

Homework Strategies for the Working Parent

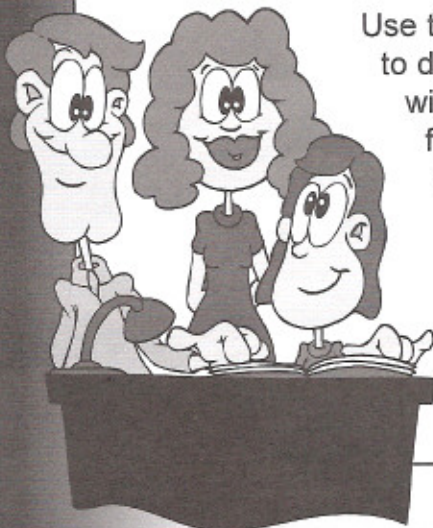
It is hard trying to come home after a long day at work to find that your daughter or son has four pages of homework. Don't forget, your child had a long day just like you! Homework time can be a bonding experience with you and your child or it can be an absolute nightmare. Here are some tips that might make things a little easier.

If your child goes to an after-school center instruct them to start their homework there. Getting it started and then finishing it at home will be much easier than trying to begin it after dinner. If a child is home with an older sibling, the same rule applies. They should start their homework and work on it for at least 30 minutes before putting it aside and going out to play. You are sending a message that even though you are not at home their studies are important and should be taken seriously.

You should have a schedule when you get home to help plan the evening. If you get home at 5:00 and dinner is at 6:00 then designate a time for you and your child to sit down to review and complete homework assignments. Homework is a way for students to practice independently and to let the parent know what the child is learning in school. Sometimes having homework time before dinner is better than after. You are the expert on your child and you know when he / she is most alert and attentive.

Make sure that there are no distractions. The T.V. should be off, no social calls should be taken or made, and other members of the family should not be in the same room doing other things. Some kids work well with soft background music, more specifically music that is instrumental only. Music by the latest pop star is most likely not homework appropriate.

Choose a special place for you and your child to go during homework time. It can be just a corner in the den or kitchen but it tells the child that it is your place.



Use this time to encourage your child. Their self esteem has a lot to do with how hard they will try. If they think they can they often will. Use phrases like, "Look at that, you did it." or "Wow, you figured it out!" or "Look at that smile, you must be proud." You want to give the child ownership of the accomplishment.

Don't hesitate to contact the teacher if you do not understand an assignment. Write a note in your child's folder or agenda or send him / her an email. He / She will appreciate it and be happy to explain!!