



Hassle-Free Homework Tips and Tricks for Parents

By Mrs. Anderson

While homework time is a great way for students to practice and reinforce what was learned in class, I understand that homework time can be stressful for some students and parents alike. You may both be tired after a long day of work and adding on additional tasks in addition to the daily after-school obligations can sometimes be a challenge for families. Below are some strategies to implement to help make homework a pleasant and rewarding experience.

- ✓ Third graders are beginning to become independent; however, they still need parental guidance to help them plan and organize their session is most beneficial during homework time. Be sure your child has a quiet environment to complete homework and are equipped with all of the necessary items- pencils, workbooks, a well lit area, etc.
- ✓ Have your child begin their homework independently and only call you if they are struggling. If they are stuck on a question, illicit more than, "I don't know what to do". Help activate their working memory by probing your child to get to the heart of where their confusion is. Perhaps they are stuck on a word, or if it's math, perhaps they don't know if they should add or subtract. It's important for your child to articulate to you what it is they are stuck on. You can offer guiding questions to help them solve the question on their own. Encourage students to look back at the day's math lesson or the envision website to review what was learned. Students will also often come home with copies of Math Power Point slides that they can use as a review. Please do not write the answers down for your child- that is their responsibility.
- ✓ Feel free to use Post It notes to have your child jot down questions that they can ask me the next day in class. The ultimate goal is to have students complete homework independently, but guidance along the way is certainly welcome.
- ✓ Help your child with initiating the task and sustaining attention. I often hear from parents that homework takes a long time because their child is constantly getting up, being distracted etc. Homework should only take about 30 minutes (not including TAPP). A strategy that works is to set a timer. Your child has an agreed upon amount of time to finish either a question or the entire assignment. (Go question by question if you think your child will benefit from breaking the assignment into shorter intervals of time). This is a way to motivate your child to remain focused and on task. I have often used hourglass timers because this way visual learners can actually see time passing by. Of course, when they are successful praise them for their hard work.
- ✓ Help your child plan and organize their assignments. Students should start the school year reading at least 20 minutes 5 times per week at home. They should be reading a chapter book that is of interest to them. Students are required to fill out their own TAPP sheet.

Work with your child to see which days in the week they can skip the reading-maybe because of an after-school activity, and which days they will schedule to read for at least 20 minutes. Some students have more time on the weekends and can do the reading on Saturday and Sunday, thus allowing them 2 days during the school week where they don't have to do a nightly reading assignment. TRPP sheets are due every Monday, so it's important for students to map out their week so they can be successful with the reading assignment. Again, this is the student's responsibility. Please allow them to fill it out completely and please only sign if they completed the required amount of reading. Students are responsible for asking the parent to sign the TRPP sheet and they should return it to their STAR Binder-there will be a sleeve dedicated to TRPP. This is a means of fostering independence, organization, and responsibility in your child.

- ✓ Help your child regulate their emotional control during assignments. If homework becomes frustrating, I encourage students to pause, take a break, take several mindful breaths, and then try again.
- ✓ When homework is complete, students should get into the habit of putting all of their papers and books back in their STAR Binder and in their backpack. This is the student's responsibility-even though it may be easier for a parent to do it, instilling this routine in your child will go a long way to fostering their independence and helping them establish organizational routines.
- ✓ Parents are discouraged from returning to school to obtain forgotten items. In fact, our custodians won't allow parents to come back to school for forgotten books. If your child doesn't have the materials needed to complete homework, they will have consequences. They will have to fill out a "Missing Homework" slip (and get a parent signature) they will get a 'missing homework mark' in my grade book and they will have to complete the missed assignment the next night. Usually, those consequences are enough to motivate them to complete their assignments in a timely and organized manner.
- ✓ In an effort to teach responsibility and organization, students will write their homework in their Agenda Book (provided by our PT/TA). Students have plenty of time at the end of the day to copy their homework and pack up. They will also have an Agenda Checklist that they should fill out for as long as they feel they need to, that will help them plan what they need to have with them for that night's assignment. Again, scaffolding this responsibility to each student will help them become more independent and better able to plan and organize their daily responsibilities.
- ✓ Homework time is a great way to get a sneak peek into our classroom learning. Understanding what fuels your child's interest and what they are excited about often comes up during homework time. It's also a great time to see where your child may be struggling. I always welcome any questions or concerns that you may have and I value the insight you can share with me about your child. Please feel free to call me at school with any questions you may have!

