



Helping your Child with Disabilities with Homework

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK

Research shows that when parents become involved in their children's schoolwork, the children do better in school. One way you can be involved is by helping your child with homework.

Teachers have long used homework to provide additional learning time and to strengthen study and organizational skills.

For students with disabilities, homework may be especially challenging. Your child may have significant attention or organization issues, or s/he may have difficulty with the way homework assignments are given. A lack of communication between home and school about the homework can be at the root of the problems or, sometimes, children need special assistance in order to complete the assignments. It is important for parents and teachers to work together to help build good habits and to develop a system that works for an individual child. The results will be good homework and study habits that will help your child have good work habits as an adult.

Special Homework Tips for Parents of Children with Disabilities

1) **Communication:**

Communication is an essential part of successful homework. Teachers and parents of students with disabilities should set up a clear and effective way of sharing information with one another and with the student about homework policies, expectations and concerns.

- a) Use technology such as answering machines, texting, or email for communication.
- b) Request teacher monitoring of assignment books.

2) **Organization:**

Many students need help with organizational skills to be successful with homework.

- a) Establish a daily routine and schedule. Be sure to give your child time for a snack and wind-down time after school before s/he starts on homework.
- b) Limit distractions (tv, phone, loud music) and arrange a quiet place for homework.
- c) Organize a consistent work space with needed items (pencils, pens, paper, etc.) where homework is done each day.
- d) Use a calendar or day planner/assignment book that has been developed with input from the teacher to organize and keep track of daily assignments.
- e) Develop a homework schedule that allows enough time for completion of assignments.
- f) Supervise to make sure that completed work is put in the notebook or backpack when completed and that it leaves home the next morning. It is very common for students with learning issues to fail to turn in their finished work. It is very frustrating to know your child struggled to do the work, but did not get credit! You may want to arrange, with the teacher, a system for collecting the work immediately upon arrival at school.

3) **Guidance.**

Some students only need help getting started on their assignments and some guidance to keep them on track.

- a) Read the directions together, do the first items together, observe as your child does the next problem/item on his or her own and then leave the room.
- b) Guide, but don't correct. It is helpful to point out errors on the homework. If your child needs help, offer ideas that can help sort out the problem, but don't give the answers.



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- c) Give breaks if needed. If the child has several sheets of homework or one sheet of a particular subject that causes your child stress then break up the homework session. Have the child complete some of the homework and then let him/her take a break and engage in an activity that relaxes them. Set a timer and make sure the child knows how much free time s/he will have.

4) **Accommodations.**

If a child uses accommodations in the classroom, they may be needed for homework as well. The child might need scaffolded assignments or alternative response formats (e.g., allow the student to audiotape an assignment rather than handwriting it). Homework accommodations can be written in your child's (Individualized Education Plan) IEP and be followed by all of your child's teachers.

5) **Assistive Technology.**

Devices that are used at school may be needed at home. Talk with the IEP team about how best to accommodate your child's technology needs for homework. Parents should be trained on how to assist their children with the devices during homework time.

6) **IEP Goals.**

Include goals and objectives about homework completion in your child's IEP. Make sure that all assistive technology, supplementary supports, accommodations etc. are included.

Possible Homework Adaptations and Accommodations

Listed below are just some of the things that might be included on your child's IEP to assist him/her in becoming more successful and independent in doing homework. Discuss with the IEP team any other things that you think your child might need.

- 1) Allow alternative response formats (e.g., audio taping rather than writing an assignment).
- 2) Adjust the length of assignments by breaking longer assignments into manageable segments.
- 3) Provide a peer tutor.
- 4) Provide learning tools (e.g. calculators).
- 5) Adjust grading standards.
- 6) Give fewer assignments.
- 7) Provide an extra set of textbooks for homework use.

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia
770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038
www.p2pga.org

Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports
404 656-3963 or 800-311-3627 and ask to be transferred to Special Education
http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx

Additional resources: Contact the **Special Education Director** for your school system.