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Study Skills that Help Students Help Themselves

Question: What are some areas of study skills development for students in elementary school and which is the most important?

There are basically four areas of study skills development in the composition of a successful student:
Classroom Study Skills
Overall Organization
Test Taking Skills
Homework Study Skills

In elementary school, because all four areas are important, it is always relevant to talk about Homework Tips. Families need to regularly evaluate their homework plan so that it is always developmentally appropriate and effective in reaching the goal of independent learning.

Question: What are a few tips on Homework for elementary students?

One of the best books with clearly spelled out homework procedures is Homework Without Tears by Lee Canter. Four tips he gives that can really help a student get organized for Homework include the following:

1. Drop Spot-A special place students and parents have agreed on where the child puts his book bag everyday. The drop spot for the book bag should be a place where no one will move or bother the child's book bag. This place should also be out in the open so the child can see it as he leaves home to go to school.
2. Study Place-There is some new research out that shows it may help for a child to have a couple of places set up for study. No matter if there is one or two places, the child and parent should set up the special study place where there are few distractions, it is relatively quiet and well lit, and all school supplies that might need to be used are organized into one place. In the study area there needs to be a hard, flat surface with a chair that has a back. Parents may need to help siblings respect the student's homework time by making sure younger children stay away from the study place until homework time is over.
3. Survival Kit-All supplies that might be needed for homework are located in one place so time can be used for completing homework and not looking for supplies. The supply container could be a bag, basket, or desk drawer.
4. Schedule-It is important to learn to organize time. Parent and child need to sit down together with an afternoon schedule to come up with a weekly schedule where each day a certain amount of time teachers have designated is figured into the weekly schedule. If you are unsure how long homework should last, ask the teacher. Both parents and child need to agree to respect the time allotted each day for homework. (See after school schedule at the end of this article.)

Question: What can parents do when children don't do their best work?

1. First of all, an example of quality work should be hanging up in the student's study area or on the refrigerator where the student can compare his most recently completed work with the quality homework example. Parent and child should discuss this procedure so the child knows the teacher/parents' expectations. (If parents do not know the teacher's expectations, contact with the teacher should be made to clarify teacher expectations.) The student can then practice being honest with himself as to whether his homework measures up to his quality work example or a checklist of what is expected. If it does not, then the student needs to redo it. Hopefully he will redo it on his own.
2. Encourage your child when he does a good job. Example: "You have worked hard and you have your homework completed!" Be sure your encouraging statement is specific, descriptive and sincere. (This is different from praise where the parent makes a judgment-"What a great job!") The idea is to allow your child to make the judgment.
3. Having a mandatory homework time means that a child must use the entire scheduled time for homework or other academic activities. An afternoon schedule completed by parent and child could be hung close to or in the study area as a reminder of homework time. If assigned work is completed before the end of the designated time, the rest of the time can then be used for other academic work such as reading library books, practicing math facts, reviewing for tests, or working on long-term projects.
4. Hopefully students will follow this plan because it will help them to be successful at school. If needed, an incentive

can be incorporated into the plan and eventually eliminated. An example is, "When homework time is over and all homework is complete, it will be free time until dinner".

Question: What do I do if my child will/can not do homework by himself?

1. First things first-see if the teacher expects the student to try his best, and when she checks it she can see where he continues to miss, so she can help him; Or she may expect the parent to help the child after he has tried-then the parent is to let the teacher know specifically what the problem seems to be so she can coach or reteach the student. Again parent/teacher communication is critical to helping the student be successful.

2. Tell your child that you expect his homework will be done alone. Once he has tried to complete all work, the parent can then check it and help with areas of difficulty remembering to follow the teacher’s plan for communicating homework problems.

3. Help your child learn to chunk assignments. Chunking means that an assignment is broken down into smaller chunks with a quick break in between.

4. Remember: Give help only after your child has tried to solve his problem at least twice on his own.

Homework is an opportunity for students to begin to develop responsibility. Once homework time is successful, parents can use the successful homework examples in all kinds of situations where the child is learning something new. Example: "Remember when you were having trouble getting your homework done . . . well, we can also make a plan to work your piano lessons and practice into your schedule so you have time to learn to play the piano."

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3:00-3:30					
3:30-4:00					
4:00-4:30					
4:30-5:00					
5:00-5:30					
5:30-6:00					
6:00-6:30					
6:30-7:00					
7:00-7:30					
7:30-8:00					
8:00-8:30					
8:30-9:00					
9:00-9:30					