How to Help Your ADHD Child With Homework

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ADHD and Homework

It is never too early to start preparing for school, especially if your child has ADHD. Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder makes homework difficult for children because the attention, focus, and concentration they need to complete the task are in short supply.

Forcing your child to sit for hours every night only adds to battles over math, spelling, and geography. Not only is this not on your agenda but it also damages the relationship between you and your child. Make homework an opportunity to improve relationships rather than destroy them.

ADHD Homework Planner Tips

At the beginning of each school year, most schools will offer a planner to help their students remember their daily homework, upcoming projects and tests, and assignments. While the use of school planners are a wonderful resource for parents, many children feel otherwise it's a hassle.

As a parent of an ADHD child, here are a few ways you can help your child set themselves up for success with an ADHD homework planner:

1. **Use a planner with fewer pages.** Purchasing a smaller, thin planner may help your child quickly access the pages they need to write down any important homework information. Ideally, you want a planner that has a weekly page layout as well.
2. **Use a magnetic page marker.** A page marker can help your child instantly flip to the page they need to be on and avoid any planner frustrations.
3. **Encourage daily planner writing.** If your child has a tendency to forget to write down important information, encourage them before class ends for the day to write down what the teacher wants them to complete before the next day of class.
4. **Review the planner with them.** Before homework time begins, sit down with your child to discuss what they have written in their planner. Be sure to ask if they have forgotten anything in their said planner, and if they did, have them write down the missing task in their planner right away.

If your child is still having issues with their ADHD homework planner, be sure to discuss with their teacher about ways they can help your child remember what homework they need to have completed or ask their teacher to review your child's homework planner before the end of the school day.

ADHD and Homework Strategies

When building a homework plan, it is vital to involve your child. Chances are that they know their situation and symptoms better than anyone else does. A collaborative effort will also help them feel more engaged to the plan. This will increase the likelihood of adherence. When building a plan consider the following:

- **Timing**. Some parents want their child to come right home from school and begin homework. This can be problematic. Often, school is demanding for children with ADHD, forcing them to sit quietly, pay attention and focus for long periods of time which is demanding for your child. Consider adding time for your child to unwind after school. Recharging their batteries can make homework time more efficient and productive.
- **Environment**. Does the homework environment set your child up to fail? Find a quiet place with few distractions. An empty desk in a spare room is more conducive to learning than the couch with the TV on and people talking. Trial and error is helpful here, and do not be afraid to experiment. Try each location for several days before trying another.
- **Check-ins**. Putting faith in your child to complete two hours of homework without any supervision might be unrealistic. Hovering over your child might be more of a distraction and build unneeded tension in the relationship. Instead, work with your child to find an appropriate balance of check-ins. Provide more freedom as a reward for success and check-in more regularly if the focus is wavering.

- **Breaks**. Set a break schedule. As mentioned, asking a child with ADHD to do homework for long periods seems painful to them. Make breaks based on completion of tasks rather than on time passed. Kids with ADHD are great at stalling but if a break is in sight, they can work to complete the task quicker. A 10 or 15-minute break to stretch or listen to music will help but avoid video games during breaks. Frequently, a new battle will erupt around turning off the Xbox.
- **Reinforcement**. Breaks do well to serve as small reinforcers but build and expand to encourage homework completion. Consider setting up a token economy where the child receives a chip for a successful night of homework. Four chips by Friday and he can cash them in for a trip to get ice cream, a movie rental or extra screen time. Making homework more positive will increase the odds that next week will go well.

ADHD and Homework Advice for Parents

With ADHD, the most important piece of information is for parents to be consistent. If there is no consistency, there can be no success. Try out the tips mentioned above and you will be spending more time taking trips to the ice cream store and less time fighting about homework.