



PSYCH NOTES™

Courtesy of

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Volume 3 Issue 1

A Parents' Guide to Surviving Homework

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Homework has been part of our education system for over a century. Yet in recent years, the amount of homework given to students has increased exponentially, particularly in the primary grades. In most schools today, it is customary for children as young as first grade to receive homework assignments that are challenging as well as time-consuming.

Many parents claim that homework time is the most stressful part of their day. Parents often struggle to get their kids to begin their homework, and to remain on task long enough to complete it. This is particularly true for parents of children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) or Learning Disabilities. Oftentimes, this mutual frustration causes a great deal of stress within the home, and has a negative impact upon relationships within the family.

Aside from consistency and verbal praise, there are many strategies parents can implement to make homework time less of a challenge in their homes:

Make it an adventure. Do homework in an unusual location — on the jungle gym, the trampoline, or in a closet with a flashlight.

Play school. Have your child play the teacher, while you play the student. Act as if you don't understand, and have him "teach you" by doing his homework. This will help your child develop pride and confidence, while reinforce his understanding of the material.

Use teaching aids. Let your child use candy, grapes, or goldfish crackers to do her math homework. Practice

spelling words with finger paint or by writing them in sand on a cookie sheet.

Chart progress. Make a sticker chart indicating how many pages your child read this week, or how many multiplication problems he knows. Make it fun by comparing his achievement to that of previous weeks, or by having a "contest" with him (i.e., how many hours you spend at the gym, doing housework, etc.).

Utilize technology. If your child enjoys working on the computer, allow her to do some of her work, when appropriate, on the computer. This can make the work itself more enjoyable, while helping her to acquire new computer skills.

It is important to realize that no strategy is going to work for all children. Finding what works for your child may require a great deal of trial and error, as well as some planning and preparation on your part. Most parents would agree, however, that this is well worth the end result of reducing the frustration and tension associated with homework in their family!

(Information adapted from <http://www.schwablearning.org>)

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