

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET #23: Homework

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they report doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

53%

of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Homework" is one of five commitment-to-learning assets.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

Homework Helpers

The most you may hear about homework from your child is that he or she hates it, doesn't have any, or has too much of it the night before a test. But it's more likely that your child is actually lacking in some essential homework skills.

Judy Dodge, author of *The Study Skills Handbook* and a study-skills consultant, says young people need to incorporate three key skills to do homework well.

1. Organizational skills—Young people need to develop ways to ensure that homework can be worked on, such as finding a homework site, creating a homework filing system, and using visual organizers.

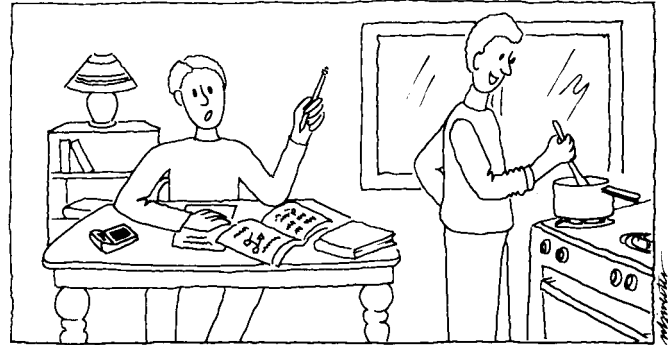
2. Time management skills—Children should set a consistent time to study, eliminate distractions, get proper sleep, take needed breaks, and accurately project how long an assignment will take.

3. Study strategy skills—Children need to know and use a variety of learning strategies, such as rewriting, drawing, memorizing aloud, and making flash cards.

In addition, Dodge suggests young people create a daily homework checklist that includes:

- Carefully copying the homework assignment from the teacher's instructions.
- Bringing home all materials needed from school.
- Beginning to study at a set time.
- Putting all their effort into doing the homework well.
- Placing the homework near the door to take back to school the next day.

Once children get the hang of homework basics, then they can become more creative with their study strategies. Keep encouraging them to stick with it.



time together

Four ways to help your child improve her or his homework skills:

1. Plan dinner and other family events around your child's homework schedule.
2. Make a study corner. Use the same place such as a table, couch, or chair for helping your child review material before a test.
3. Encourage your child to study with other students when appropriate.
4. Make a point to look over your child's finished homework.

Quick Tip:

Encourage your child to read or study something—even if he or she doesn't have homework.

A challenge . . . Only 45% of boys have this asset, compared with 59% of girls.

How You Can Help

Helping your child with homework may be difficult for some parents. If it isn't easy for you, try anyway. You don't have to teach your child the answer. The important thing is for your child to learn how to find the answer. If they watch you learn, they learn, too.

Don't be afraid to talk with teachers if your child seems to be getting more homework than he or she can handle.

Consider the possibility of starting a rotating "Homework House" in your neighborhood. Each day a different home can provide space, encouragement, and help with homework.

Creating a Homework Haven

Children need a place of their own when it comes to doing homework. Setting up a homework area will encourage your child to study on a regular basis.

- Find a space away from distractions—including television noise and people talking on the phone.
- The area should include a chair, a lamp, and a sturdy writing surface.
- Make sure all necessary materials are available, such as pencils, paper, a dictionary, computer equipment (if available), and all the materials needed from school for the assignment.
- Include a basic personal reference library: a dictionary, thesaurus, almanac, desktop encyclopedia, and atlas.

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**"The more you study, the more you find out you don't know,
but the more you study, the closer you come."**

—Cozy Cole

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talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- *At what time of day is it easiest for you to study: morning, afternoon, or evening? Why?*
- *What are the benefits of doing homework?*
- *Is it distracting or helpful to play music? Is certain music better?*

More Help for Parents

The Homework Handbook: Practical Advice You Can Use Tonight to Help Your Child Succeed Tomorrow by Harriett Cholden, M.Ed., and John Friedman, Ph.D., has many ideas on common homework problems. (Published by McGraw-Hill/Contemporary Books.)

How to Be School Smart: Super Study Skills by Elizabeth James, Carol James, and Carol Barkin contains commonsense advice on how to organize and carry out schoolwork. (Published by Beech Tree Books.)