



Therapy Changes

Focused guidance when you need it most

THERAPY CHANGES GUIDE

Therapy Changes Parent's Guide:

Ending the Nightly Homework Struggle



Contrary to what your kids might say, homework is important. In fact, homework is oftentimes one of the first ways kids learn responsibility. Learning how to read and follow directions independently, how to manage and budget time for long-term assignments, and how to complete work neatly and to the best of their ability are skills children need for life. However, many parents experience homework struggles where doing homework can be a trying experience for the entire family. But, with a little help from parents and guardians, doing homework can be a positive learning experience. Here are some ways you can help.

Create a ‘Study Zone.’

This location needs to be free of clutter, well lit and quiet, without the distractions of the television, other children playing, or people talking on the telephone. A stable and comfortable environment will help your child remain calm. In a calm state, students of all ages are able to think more clearly and are better problem solvers. Make sure that you and your child agree on the set time and place, which can eliminate some of the homework-related discord between parents and children.

Select a ‘Homework Time.’

Choosing a regular time every day to do homework will not only help kids mentally and emotionally prepare for homework, but it will also help them enjoy their free time more. Some children do best if they tackle their homework shortly after returning home from school in the afternoon; other kids may do best if they devote the after-school hours to unwinding and playing, and do their homework in the evening. However, some children respond poorly to a dictated study time, such as 4:00 every afternoon, and may be better off if they’re given guidelines, such as “First do your homework, and then you can play videogames.”

Take a Break.

You know the importance of stretching your legs or taking a break here and there during your workday. Just walking away from your desk for a few minutes can often do wonders to help your concentration and improve mood. The importance of breaks applies to kids as well, and may be even more important because kids tend to be more active and full of energy than adults.





Use a Planner to Write Down Assignments.

Help your child manage his or her assignments by planning out the work on a daily planner. The most logical place to write down your assignments is in a planner, but your child might prefer to keep a to-do list in a simple notebook. It doesn't really matter what tool you use, but it is absolutely essential to your child's success that they write down every single assignment, due date, test date, and task. If your child is having difficulty doing this, parents can get involved by communicating with their child's teacher. Writing down what needs to be done can be a great way to manage homework, and crossing off assignments when they are completed and tracking their own progress can be satisfying for kids and help give them motivation to continue their work.

Get Organized.

Kids can often feel overwhelmed when they look over their list of assignments for the week. Children can devise their own color-coding system to track assignments and stay organized. You may select a single color for each class (like science or history) and use that color for your folder, your highlighters, your sticky notes, and your pens.

Work Alongside Your Child.

Modeling is an important aspect of developing healthy homework habits. Younger children in particular tend to work better when an adult is nearby, ready to answer questions or help work out a problem. You can sit down with your own work or a magazine article or bills — whatever quiet activity you can do while your child does his or her homework. If your child is getting stuck on a certain task or easily distracted, you can assist your child by answering questions, helping him or her understand the directions, and giving positive praise. Remember that although it's perfectly okay to help your child get focused and organize his or her approach to the assignment, they still should be encouraged to do the work themselves.

Review Completed Homework

Be sure to check your child's work every day, and try to make that a fun routine as well. Challenge your child to check-off all the items on his or her list. This is also a good time to encourage your child to check his or her work for any errors. If you take a relaxed approach to the homework and adopt a fun attitude about it, your child will follow suit.

Reward Your Child.

Everyone deserves a pat on the back for a job well done.

Congratulate Your Child.

Congratulate your child by rewarding them with something special. Rewards don't have to cost money, and can include a family movie night, a "date day" with mom or dad, a sleep-over with a friend, or an extra book before bed. Rewards also serve as powerful incentives to keep your child motivated and on track.

Some kids can experience more stress over homework and schoolwork than other children. If you see signs of stress in your child or your child is experiencing difficulty with the workload, consider meeting with a therapist to learn more about your child's unique approach to learning. Also, if family conflict is getting out of hand, and you worry that the fights are starting to impact your child's self-esteem or the relationship between you and your child, a family therapist can help. Therapists are trained to support you as you work through complex and difficult problems like homework stress.

Since homework starts as early as kindergarten these days, it's a good idea to get kids into a rhythm of great homework habits as soon as possible. And, if your child is a bit older, remember that it's never too late to develop great study habits.



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Please contact Therapy Changes if you would like more information about how to help your child overcome the challenges they face through play therapy.

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