



Homework Tips for Parents to Teens



Identifying Where Problems Begin and Solutions for Improvement

- Does your child write the assignments in a planner?
 - If not, work with your child's teacher to check his homework planner to be sure assignments are there before he leaves class.
- Does your child lose his homework planner?
 - Purchase extra ones at the beginning of the school year so that there can be quick replacements.
- Homework is more easily, and more effectively, completed if the routine homework time is while the child's medication is still active, such as during in-school structured study time (study hall) or immediately after school. Depending on after-school activities and athletics, an additional dose of medication can be prescribed to cover evening study.
- Does your child forget to bring home the materials needed to do homework?
 - For elementary school children, develop a behavioral program that rewards children for bringing home the correct materials. Teachers can help a child succeed by reminding him at the end of the day.
 - For middle or high school students, it can be difficult or impossible for parents to know daily what materials should have been brought home. Prioritize the homework routine described in the Strategies for Helping Your Child section later on this page over attempting to manage this.
 - Having a supply of poster board, folders, note cards, and other common school materials can prevent late-night runs to purchase last-minute supplies.
- Does your child have difficulty starting his homework?
 - See the homework routine in the Strategies for Helping Your Child section later on this page.
- Does your child have difficulty staying focused?
 - See the homework routine in the Strategies for Helping Your Child section later on this page.
- Does your child do the homework but forget to turn it in?
 - At the end of homework time, help him organize his notebook and backpack for easy identification of assignments to be turned in.
 - Have your child put the backpack by the front door, ready to go in the morning.
 - Still forgetting? Talk with the teacher about initiating prompts at school to turn in the homework.

Strategies for Helping Your Child

- Make sure your child has the phone number of at least one student in each of her classes to call for clarification of any assignments. Many schools have a homework hotline or an internet site for checking homework assignments. Help teach your child to use them!
- Establish a routine and schedule homework for a specific time and place each day. Choose a quiet location where you can monitor the level of effort. The more predictable and consistent homework time is for a child, the easier it will be to get it done. The best time to do homework is during the coverage time of your child's medication, if possible. If your child has after-school sports or other activities, you may want to speak with your child's doctor about extending medication coverage time in the evening, to cover homework after activities are completed.



Strategies for Helping Your Child (*continued*)

- Establish a minimum amount of time to be spent on schoolwork each day. If your child claims to have nothing to do, find a book or another material (preferably related to a topic she is studying in school) and have her read it and describe what she learned to you.
- Be available for assistance, but do not hover. If you observe your child having difficulty, ask whether you can help. For example, you may notice your child having trouble getting started on an assignment. If your child requests your assistance or accepts your offer to help, you may help your child break down complex instructions into simple steps.
- It is also common for children to need assistance starting long-term assignments. You can help by encouraging them to divide them into smaller steps. Schedule when each step should be started and completed (setting a deadline) in the homework planner. Get started immediately so that the project does not feel too big to ever get done.
- This routine should occur every school day because the real benefit to your child comes with repeated practice over an extended period of time.
- Give praise and rewards for consistent effort and work during these periods. This will help decrease procrastination and teach good work skills.
- Consider using a contract or token system, with your child earning rewards for sticking to the homework routine.
- Do not do your child's homework with or for her. Your job is to provide the structure and feedback, not do the work. If you are always doing the homework with your child, you will be preventing her from learning how to work independently. (Reading together can be very useful and is an exception. It can also be very rewarding to your child.)
- The last activity of homework time should always be having your child clean out the notebook and backpack and organizing the material so that it can easily be found the next day. Consider special folders or color-coded sections for homework. Figure out what will help your child stay organized and have her do it daily.
 - Create a checklist for your child to follow, listing what she needs to bring to school, and place by the front door, ready to go.

Asking for Help

- Know when to ask the teacher for help.

If your child is bringing home incomplete class assignments to do at home, meet with the teacher to request these problems be addressed in school with a behavioral intervention plan. These additional makeup assignments can push a child over the edge at homework time.
- Know when to ask your physician for help. Contact your physician if your child is regularly having major meltdowns at homework time. The timing, duration, and type of medication may need to be reevaluated.
- Know when to get a tutor. Sometimes a neutral person will be far more successful in helping your child learn content than you will be. Many schools have peer tutoring programs that are free.

Derived from materials offered by the Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) Parent to Parent Program and from Rief SF. *The ADD/ADHD Book of Lists*.

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Need more information? Contact CHADD at www.chadd.org.

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