

## Homework tips for parents

The main reason for homework is to reinforce the information and skills your child learns at school. Homework will tend have a specific purpose and will be given consistently, in small quantities. It is extremely useful for a number of reasons:

- link between school and home
- shows your child's progression
- develops your child's self-discipline
- encourages independence
- revision for tests/exams
- completion of unfinished work

Having a plan and following through can help reduce the nightly stress that homework can bring. It is important that parents and children find a plan that works for their family and stick with it. Here are some tips to use when developing homework strategies:

### 1. Establish a routine.

Agree on a set time with your child and stick to it. Parents should include their child in making this decision. Children should know that a certain time every day is reserved for studying and doing homework. The best time is usually not right after school as most children benefit from time to unwind first. Even if your child does not have homework, use the time to review the day's lessons, read for pleasure, solve some puzzles or work on an upcoming school project.

### 2. Set up a homework friendly area.

Children often find it helpful to study in the same place every night where supplies and materials are close at hand. Try to avoid using your child's bedroom. It should be a quiet, well-lit place with few distractions. Make sure that the television is turned off and that if music is requested, try some relaxing classical music.

### 3. Use checklists

Help your child get into the habit of using checklists for keeping track of homework assignments. Schools often provide a homework diary so use this to check homework assignments. Once assignments have been completed, crossing off items will help children feel a sense of

accomplishment. Some children prefer using a calendar or even a personal digital assistant (PDA) to keep track of due dates and to help prioritise assignments.

#### 4. Prioritise homework assignments

Before beginning a homework session, encourage your child to number the assignments in the order in which they are to be completed. Some children prefer to start with one that's not too long or difficult. Others prefer saving the easy ones for last and starting on the longest or hardest assignments. Be sure to set realistic goals and stop along the way to check progress.

5. Have necessary supplies, such as pens, pencils, paper, scissors, glue, dictionary and a calculator, available and in working order before they begin.

#### 6. Set a time limit.

If there's a lot of homework to be done, allow for breaks and provide a snack and/or play time. If the amount of time spent on homework seems unreasonable for several nights in a row, you may want to contact the teacher to explain your child's difficulties. If your child is having genuine difficulty, try to help them but don't exceed the allotted time.

#### 7. Check over homework assignments.

Make sure your child does their own work; it is not your homework. Take time to review your child's homework with them, offering praise and encouragement. Your child should try to find and correct their own mistakes. Making mistakes is part of the learning process and it's important that they understand this. However your child's teachers might prefer to see uncorrected work to guide their lessons in class. Being familiar with your child's work will help you identify areas of strength and weakness. Once homework is done, immediately place it into a book bag or schoolbag to ensure it gets back to school on the due date.

#### 8. Set a good example.

Take the opportunity to do a puzzle, read a book or newspapers while your child studies. Remember you are trying to instil a lasting love of learning for your children. Children are more likely to follow their parents' examples than their advice.

#### 9. Use the weekend to get ahead.

If your child has a project due soon, have them set aside some time to work on it, even if that means during a weekend. They will have a head start and will feel less pressure by not leaving it until the last minute.

#### 10. Go along to Parents' Evenings

You are in a partnership with the school. Be sure you understand the goals that the teachers have set for the class and, in particular for your child. If you don't understand the teaching methods the teachers are using in the classroom, ask the teachers to explain these.



## 11. Take your child's struggles seriously

Try not to display concern about your child's schoolwork or homework. If you notice your child is struggling please discuss this with your child's teachers. This is particularly important in the early years when children are learning how to read and comprehend. Early intervention works and will save your child from falling behind in school. Some children have trouble seeing the board or hearing the teacher. Others might need an evaluation for a learning problem or attention disorder, while uncommon, it is best that such problems are identified early.

## 12. Give your child praise

Praise your child for successfully completing homework. Build their self-esteem by displaying their work on the refrigerator or on a display board. Everyone responds well to praise.

## 13. Find a tutor

For many parents, finding a tutor is another way to offer additional academic support for their child. In Scotland alone there are 28 Kip McGrath Education Centres with fully qualified teachers offering professional tuition for children at all standards whether they need to catch up, keep up or get ahead. The Ayr Centre is owned and run by **Liz McKay**, a fully qualified **Secondary Maths teacher** with over 30 years experience of teaching children in schools in **Ayrshire**. Liz is supported by her team of Primary and Secondary tutors.

# Build a brighter future

Kip McGrath Education Centres is currently the largest international provider of face to face tuition, using only qualified and experienced teachers.

The first Kip McGrath Education Centre opened its doors in 1974 with the founding principle; "any child can learn if they are taught properly". A leader in the marketplace, we have history of helping children and an international reputation as a trusted and innovative provider of quality supplementary education.

Professional and affordable tutoring programs are available for students of all ages and levels in maths, reading, spelling, comprehension and English at more than 650 centres operating in 20 countries around the world.

