



HOUSTON HINTS: HOMEWORK HELP

Meaningful homework assignments reinforce learning, increase student achievement and encourage children to become independent learners. You can help them use their homework time as effectively as possible.

1. Location, Location, Location... Provide your child with a well-lit, distraction-free place to do homework. Avoid areas in front of the television, telephone or computer. If others in the house are listening to music or watching television, keep the volume low.

2. Tools of the trade... Your student will find it hard to complete their homework without a pencil. Make sure you have a sharpener, pens, paper, erasers and a dictionary/thesaurus at hand. It might also be useful to have a supply of project materials ready, such as poster board, markers and construction paper.

3. Time management... Help your child learn to use an assignment notebook. They should prioritize each night's homework, completing the toughest assignments first. The calendar will also help your child keep an eye on long-term assignments. It may also help to add major tests and projects to the family calendar.

4. Dedicated homework and study time... Set aside daily homework/study time, keeping in mind regularly scheduled after-school activities and practices. Try to schedule homework time as early in the afternoon or evening as possible, so your child has some free time before going to bed.

5. Reading and review... Even if your child doesn't have an assignment, homework time can be used for review or reading for pleasure.

6. Building an independent learner... Remember, you're the advisor, not the homework assistant. It's ok to help your child work through a tricky math problem, but he or she should be able to complete most assignments independently.

7. Communication is key... Talk to your child's teacher if the assigned work regularly seems too hard to too easy. If your child is struggling with homework, he or she may be struggling with classwork too. A student who isn't challenged by homework may not be challenged in the classroom and could need some additional enrichment to engage them in class and prevent boredom and possible disruptive behavior.

8. Stay connected... Some homework—reading aloud or studying for a spelling test—needs your direct involvement. Make time to show your interest and help when appropriate.

9. Get organized... Help your child learn to be organized and conscientious at an early age. Make sure they read directions carefully before beginning an assignment. Encourage them to review their notes at the end of the day and highlight important facts or concepts.