

Homework

Homework is typically defined as teacher-assigned tasks to be completed by students outside of the school day hours. The debate over the value of homework is prevalent in educational research. Regardless of which side of the debate you stand on, the research provides us with several important aspects about homework to be considered.

Homework is for the following purposes:

- Building fluency and recall (e.g., independent reading, math facts)
- Applying learned skills (e.g., following a recipe to apply the learning of units of measurement)
- Spiral review (review of previously taught and learned material that will be useful in an upcoming unit of study or assignment)
- Extension of concepts learned (further research in a particular area being studied)

Homework is valuable if it:

- Successfully extends student learning in a manner in which they are genuinely engaged (students pursuing areas of interest, active learning/investigating, pursuing student-generated inquiry questions; self-directed research with the guidance and support of an adult)
- Is adequately challenging and interesting
- Builds, for the child, positive attitudes, habits, and character traits (true responsibility cannot be coerced!)
- Allows for appropriate parent involvement (guiding, coaching, encouraging)
- Reinforces the learning of simple skills and concepts already taught and practiced in class (i.e., the homework is not the “teacher”).
- Is realistic in terms of quantity and difficulty given the students' abilities to work independently.
 - Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates.
 - Encourage your child to seek the teacher's help if "stuck", and if your child has difficulty with homework, don't push your child to complete it, instead, communicate their difficulties to your child's teacher

How much time should be spent on homework?

A general guideline for the amount of time spent on homework is 10 minutes x the grade level of homework per weeknight (e.g. Grade 4 = approximately 40 minutes of homework per night, Monday-Friday). However, research on homework indicates that the positive effects of homework relate to the amount of homework that the student *completes* rather than the amount of time spent on homework. If your child is routinely spending greater time on homework each night than the guidelines suggest, or if

challenges or conflict over homework become an issue, please meet with your child's classroom teacher to discuss.

Making homework manageable:

- Build homework time in as part of a daily routine
- Make the “homework place” in an area that is well-lit and ventilated, and away from distractions (such as TV or play areas) with a desk/table, chair and stocked with necessary writing/homework tools (pencils, erasers, ruler, dictionary, calculator)
- Be supportive, encouraging, and interested - ask questions that help students clarify and summarize what they need to do and what have learned – support your child in "talk through" their thinking
- Refrain from doing the homework FOR your child or letting your child get to the point of tears – if your child is not able to complete work within a reasonable time, or if unable to complete the work due to lack of understanding, speak to your child’s teacher

Reminders about Internet Use:

Surfing the Internet, chatting to friends on-line through instant messaging, or communicating through Facebook can be fun for young people but there is a growing trend where these experiences can lead to unpleasant encounters. We ask you to become Web-Aware. Below are some guiding thoughts for students going on-line.

Managing the Internet at Home:

- Learn about the Internet, and what your kids do on it (who they are speaking with)
- Create a family agreement on Internet use
- Accompany young children online as they learn their way around
- Create your own list of great sites
- Teach your children never to give out personal information
- Encourage good Netiquette
- Encourage an open dialogue with kids regarding Internet conduct (discuss “cyber bullying”)
- Put your connected computer in a well-used area of your home
- Explore technological tools to filter content and control Internet access

Media Smarts: <http://mediasmarts.ca>

Other recommended sites for parents:

- <http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents>
- <http://www.netsmartzkids.org> (for kids)
- <https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/parents>

NVSD internet safety links:

<http://www.sd44.ca/District/Departments/ICT/Pages/Internet-Safety.aspx>

Research Sources Cited:

ASCD: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar07/vol64/num06/The-Case-For-and-Against-Homework.aspx>

SAGE Journals: <http://joa.sagepub.com/content/22/2/194.short>

21st Century Learning: <http://www.21learn.org/archive/review-the-myth-of-homework-and-the-case-against-homework/>