



Top Tips for Home Learning

Children learn best where home and school work together to support them. Homework is important, but helping children with their learning at home isn't always easy. Here are some ways you can make homework easier for everyone!

Show your child that you think homework is important.
Tell your child that you are proud of the work s/he is doing.

- **Attend parent-teacher consultation sessions** to meet your child's teachers. Ask about how you should be involved
- **Set a good example.** Do your children ever see you reading a book or newspaper or balancing your budget? Children are more likely to follow their parents' examples than their advice. Men as role models can be particularly important to boys
- **Keep distractions to a minimum.** This means no TV, loud music, or phone calls
- **Praise their work and efforts.** Mention handwriting awards or number bond challenges to relatives

Helping your child with Reading

- Reading with your child is vital. Research shows that it's the single most important thing you can do to help your child's education. It's best to read little and often, so try to put aside some time for it every day. Daily reading can be difficult to manage for some families so we ask that your child reads to you a minimum of 5 times a week.
- Think of ways to make reading fun - you want your child to learn how pleasurable books can be. If you're both enjoying talking about the content of a particular page, linger over it for as long as you like.
- Books aren't just about reading the words on the page, they can also present new ideas and topics for you and your child to discuss.
- Visit the library as often as possible - take out CDs and DVDs as well as books.
- Try to schedule a regular time for reading - perhaps when you get home from school or just before bed
- Look for books on topics that you know your child is interested in - maybe dragons, insects, cookery or a certain sport
- Make sure that children's books are easily accessible in different rooms around your house

Helping your child with Mathematics

- As with reading, try to make maths as much fun as possible - games, puzzles and jigsaws are a great way to start. It's also important to show how we use maths skills in our everyday lives and to involve your child in this
- Don't shy away from maths if you didn't like it at school. Try to find new ways to enjoy the subject with your child, try never to say that you aren't good at maths or you don't like it.
- Point out the different shapes to be found around your home
- Take your child shopping and talk about the quantities of anything you buy
- Let your child handle money and work out how much things cost. Earning regular small amounts of pocket money can help a child to understand about the value of coins, counting money, saving for something they would like to buy and realizing how expensive items can be
- Look together for numbers on street signs and car registration plates. Use these numbers to carry out calculations. "Can you add together all the numbers on that registration plate?" etc.

Fitting homework into very busy lives

Keep books in the car, in your handbag, upstairs, downstairs, at the grandparents' and anywhere else you can think of so that there are opportunities to read every time there is a spare moment.

Use driving time in the car as an opportunity to practise spellings, or the 'number bond' game, where the child must pair two numbers together to make the specified sum:

Parent: "Number 10 – I say 5, you say..."

Child: "5"

Parent: "I say 9, you say..."

Child: "1"

Count when you are walking along. Count forwards, count backwards, count in 2s, count in 5s, count in 10s etc. If your child can only count as far as ten, (or any other number) then start again when you get to ten

Keep a lined notebook in your bag or in the car along with some nice sharp writing pencils. You will be ready to practise handwriting or spellings when you are waiting around for siblings to finish dancing or football or if you arrive at school a few minutes early in the morning

After school clubs are often happy to help with homework if you let them know what you would like them to do. Perhaps you can let them have a list of spellings or handwriting sheets. We can provide copies of these if you ask at the school office

Children do not always need to read to mum or dad. Any interested adult can be enlisted to help. Grandparents, childminders, the babysitter, teenage brothers and sisters or visiting family friends can all provide helpful support. Some of them might even be good at helping with spelling or learning number bonds and tables!

These ideas are particularly useful for more-able readers...

When time is very tight and you cannot give your child some undivided attention, perhaps s/he can read to you while you are cooking the tea, when s/he is in the bath, when you are in the bath (not terribly relaxing for you, but you may be able to relax later knowing that the reading is done) or s/he can read younger siblings a story.

Relatives and family friends love to receive letters from children and what a wonderful way to show off developing handwriting.

Bear in mind that progress isn't always a smooth upward curve - children often plateau in their learning levels. Rest assured that if you continually assist your child in a loving and supportive manner, you will eventually see results. Don't let homework become a chore. Keep it fun and make it a special time that you both look forward to.