

Clinical Corner – Helping with Homework

Homework

You hated it as a kid and you've come to loathe it nearly as much as a parent. Homework can be easy to tame if you plan ahead and then follow these simple tips.

Know The Requirements

Make sure that you and your child fully understand the teacher's homework policy. Most teachers hand out a document early in the school year that explains the details about the types of assignments and subject requirements. Understand the basic facts about grading of homework, frequency of assignments and amount of work to expect each evening. Encourage your child to ask questions if s/he is not sure about any assigned work.

It's Not Your Job

Remember that the homework is the responsibility of the student, not the parent. Set your child up for success, but let them do the work on their own. Your job is to advise and encourage.

Time It Right

Schedule a time to do assignments that suits your child's learning personality. If your child arrives home famished and exhausted, take time for a nutritious snack and quiet time before tackling the toughest work. If your child prefers to get homework behind them and then play, plan for that. There is nothing wrong with splitting up homework into shorter segments with a comfortable break in between.

Minimize Distractions

Choose a homework area that eliminates as many noisy distractions as possible. Pay attention to your child's learning style. There are some kids who actually work well with a CD blaring nearby!

Stock Up On Supplies

If you gather as many typical homework supplies as possible and store them in one place, you'll save yourself from at least a few last minute dashes to the store. Be warned though that it's inevitable that a teacher will spring a crazy project on your child that will require you to tramp all over town late some Sunday night to find an item that you never anticipated needing.

Read!

If your child has no homework, encourage reading! Be sure your children see you reading more than cereal boxes. Parents who read raise natural readers and readers succeed in school. Some schools require students to read a certain number of minutes each evening. You might want to adopt this policy for your own family. Read to each other or read silently, but READ!

Pay Attention And Praise

Review your child's completed homework and then talk to your child about what you observe. Homework gives a great insight into what's going on in your child's life. You may notice an aptitude that will surprise you. Or you may realize your child needs help. If you do, work with your child until you are sure they understand, or talk to the teacher to see what kind of help is available at school. Be sure to praise your child whenever possible.

Make Learning Fun

Memorization homework can be a great game. Quiz your child on vocabulary, spelling, math and more when in the car or waiting somewhere. Let them quiz YOU!

Take Breaks

If you notice your child is frustrated or overwhelmed, offer a rest, a snack, and an empathetic ear.

Get Help

Find out if there is homework help offered through your school and encourage your child to use these opportunities for assistance. These may include a homework hotline, online resources, library resources and more.

Remember that you are teaching important life lessons when you encourage independent work, organization, perseverance and problem solving. All of this can be accomplished by making homework a priority at your house.

