

Getting a Handle on Homework

One area that causes much angst for parents is determining how to help and how much to help children with their homework. Checking over an assignment to be sure it is complete and that your children aren't missing any major concepts is important, but that is quite separate from finishing the assignments for them. When parents get overly involved in their children's work, then kids do not feel any sense of ownership or accomplishment.

Just the thought of homework conjures up many different reactions in different households. While some see assignments as a way to reinforce learning and teach responsibility, others view it as an annoyance, interrupting family time and extracurricular activities. For some, it is a battleground. Children may procrastinate, dilly-dally, or do a mediocre job completing their coursework. Moms and dads become the enforcers, not a very "fun" part of parenting. If parents concentrate on the negative aspects of homework, they will want to "get through it" as quickly as possible and if children can't dispense with the work fast enough, parents may be tempted to expedite the process by helping them or doing it for them.

Yet, for all of its drawbacks, there are benefits to having your children complete homework assignments, including:

- Learning to be responsible for bringing papers and books to and from school
- Listening to instructions and taking responsibility for what is required
- Learning to manage one's time
- Reaching out for help when having trouble (by going to you or a teacher)
- Reinforcing learning that has taken place in the classroom
- Developing a sense of capability that comes from mastering new tasks and skills
- Experiencing pride in completing a project
- The Center for Parenting Education:



Source:

<http://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/school-and-learning-issues/getting-a-handle-on-homework/>

Phonics Basics

What is phonics?

Phonics is simply the system of relationships between letters and sounds in a language. When your kindergartener learns that the letter B has the sound of /b/ and your second-grader learns that "tion" sounds like /shun/, they are learning phonics.

Why is phonics important?

Learning phonics will help your children learn to read and spell. Written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sounds of letters and letter combinations will help your child decode words as he reads. Knowing phonics will also help your child know which letters to use as he writes words.

Helping Your Child with Test-Taking -- Helping Your Child Succeed in School

You can be a great help to your child if you will observe these do's and don'ts about tests and testing:

- Do talk to your child about testing. It's helpful for children to understand why schools give tests and to know the different kinds of tests they will take.
- The results of some tests tell schools that they need to strengthen courses or change teaching methods. Still other tests compare students by schools, school districts or cities. All tests determine how well a child is doing in the areas measured by the tests.
- Tell your child that occasionally, he will take "standardized" tests. Explain that these tests use the same standards to measure student performance across the state or even across the country. Every student takes the same test according to the same rules. This makes it possible to measure each student's performance against that of others.
- Do encourage your child. Praise her for the things that she does well. If your child feels good about herself, she will do her best on a test. Children who are afraid of failing are more likely to become anxious when taking tests and more likely to make mistakes.
- Do meet with your child's teacher as often as possible to discuss his progress. Ask the teacher to suggest activities for you and your child to do at home to help prepare for tests and to improve your child's understanding of schoolwork.
- Do make sure that your child attends school regularly. Remember, tests reflect children's overall achievement. The more effort and energy your child puts into learning, the more likely it is that he will do well on tests.
- Do provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home and make sure that your child is well rested on school days and especially on the day of a test. Children who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of a test.
- Do provide books and magazines for your child to read at home. By reading new materials, a child will learn new words that might appear on a test. Ask your child's teacher for lists of books for outside reading or get suggestions from your local library.
- Don't get upset because of a single test score. Many things can influence how your child does on a test. She might not have felt well on test day or she might have been too nervous to concentrate. She might have had an argument with a friend before the test or she might have been late to school because the school bus got caught in traffic. Remember, one test is simply one test.
- Don't place so much emphasis on your child's test scores that you lose sight of her well being. Too much pressure can affect her test performance. In addition, she may come to think that you will only love her if she does well on tests.
- Do help your child avoid test anxiety. It's good for your child to be concerned about taking a test. It's not good for him to develop "test anxiety." Test anxiety is worrying too much about doing well on a test. It can mean disaster for your child. Students with test anxiety can worry about success in school and about their future success. They can become very self-critical and lose confidence in their abilities. Instead of feeling challenged by the prospect of success, they become afraid of failure. If your child worries too much about taking tests, you can help to reduce the anxiety by encouraging the child to do the following things.
- Plan ahead. Start studying for the test well in advance. Make sure that you understand what material the test will cover. Try to make connections about what will be on the test and what you already know. Review the material more than once.

Source:

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/succeed/part9.html>

STUDENT SUCCESS

ABCs Of Student Success

P is for PARENT INVOLVEMENT.

Research shows that students with parents who are involved in their education have higher achievement. You can get involved in your child's education by...

- reading with your child each night. Regular reading improves many skills. It reinforces that reading is a valuable and pleasurable activity.
- volunteering at school. Call your child's teacher for ideas about how you can help at school or from home.
- attending school activities. Be your child's number one fan!

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ABCs Of Student Success

I is for INDEPENDENCE.

As parents, our job is to work out of a job! One of the most difficult days in parenting is the day we send children off to school for the first time. We swallow hard and let our children go. It must be harder to wave goodbye than to leave, we think. We wonder if our children will miss us. We worry about how they'll behave. We remind ourselves that our children are old enough to handle this challenge, and that they are going to face many more challenges in their lives. This one is practice for the next, so we cheer them on as we let them go!

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ABCs Of Student Success

A is for ATTENDANCE.

Attendance is a critical factor in any child's school success. Children should attend school every day, except in cases of illness or emergency. It is impossible to replace the learning that happens on any school day with make-up work. Regular attendance and promptness are good habits that are expected and appreciated at all levels of schooling and in the workplace. This year, make school a priority in your household. Commit to excellence in attendance. Your child's future depends on it!

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Title I

Parents and Teachers

Forming Partnerships for Education



Dear Parent or Guardian:

Welcome to the *2014-2015 School Year!* ISD 31, Bemidji Area Schools, is proud of our highly qualified teachers with 54% holding Master's degrees and 98.4% in their licensure areas. You have the right to request and review information from your school district on the professional qualifications of your child's teachers. The federal No Child Left Behind law requires schools that receive federal education funds under Title I, Part A to provide this information to you if you request it. The information must be provided to you in a reasonable amount of time. The information you may request includes the following:

- Has the teacher met state qualifications and licensing requirements for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction?
- Is the teacher providing instruction under emergency or another provisional status that means regular state qualifications or licensing criteria have been waived?
- What college degree does the teacher have, as well as any other graduate degree or certification? In what academic subject area/s were the degrees received?
- Are paraprofessionals providing instructional services to my child and if so, what are their qualifications?

The district is also required to inform you if your child receives instruction for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the federal definition of being "highly qualified". Highly qualified teachers are those who have met state qualifications and licensure requirements. If this is the case, we will inform you.

The No Child Left Behind law requires all teachers to be highly qualified. One of the law's intentions is to improve student achievement by focusing on improvements in teacher quality. For additional information about the requirements for teacher quality, visit the U.S. Dept. of Education's website at <http://www2.ed.gov/teachers/nclbguide/improve-quality.html>

You can also find information about your child's school, test data and teacher licensure at the Minnesota Dept. of Education's website at <http://education.state.mn.us>

If you have questions, please contact me or Brenda Sand in Human Resources at bsand@bemidji.k12.mn.us or send a request to Brenda at:

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Sincerely,

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Be sure to visit our Website at:

www.bemidji.k12.mn.us

See the "Parent" tab for valuable resources