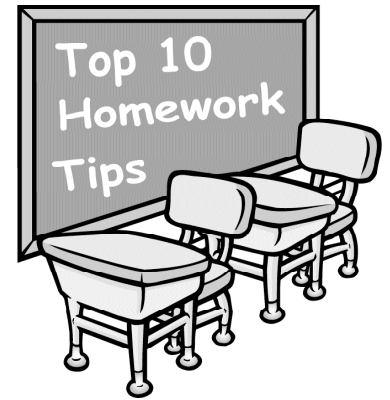


Top Ten Homework Tips for Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities

by Wendy C. Ward, M.A.T.



After a long day of school, homework time can be difficult for all children. It can be especially difficult for those children with learning disabilities. Children with learning disabilities (LD) have more difficulty completing homework due to the following reasons: difficulty with organization (e.g., forgetting to bring home books, which homework pages to complete), higher frustration levels and often, attentional issues.

Thankfully, there are things parents can do to assist their child with a learning disability to complete their homework!

The Environment

Location: Your child should complete his/her homework in the same location every night. *Hint: Have your child assist you in choosing the location.* Also, make sure your child's homework space has plenty of lighting. His/her desk and chair should be the appropriate size.

Supplies: At the beginning of each school year, assist your child in making a homework supply kit with all the necessary school supplies. Purchase a calendar with large spaces to write in assignments and due dates. Starting to use a calendar early on will assist your child through his/her school career.

Routines & Goals: Be consistent! Homework should be done at the same time every day. Decide which adult is going to assist. Establish rules for reducing distractions (no friends over, no phone calls during homework time, no stereo or TV).

Strategies

Organization: It is important to teach your child a strategy to pack his/her book bag at the end of each school day. *Hint: Write a simple list of books/supplies needed for homework on an index card & keep it in the front pocket of the book bag.* Other strategies for organization include using different colored folders and notebooks for each subject and having your child pack up his/her book bag every night instead of waiting until the morning.

Mnemonic Phrases: It's a fact: Students learn better when they are able to attach abstract concepts to mnemonic phrases. (Example: When learning the notes on a music staff, students learn the mnemonic phrase: "Every Good Boy Does Fine.")

Fatigue: In order to prevent fatigue when completing homework, provide frequent, short breaks.

Chunking: Break assignments into shorter tasks. *Hint: Do not wait until Thursday night to start studying for Friday's spelling test! Start Monday and study for 10 minutes each night.*

Encouragement/Motivation

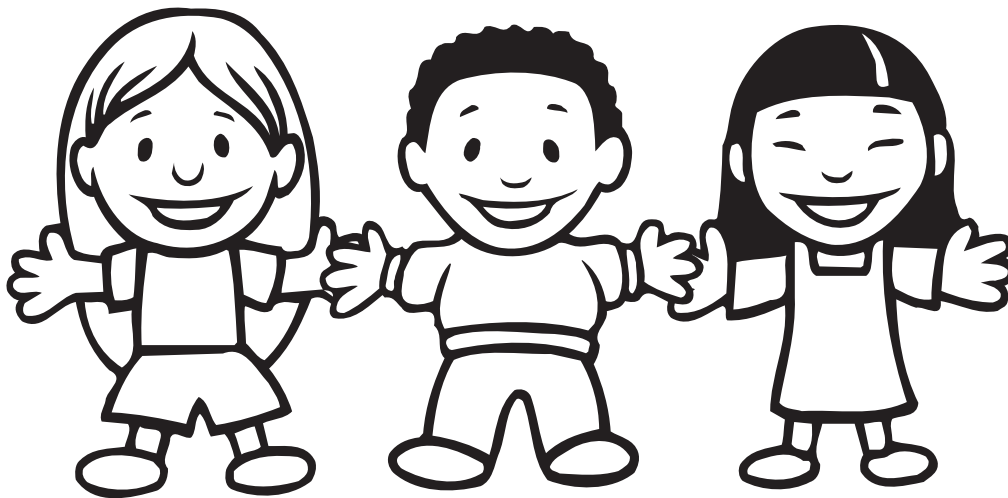
Praise: Provide frequent verbal ("Wow! You're working so hard on these multiplication problems!") and non-verbal praise (hugs, pats on the back).

Homework Contracts: Use homework contracts and focus on one goal at a time. *Hint: Have your child assist in writing the contract to develop ownership.* Example: "I, Melvin, will complete all of my homework each night for five nights in a row. When I accomplish this, I can go to the movies."

Monitoring Time on Task: Using a timer or an hourglass will make the passage of time more concrete. Your child can actually see the amount of time that is passing and how much time he/she has left to work.

References

Richards, Regina G., Tool Kit for Parents: Being an Efficient Homework Helper, 2004. (www.ldonline.org)



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