

Pointers For Parents

Avoiding Homework Battles

(NAPSA)—Is homework a battle each night? Do you spend endless hours helping your elementary or middle school child with homework? If your child has learning or attention problems, it's likely you and your child have faced such challenges. SchwabLearning.org asked Diana Browning Wright, M.A., school psychologist and parent, to share her perspective and strategies for managing assignments effectively—which can be of great help to you and your child.

Getting Started

Start by making sure your child understands what the assignment is and the directions for completing it. Next, find out if she has learned enough at school to do the assignment on her own. If your child has problems in either of these areas, schedule a conference with her teacher to develop a home-school communication system. One example would be an assignment sheet that the teacher reviews with the child and sends home for the parent to read and sign off on.

Where Is It Done?

For some kids, a small desk where supplies can be stored is the best place to do homework. In other homes, the kitchen table may be the best place. Wherever your child works, you should be able to check to see if she's sticking to the task, especially if she has problems with concentration, and be able to offer encouragement.

When Is the Best Time?

For some kids, right after school is the perfect time to do the work because the assignment is fresh in their minds. Others need a break before they can tackle more school work.

Sometimes team sports, a parent's work schedule, or other



Take time to review your child's graded assignments.

activities interfere with doing homework immediately after school. With your child's input, you may need to develop two plans: one for the usual day and one for unusual events. When you agree on the plans, write them down.

How Much Time Should It Take?

If your child has problems focusing on a task, writes slowly, or needs more time to understand concepts, homework can take a lot longer. No wonder she protests, tries to delay, hides the work, or doesn't turn it in at school! Sometimes just your sympathy can help.

Be sure the amount of time she's expected to work at home is appropriate for her age. Learn about your school's homework policy for each grade level.

By keeping track of how long it really takes your child to do her homework, you'll have specific information to share with her teachers. If the amount of time exceeds the school's homework policy, meet with her teacher to discuss what accommodations might be made.

Advice About Homework

- Encourage your child to talk to you about what she finds hard

or confusing. Listen to her ideas on what would make homework easier.

- Help your child learn effective study strategies, as is appropriate for her age.

- Model and help your child learn good organization and time management skills.

- If assignments seem endless, break them into smaller parts.

- Let her choose a pleasurable activity she can do immediately following homework, e.g., talking to a friend on the phone. Make sure the activity is one she's chosen so it motivates her to finish the work.

Eager for More Homework Tips?

For more practical tips on managing homework, download *25 Top Tips for Handling Homework*, free from Schwab Learning at www.SchwabLearning.org/hwk. This easy-to-read booklet offers parents useful strategies for helping their children manage their homework—from elementary through high school. Make your child's homework sessions a better experience for both of you.

About Schwab Learning

Schwab Learning is a nonprofit program of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation dedicated to helping kids with learning and attention problems be successful in school and life. Schwab Learning services are delivered through two Web sites—one designed specifically for parents at SchwabLearning.org and another created expressly for kids ages 8 to 12 at SparkTop.org. Recently, SchwabLearning.org was honored with the Good Housekeeping Web Certification Seal and SparkTop.org received a 2004 Parents' Choice Recommended Award from the Parents' Choice Foundation. More information on Schwab Learning can be found at <http://www.SchwabLearning.org>.