

How to Handle the Horrors of Homework

Almost every family at some time or other is faced with the problem of “homework.” Even the sweetest child may be resistant. Many children have a difficult time feeling motivated to complete their work when they get home, at the end of the day. They feel that school work should be done at school and home is a place to do fun things with the family as well as eat. This creates unhappiness for both parent and child. The question is “what to do?”

It has been established that homework improves a child’s knowledge in addition to other skills such as, memory, self-discipline, organization, problem solving and confidence. Before a parent assumes that their child is stubborn or lazy when it comes to homework, they should consider that he or she might have difficulty doing the work and is frustrated and discouraged. If this is the case, a conference with the teacher would be advised. There are several things a parent can do to create a happier and more tranquil way to deal with the daily hassle of homework. Start by giving your child a snack and letting him/her take a short rest. Every child is different and most parents know what works best for their child. Some parents will designate a location and instruct the child to get their work finished before dinner time. Others prefer to allow their child to choose where they want to do their work. Some children like to be near their parents while others might like to be in their room (however, if they are in their bedroom, you should check that they don’t get sidetracked). If you have a child in kindergarten through 2nd grade, he or she may wish to take short breaks. They could work for 10 minutes, take a break, and then continue. If the work is broken into several sections, it seems less daunting and overwhelming. Other children prefer to do half before dinner and finish the rest later. A good place for homework is the dining or living room or somewhere you can see your child but are not so close that you find yourself hovering over him or her. Encourage them to do their own work but be open to helping, if they ask. Don’t do the work for your child, it doesn’t allow him/her to become independent and self-confident. It’s better to be a guide and coach. Keep all electronics turned off or out of hearing range. Knowing that a sibling or the rest of the family are having fun can be very upsetting and distracting.

Once you have a system in place, stick with it. Eventually the whining will lessen and the work will get done. Stay positive and praise your child whenever the opportunity arises. The key is to be consistent and to remain calm at all times.

At Woodcrest School the students who stay for Extended Day Care go to Study Hall every day, from 3:20 - 4:10 P.M., except Friday. Our Kindergarten and 1st grade students have a choice to do their work or play. 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th go to specific classrooms. The Extended Day Care staff helps the students when needed. Since most of the students who stay for extended care complete their work before they go home, the problem of homework is eliminated.