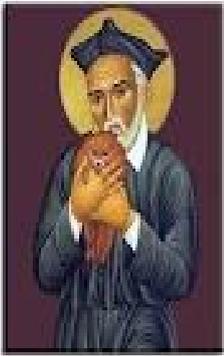


**Saint Philip
Neri
Saturday 26th
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Helping kids with homework

Homework causes more headaches for parents than it does for the children. Some parents worry because their children do not seem to do enough while others are concerned because they do too much.

But for many parents homework is that time of the day when they routinely harass and hassle their child to **just do your homework!**

Here are some practical homework tips:

1. Establish homework time and stick to it each day. If children tell you they don't have any formal homework then they can read, revise or organise their work. My feedback tells me sticking to a routine even when no formal homework is set is extremely useful and helps avoid battles.
2. Put the onus back on your children to take responsibility for their work. Ask children at the start of a homework session to state how much homework they will do. At the end of the session check it to see if it matches with their intentions as well as yours. If you are more concerned about homework than them, your children are not the ones responsible for their homework.
3. Help children to decide the best time to do homework and then encourage them to stick to those times. Maybe on some days homework is tackled after dinner for any number of reasons. If doing homework straight after school is important to you then consider feeding children **ONLY** after homework is completed! Food can be a huge motivator for some children!
4. Homework is as much a time management issue as anything else. Encourage children to work reasonably quickly and efficiently. Have a set time limit, which they should stick to. There is little point slogging away once they become frustrated or tired. Give them an egg-timer or use a clock and get them to work hard for small chunks of time. A little work each night is more productive than packing it into one weekly session.
5. Establish a good working environment for students. Make sure they have a quiet, well-lit, well-ventilated area away from distractions. A table or desk makes a good workshop, although don't be surprised if they spread work all over the kitchen table. Some kids hate to be stuck away in their rooms and prefer to work at the kitchen table and can do so productively. Others are easily distracted and work in short bursts. Work out what is best for your child.
6. Use the motivating factors of technology. The Internet and other forms of electronic learning are quick, convenient and give access to huge amounts of information. Nevertheless, children should still know how to access information from more traditional means such as books. Check with your child's teacher as to their specific recommendations and preferences.
7. Encourage children to get organised. Help them think ahead to plan their homework around extra-curricular activities. A weekly planner or diary will help older students get organised. Assisting children to become organised is perhaps the best way parents can help at home.
8. If you are helping with a particular task, keep your explanation simple and practical. If you become frustrated or upset and the atmosphere becomes tense – stop helping.
9. Be realistic – don't expect to solve all homework difficulties. When in doubt send a note to your child's teacher letting him or her know the problem. The teacher will appreciate this good communication.
10. Communicate any concerns. If you have concerns about how much or the difficulty of homework your child is set, contact the teacher and arrange a time to discuss your worries. Such discussion is the basis of a true partnership between you and your child's teacher.

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By Michael Grose