

# STUDY SKILLS AND HOMEWORK

## Quotes

*I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework.*

– Lily Tomlin

*But homework and studying also become the wellsprings for building greater mental effort capacity in all kids. Schools teach kids how to learn, and parents should teach them how to work by establishing work rules and a work ethic at home.*

– Mel Levine, *A Mind at a Time*, 2002

## Strategies

1. Parents need to respect differences in their children's learning styles and study habits. For instance, let's look at noise issues when doing homework. Some children need complete silence while others need to hear what is going on around the house for a sense of comfort or safety. Other children thrive with soft music in the background. Believe it or not, a small number of children complete homework assignments quickly while watching television or listening to loud "hard rock" music.
2. Make sure the child has good lighting while studying, not too bright or too dim. Usually a 75 watt bulb works best.
3. Encourage the child to work at a desk with a straight, firm chair. Discourage children from studying on their beds. If they get too comfortable they may drift off to sleep.
4. Make sure the room is not too warm. They may work quicker in a cooler setting.
5. Limit distractions. Keep siblings separated. Tell the child to turn off his cell phone.
6. Make sure the child's study area has plenty of supplies. This will save time by keeping the child from having to search for pencils, paper, and other necessary items.
7. Some children may need a separate area for studying. Instead of doing homework in their rooms, they may need to work at the kitchen table.
8. Suggest to the child to get a list of classmates' telephone numbers in case she needs to call one for homework information.
9. Some children may need to keep a separate set of books at home to cut down on the, "Oh, I forgot my books," excuses.
10. Make it a house rule that even if the child doesn't have homework, she must spend a certain amount of time studying or reading.

## Recommended Resources

- The Super Student Program
- How to do Homework Without Throwing Up
- Super Study Skills
- Study Strategies Made Easy



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## Strategies

11. Getting started is always hard. Consider providing a treat or words of praise when the child starts his work on time. For every minute he delays, subtract minutes from television viewing.
12. Children need to schedule a few short breaks. They can stand, stretch, take a few deep breaths, jog in place, do a few jumping jacks, or get some water.
13. Some children are "morning people." Consider allowing them to get up earlier than their siblings to do their homework and studying.
14. Help with organizational skills by providing different color folders. Math work goes in green, science in blue, etc.
15. Teachers can encourage children to actively participate in class. This helps children to retain information that will help with homework.
16. Teachers or counselors can teach lessons on note-taking.
17. Help the child identify times throughout the school day when he can take advantage of free time to do some of his homework. Can he do a few math problems on the bus or read a couple chapters at lunch? Often teachers give students free time at the end of the period or day to get started on homework.
18. Have children do their least favorite subjects first; get it out of the way.
19. Teach children "tricks" to help them remember. For instance, when Alicia has to remember the names of the Great Lakes, tell her to use an acronym. In this case use HOMES (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior).
20. Get organized before going to bed. Place books and homework in the book bag.
21. Study right before you go to sleep. Your brain will commit it to memory while you sleep.
22. Students should go over returned worksheets and tests to check on mistakes.
23. Parents should refrain from nagging their children about doing homework. Instead, encourage, support, draw up plans, and provide assistance. If necessary, take away privileges.
24. If things don't improve, call the school counselor for suggestions.
25. Ask the teacher if you can get the child's homework a week in advance. This gives you some flexibility. You might not have time and energy to help the child weekdays, but you, and the child, may have more time on Saturday to get caught up.
26. Always check your child's homework when finished. If it is quality work, place a Q on it. If it isn't, have the child make necessary changes.
27. Look over your child's homework. Decide how long you think it should take the child to complete it. Set a time limit. Let the child earn points toward extra privileges for finishing on time. Once in a while you may need to send the child to school without his homework finished. Let him deal with the school's consequences.
28. If studying and homework issues continue, consider these options:
  - 1) Finding a tutor,
  - 2) Getting child enrolled in a study skills group,
  - 3) Seek counseling to find if there are any emotional problems hindering the child,
  - 4) Talk to the teacher, counselor, or psychologist to determine if the child needs testing to uncover possible learning problems.