

*Aggravation
with homework
is a common
daily occurrence
in homes across
the country.*

I Have Homework, I Don't Remember What It Is

Many parents are at a loss for what to do when a child has trouble with homework. Inclusionary practices, which enable students to participate more fully in regular education, require teachers to accommodate a range of learners in their classrooms.

It seems that students who receive accommodations in the classroom may need homework accommodations in order to meet assignment demands.

According to recent studies, students with mild disabilities experience considerable difficulty with homework. Homework plays an important role in academic success. Without attention to the need for adaptations in homework assignments, research suggests that we have little to be optimistic about regarding the potential success of these students.

Parents know that their children with learning difficulties experience greater problems with homework than their peers. Often there is an inability to pay attention (being easily distracted), a lack of independence (will not do homework without assistance) and poor organizational skills (doesn't bring assignments home). These characteristics will interfere with a child's ability to do homework.

Most importantly, frustration resulting from academic difficulty affects a child in all the above areas. Without the hope of mastery in a basic skill area, such as reading or writing, the child's effort to participate in and perform homework assignments decrease.

Providing children with reinforcement and encouragement are the most critical factors in building their capacity to do homework. In addition, teachers must partner with parents so that a strong positive relationship can exist between family involvement and academic success.

Form a plan for homework

Parents can improve their child's homework experiences using the following strategies.

Encouragement for child

The primary role of parents regarding homework should be to support and reinforce what is taught at school.



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Create a home environment that is helpful to doing homework

Parents need to set a specific time for doing homework in order to establish a routine that the child comes to expect. A distraction-free setting for doing homework must be arranged. Parents should help their child obtain all necessary materials and equipment needed to complete homework assignments, although it is the student's responsibility to bring home any school material needed. An assignment book and in class homework buddy will help support this effort.

Maintain ongoing involvement

When parents are involved early on and stay involved over time, they are more effective contributors to the homework process. Oftentimes, without long-term interest in and interaction with their child's homework, problems may arise.

Encourage the student's effort

To motivate your child, let them know how much their effort is appreciated and provide positive messages when homework is finished. Be careful not to over monitor and make excessive corrections.

Go through training, if available

Parents can increase their effectiveness in assisting their child with homework if they are provided with instruction and/or materials. When formal training is not available, some teachers invite parents to attend special sessions dealing with homework. This suggestion is particularly helpful when conducted early in the school year.

Communicate views regarding homework to school personnel

Parents should contact the school regarding their views on homework. Be informed of their child's school-based performance and work together to resolve inconsistencies between home and school. Parents may choose to use simulation activities to sensitize teachers to the needs of their child with a disability.

The recommendations above can only be carried out when parents have the information they need to understand the classroom curriculum, teacher expectations, and how the homework is designed to meet the needs of their individual child.

What parents find helpful

In interviews, parents said they appreciated using technology, such as online assignments, to help them to understand the assignment. Knowing how and when to reach teachers was important to parents when questions and concerns arose. The use of an assignment book between home and school was effective in promoting communication between parents and schools if used continuously. In addition, parents found it helpful to include homework modifications and accommodations, supplementary supports, and assistive technology, as needed, on their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Positive relationships between teachers and parents support the homework process. Affirming the child's willingness to do homework after a day of academic insecurity takes time and patience. Parents must walk that delicate line of gentle encouragement and support while moving their child toward developing independent study skills. Remember, ensuring a positive homework experience includes valuing that children also need time to enjoy the non-academic aspects of life.

Resources

Reading Rockets

Homework strategies for students with learning disabilities.

[Vermont Agency of Education](http://www.vermontagencyofeducation.com)

Special Education Technical Assistance.
802-828-1256