

## Solving the Most Common Homework Problems

In spite of all the steps you've taken, it isn't uncommon for specific homework problems to still arise. Don't worry. The goal of the following pages is to give you specific solutions to these problems that you can begin to use right away. By helping your child solve these problems now, you will prevent them from becoming more serious later.

**First, Pinpoint the Problem** As you read the problems listed below, check the one(s) that applies to your child.

- A. My child does not do his or her best work.
- B. My child's homework seems difficult to do.
- C. My child fails to bring assignments home.
- D. My child takes all night to do homework.
- E. My child will not do homework on his/her own.
- F. My child waits until the last minute to finish assignments.
- G. My child will not do homework if I'm not home.

### Then, Take Action

Take a look at the suggestions presented. Try the solution that you feel will work with your child.

**PROBLEM A: *My child does not do his or her best work.***

- a. Often children don't do their best work because they are rushing through homework in order to

play, text, or watch TV. Take away this incentive by instituting a required **Daily Homework Time.**

Tell your child that he or she must stay in the study area for the *entire* Daily Homework Time. If homework is completed before Daily Homework Time is over, your child must remain in the study area and continue to work. Options may be reading for pleasure, going over spelling words, etc.

- b. Have your child fill out a Quality Control Checklist. Take a look at your child's work and make a list of those areas that need attention. For example:

\_\_\_\_ I followed directions

\_\_\_\_ I did my work neatly

\_\_\_\_ I checked for mistakes

\_\_\_\_ I corrected my mistakes

\_\_\_\_ I am proud of my work

When your child checks everything off, give lots of praise.

- c. Ask your child's teacher to send a note home to inform you when a well-done assignment is turned in by your child. Share the good news with your child and let him/her know how impressed you and the teacher are with the improvement.

**PROBLEM B: *My child's homework seems difficult to do.***

- a. Determine whether or not your child is able to do the work. If he or she makes a genuine effort and is still unable to do the work, offer to help. Be careful not to do the homework for your child.
- b. Sometimes children simply need a bit of coaxing. If you've looked your child's work over and are confident she can do it, stand by for a moment or two and give some encouraging words about doing your best work. Perhaps break the assignment down into smaller chunks and offer suggestions on how to complete one or two of these small steps. Then, explain to your child that you have confidence he/she can do the rest and then leave him alone to do so. At the end of Daily Homework Time, check the work and praise for a job well done.
- c. If your child still can't do the work even with your help, or if you are unable to help your child, contact the teacher. Express your concerns and work with the teacher to best help your child.

**PROBLEM C: *My child fails to bring assignments home.***

- a. Take away your child's incentive to "forget" homework by insisting on Daily Homework Time. Your child won't be as likely to leave work at school if he or she knows that time will be spent on academic work whether homework is brought home or not.
- b. Make good use of the assignment book. Explain that this book is to be used daily to write down all assignments. When no assignments are given, they are to write that down also. The key here is that your child learns to make a habit of writing down all daily assignments so you can follow up at home.
- c. Make sure your child knows that it is his/her responsibility to bring home the necessary books and papers for assigned work. If an assignment is forgotten, have your child phone a friend or classmate to get the assignment.
- d. Tape a note onto your child's binder or pin a note into the backpack which reads, "Remember homework!"

**PROBLEM D: *My child takes all night to do homework.***

- a. Go over the Daily Homework time schedule with your child. Let him/her know that, just as it's important to start homework on time, it's important to finish it on time also. Reward your child with a star for every night he/she completes homework on time. When five stars have been earned, reward this effort with a special treat.
- b. Plan a favorite activity for you and your child to do together after homework is completed (bake cookies, watch a show, play a game). Half an hour of 1:1 time with you may be plenty of motivation for your child.
- c. Have your child do homework in order of difficulty, starting with the hardest assignment first. Saving the easiest for last will help your child gain momentum while working.
- d. If your child continues to linger through homework, check for distractions. First, look around the study area. Is it well lit? Are there noises coming in from other rooms or the street? Try to eliminate distractions. Next, talk with your child to see if they are preoccupied with a problem.

**PROBLEM E: *My child won't do homework on his own.***

- a. Give your child 5-10 minutes of your undivided attention before Daily Homework Time. Then explain to your child that you both have things to do and that after homework time is over, you can both get back together and talk about what you've done.
- b. Place three pencils on your child's desk. Explain that he must learn to work on his own, and may ask only three questions. For each question asked, you will take a pencil away. If at the end of homework time there is at least one pencil left, he may have a reward.
- c. Anytime you find your child working independently, give praise. Explain that you're very proud that he's learning to be so independent.
- d. Help your child only after he or she has attempted to do the work on his or her own. Then, only help with small parts of the assignment, just to get your child off and running. Once you see that your child has the hang of it, let her know that you won't be back to help until this particular assignment has been completed.

**PROBLEM F: *My child waits until the last minute to complete long-term projects***

- a. As the teacher for a schedule that shows specific completion dates.
- b. Go over the project with your child when he/she first receives it. Help your child understand that in order to do this type of work, she must plan each step and each step must be completed before the next step can start. Work with your child so that an understanding develops that not all homework can be done in one sitting on one night.
- c. Give your child lots of praise and positive recognition when each step is completed on time. When the entire project is finished, let him/her know how proud you are that he/she was able to tackle such a big assignment.

**PROBLEM G: *My child won't do work unless I'm there***

- a. Explain to your child that you will be calling them on the phone before, during, and after Daily Homework Time. Let your child know that you will be checking in to offer help and motivation, but that these calls will be short and to the point because you both have to get back to work.
- b. Have your child leave completed homework out for you to check when you get home. This puts him/her on notice that you will be looking at the assignments and checking to see that they are completed.
- c. Find a "Study Buddy" for your child, someone he/she can call if help is needed and you're not there—a relative, close friend, babysitter who might be willing and able to assist your child when problems arise.
- d. Offer incentives. Let your child know that if the homework is complete when you get home, you can both spend some time together. Other incentives might be that if homework is completed all week, your child may choose a special reward.