

Back to School

Easing the Transition



The first five minutes occurring between a parent and child set the tone for everything to follow.

Sharing harsh words as soon as your child wakes up will create tension for the rest of the morning. But a few moments of affection will start your day off right. And the first five minutes when your kids get home from school will set the tone for the evening. So greet them with encouraging words, not criticism. At the end of the day, tuck your child in bed with words of praise to set the tone for tomorrow.

www.FamilyFirst.net

Making New Friends

A good friend is someone who likes you, treats you with respect, makes you feel good about yourself, and is ready to help you. Ask your child what qualities she looks for in a friend. Which qualities are most essential? Help her think about her best friends. Ask what she likes about them and why they get along so well.

Ask your child what traits she has that would make **her** a good friend. She can write them down in a journal or diary or pull out her list whenever she needs a lift.

The best thing about old friends is that they know who you are, and you can really be yourself around them. But sometimes your child will need to make new friends and that can be a little scary. Talk with your child about how he can get to know the types of kids he would like to spend time with. What are some places, clubs, and activities where he could find people who would make good friends? Remind him of the traits he likes in a friend and the wonderful qualities he has that add to a friendship. Tell him that anyone would be lucky to have him as a friend!



www.family.samsa.gov

Are School Mornings Crazy Around Your House?

You're trying to get ready for work. Plus, you have to get the kids fed, dressed, and loaded in the car. It can get pretty crazy. Do as much prep work as you can the night before and have the kids help where they are able. Lay out their clothes. Put out cereal boxes and place their bowls and spoons on the table. Have all their backpacks and other school supplies by the door. If they have a separate bag for daycare, have it ready, too. Keep mornings calmer by doing your own "homework" the night before.



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Bedtime Routine

Here are some tips to help your child get a good night's sleep:

Do:

- ★ Take a hot shower or warm bath
- ★ Listen to calming music
- ★ Read a book for 20 minutes or more before bedtime
- ★ Say bedtime prayers
- ★ Talk about the day



Don't:

- ★ Exercise right before bedtime
- ★ Eat or drink anything containing caffeine after dinner time
- ★ Eat a full meal right before bedtime. (It's OK to eat a light, healthy snack such as an apple, yogurt, or cottage cheese)

Homework Checklist for Parents

- Provide a quiet, well-lit space, away from distractions with all the right study materials—paper, pens and pencils, books, dictionary, etc.
- Try to find a separate space for each child, or schedule quiet times for homework in designated places.
- Create a regular schedule, with adequate study and free time.
- Limit TV time, and turn it off during homework.
- When possible, be available to answer questions. Try doing a problem or two together, then watch as the child tries the next one.
- Avoid simply giving an answer. Instead, ask questions that let your child see the problem in smaller, sequential steps.
- Provide your kids with a notebook for writing down assignments. Compare their completed homework and the notebook to make sure that everything is done.
- See if the school has a homework hotline (that lists your child's assignments) and/or homework helpline (help for your child).
- Review completed and graded assignments. Discuss errors to be sure your child understands the material.
- Share any concerns with your child's teacher about the amount or type of homework assigned. Be sure to let him know if your child is unable to do it without help, or regularly experiences difficulty.



<http://school.familyeducation.com>

Parental Involvement in School

Author Linda S. Page writes about how parents can become involved in their child's school. Notes Page, "The type of parental involvement that makes a difference in student achievement is more than 'volunteering.' While supporting the teacher is important, your concerns go deeper than this; so should your involvement. Parents must become directly involved in their children's academic learning experience." She provides a checklist of questions for parents to ask themselves, including the following:

- ✓ Am I creating in my child a love for learning?
- ✓ Do I send my children off to school with a nutritional breakfast?
- ✓ Do I see that my children do their homework every night?
- ✓ Am I teaching my children the value of being responsible for school work?
- ✓ Have I met my children's teachers?
- ✓ Do I know my children's teachers' educational objectives?
- ✓ Do I attend parent-teacher conferences?



What are the benefits of homework?



Responsibility – doing homework helps develop responsibility and prepares children for the responsibilities of adulthood.

Reinforcement – homework helps children understand that learning doesn't stop when the school bell rings

Self-esteem – children experience greater self-esteem from the discipline and success of completed assignments

Accomplishment – taking pride in homework assignments helps children experience the satisfaction of a job well done

Tips for Helping Kids with Homework



Certain practices will make life easier for everyone in the household when it comes to study time. Some of them may require an adjustment for other members of the family—but they can be well worth it for the reduced tension. Regularity is a key factor in academic success. Try to organize the household so that supper is served at a set time, and once it and family discussions are over, it's time to crack the books. If the student doesn't have

other commitments and gets home reasonably early from school, some homework can be done before supper. Should parents help with homework? Yes – if it is clearly productive to do so, such as calling out spelling words or checking a math problem. No – if it is something the child should handle himself.

These tips can help make homework a stress-free time around your house:

- ◆ Contrary to what many specialists say, **some youngsters seem to function all right with the radio turned to a favorite music station.** (An investment in earphones might be worthy of consideration).
- ◆ **Organize homework projects.** Get a large calendar – one that allows space for jotting down things in the daily boxes. Mark exam dates in one color, deadlines for reports in another color, etc. This will serve as a reminder so that things don't get set aside until the last minute.
- ◆ **During a homework session, watch for signs of frustration.** No learning can take place and little can be accomplished if the child is angry or upset over an assignment that is too long or too difficult. At such times the parent may have to step in and simply halt the homework for that night, offering to write a note to the teacher explaining the situation and perhaps requesting a conference.
- ◆ Read directions, or check over math problems after your child has completed the work. **Remember to make positive comments** – you don't want her to associate homework with criticism or arguments.
- ◆ **Help and support should always be calmly and cheerfully given.**
- ◆ Teach your child that **studying is more than just doing homework.** Encourage her to:

Take notes while reading a chapter

Learn to skim material

Learn to study tables and charts

Learn to summarize what she has read in her own words

Learn to make her own flashcards for quick review of dates, formulas, spelling words, etc



www.childdevelopmentinfo.com

Clip off this note and slip it in your child's lunch box or backpack. Or create your own on the computer or by hand.

Have a great day! Hope your test goes well. See you after school. I love you!

