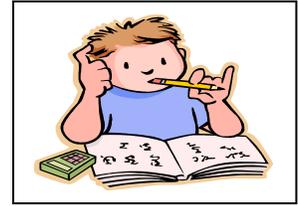




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Helping with Homework

Wondering how to help your children with homework, or how to get them to do it without a struggle? Here's how.

What's the point of homework? "Homework is designed to help students reinforce key concepts, process and solidify new information, provide time for extra practice of skills, and reflect on how much they've learned," notes teacher Susan Becker, M. Ed. However, approaches to homework vary from district to district, school to school and teacher to teacher. Some schools don't give children homework until the 2nd grade, others start in kindergarten. Some teachers create original homework, while others use or modify prepared work sheets. pbs.org

Through my search for how to create a successful homework experience, I have found a wealth of information. Here are some techniques that have been found helpful for parents.

- **Get to know the teachers.** Attend school events, such as parent-teacher conferences, to meet your child's teachers. Ask about their homework policies and how you should be involved.
- **Don't do the homework for your child.** Most teachers use homework to find out what the child knows. They do not want parents doing their children's homework but do want parents to make sure homework is completed and review any mistakes to see what can be learned from them.
- **Set up a homework-friendly area.** Make sure kids have a well-lit place to complete homework. Keep supplies – paper, pencils, glue, scissors-within reach.
- **"One of the best ways to help children become independent and responsible learners (and get their homework done) is to encourage them to take ownership over their work.** You might start by asking your child to make a homework schedule. Giving your child some control over this schedule will empower him to

do his work. Be prepared to negotiate – but not too much – as you need to maintain approval. Once you set a schedule, stick to it. Some children benefit by writing out their schedule and posting it. And when needed, change it.” Diane Levin, Ph.D. Professor of Education, Wheelock College.

- Find out how your child studies best. “You should find the ways your child likes to study. For example, some kids will learn spelling words by writing them out, others by closing their eyes and picturing them and saying them aloud,” advises teacher Susan Becker, M. Ed. “The sound environment is also important,” adds Michael Thompson, Ph.D. “Some kids may want to listen to music, some are helped by being in the middle of noise, others need absolute quite.
- Set a good example. Do your kids see you reading the newspaper, writing letters, or reading a book? Kids are more likely to follow their parents’ examples than their advice.

A Healthy Snack Can Help Your Child Pay Attention to His/Her Task at Hand

Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwich

Prep time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

- ☺ 2 slices whole-wheat bread
- ☺ ¼ banana, sliced
- ☺ 2 tbsp. peanut butter
- ☺ 2 tbsp. cereal (natural wheat and barley cereal flakes)

Directions:

1. Spread peanut butter one side of each slice of bread.
2. Spread banana pieces on the peanut butter on one slice of bread.
3. On the other slice of bread, sprinkle cereal so that it sticks to the peanut butter and covers the bread.
4. Place the slices together and serve.

Serves: 1

Serving size: 1 sandwich

**Nutritional analysis (per serving):
357 calories**