Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Keeping homework time stress free



Parenting, without a doubt, is rife with challenges that develop, change and come at us like curveballs with a speed that seems to exceed that of the aging of your kids. One often unexpected challenge for parents is the progression of homework. As children get older and progress through grade school, homework increases. It can be difficult to get your kids to sit down and do this work, and what can additionally rattle the nerves is the feeling that you might not be up to speed on what your kids are learning. Below, find some ideas to stay positive while keeping your kids on track with their homework.

Set a routine. The absolute best way to make sure kids get on track with their homework is to insist on a daily routine. After school, allow a 30 minute break with a snack and some play-time, but avoid television or video games in this break. Depending on your child's attention span, age, and other needs, you may go straight into homework after this break or wait until after dinner. The key here is to be consistent, create a daily schedule and stick to it.

Create a space for homework. It's helpful if kids have a distraction-free, dedicated homework space. This can be a traditional desk with a good lamp, or something more unconventional like a spot on the floor with cushions and blankets - if your child focuses well there, that's what counts.

Bring in the real world. There are many teachable moments all around you, take homework off the page by bringing it into the rest of your life. If your child is learning fractions in school, cooking and baking are great ways to practice these skills. If you go on a trip or see an important monument or piece of architecture, stop, look at it and discuss its significance. Homework can come alive and become more fun by making it a part of daily life.

Help when you can, admit when you can't. If your child needs help with math and you have a head for numbers, go ahead and offer some support. If Spanish is where the challenge lies and you don't speak a word of it, be upfront with your child about your limitations. Where you can't help, encourage your child to get what they need from their teacher, another family member, a friend or even a tutor.

Never take over. It can be tempting and even a lot of fun to take over the bulk of the work on a child's project, but resist this temptation. There's a difference between helping and doing the work for your child - the latter won't help at all in the long run.

Talk with teachers. Being in close contact with your child's teachers will ensure that you are on track with how homework and in-school work are connected. You can be aware of your child's progress this

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way, and if there are any difficulties or struggles you'll know about them before they snowball into bigger problems.

Just like any type of work, homework is best not left to the last minute. Use the tips above to lay a great foundation for your child's homework habits and you can expect less stress at homework time.