

# STEPHANIE SAYS



## Take Hassle Out Of Homework!

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**H**omework time doesn't have to be a stressful time for you and your child. Meltdowns over homework create a breeding ground of discouragement for learning, and if you're taking the time to read this article, I know that's the last thing you want to happen.

So, let's talk about some ways you can start reducing homework hassles tonight!

### Tips for Parents:

**Establish a schedule and agreement.** Involve your child in the process of determining the best time for doing homework. Sometimes children just need a break after school, and while we may want them to get their work done as soon as possible, 15 minutes for a snack and drink can help with the transition after being in school all day. Being forced to perform a task unwillingly immediately generates a resistance reaction. After reaching a mutually agreed upon time for each day of the week, write and post the agreement where it can be seen, like on the fridge or desk, and stick to it. Involving children in the decision making process will help increase their willingness to participate and follow the agreement.

**Free time after homework** - No Screen-time (TV, I-pad, cell phone, video games) or playtime until homework is completed, and completed well. Utilize this as motivation to stay focused, do what needs to be done, and then they can have some flexible down time.

**Move in steps.** **1) Review:** Review the assignments with your child to ensure they understand the tasks involved and setup the supplies needed. **2) Work:** Allow your child to do as much work as possible independently without your help. **3) Improve:** This is the time for parents to review the child's work. Start by looking for what's correct and point that out first. This incorporates positive feedback and avoids the child from focusing on only what's wrong with their work. Then you can move toward discussing what needs improvement.

**Change will take time.** Changing behaviors around homework will not happen overnight, but please know if you are consistent in the routine, your child's behavior will gradually shift toward the peaceful homework time you are seeking. It's imperative that your children know you believe in them. In other words, they will

model your behavior; if you get frustrated and give up so will they, but if they feel you believe in them, they will begin to believe in themselves.

**Still Having Trouble?** You may consider sharing your concerns with your child's teacher, guidance counselor or pediatrician. The answer may be as easy as getting a tutor or having a little extra help after school, but if you suspect something more serious, don't overlook the possibility of a developmental, processing or learning disability. This can be scary for parents to think about, but waiting is not going to make it better. In fact, putting off exploration to the cause of the problem can make things worse for your child by increasing frustration, getting behind in schoolwork and grades, and decreasing interest in learning.

### Tips for Students:

**Pay attention in class.** You don't want to miss something that may be on a test or that's required for an upcoming assignment. Taking notes can help you avoid daydreaming. It's natural for our thoughts to drift, so make note-taking fun by getting colorful pens (but don't let this distract you). Use highlighters later when reviewing your notes to highlight titles, subtitles and examples.

**Do your homework.** There's no reason to miss grade points in this category.

**Get organized.** Make sure you have the folders and binders needed in order to keep all of your class work separated. This is an easy way to avoid missing or forgetting details and assignments.

**Put away the cell phone.** The frequent distractions limit your concentration and ability to retain the information in front of you.

**Create a study group.** Sometimes this leads to socializing, so it's important to choose a group or person that has the same goals to succeed as you do.

**Get good rest.** You cannot focus in class, do your homework, or study if you're falling asleep. Avoiding procrastination will help you to wrap up your work at a decent hour so you can get the sleep your body and mind needs.

**Ask for help.** If you find yourself frustrated, not understanding the material or not getting the grades you want despite your best efforts, talk to your teacher(s), parents or guidance counselor. Someone will be able to give you the help or resources you need to accomplish your goals. 🙌