If the student cannot complete the homework after trying their best, it is okay to send the work back to school incomplete. You can write a note on the homework or in the agenda, explaining why it isn't finished. This helps the teacher understand what the problems are, and the teacher will be pleased to know that you are involved in your child's education.
- If your child is consistently unable to do his/her homework, make an appointment to speak to the teacher.

Other Sources for Homework Support

- Find out what kinds of homework support are available through the school or in your local library or community centre. Some schools and many public libraries have homework clubs after school.
- Students may be able to get help from friends or older siblings.
- Many high schools have peer tutors – students who have completed the course and can help with things like math and science.
- There is a free online tutoring service for high school students at www.ilc.org. Certified teachers are available on the site Sunday through Thursday, and they also offer an essay feedback service.
- Some school boards offer on-line lessons and learning activities for different grade levels. Check your school board's website for more information.



This tip sheet was developed with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

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