

Sample Parent Resource Sheet:  
What to Do When Your Child Does Not Do Her Best Work

Solving Homework Problems

What to Do When Your Child  
Does Not Do Her Best Work

If your child rushes through homework to talk on the phone, use the computer, watch TV, or get together with friends, state that it is not okay to do incomplete or sloppy work. Use these tips to help your child take responsibility for doing homework well.

1. Schedule daily homework time.  
Allot a time each day when all other activities stop and your child must go to her study area and do homework.
2. Tell your child what you expect.  
Say, "I know you can do a better job. I want you to take your time and do the best work you can. Sloppy work is not acceptable."
3. Praise your child for work well done.  
Say, "Great job getting your homework done," or "I like how neat your paper looks. Keep up the good work." Praise is the best way to encourage continued best efforts.
4. Institute mandatory homework time.  
This means that your child must use the entire scheduled daily homework time for homework or other academic activities whether or not homework is completed. For example, if 2 hours are allotted each night, the entire time must be spent on homework or, if homework is finished, on reading, reviewing textbooks, or practicing math. Your child will learn that nothing can be gained by rushing through homework and will be encouraged to slow down and do a better job.
5. Provide additional incentives.  
To encourage your child to continue good work, give a reward or a point toward a prize each time homework is completed. For example, when five points are earned, reward your child with an extra privilege.
6. Contact the teacher.  
If after trying these steps your child is still not doing her best work, you must work together with the teacher to improve your child's performance.

**Sample Parent Resource Sheet:  
What to Do When Your Child Refuses to Do Homework**

**Solving Homework Problems**

**What to Do When Your Child  
Refuses to Do Homework**

When your child would rather battle with you than do homework, it's time to set firm limits. Your child may openly refuse to do homework or lie to you or the teacher about why it hasn't been done. You must make it clear that choosing not to do homework is choosing not to enjoy certain privileges.

**1. State clearly how you expect homework to be completed.**

Say, "I expect you to do all of your homework every night. Under no circumstances will I tolerate your refusing to do your assignments."

**2. Back up your words with action.**

Say, "You can choose either to do your homework or to lose these privileges: You will not leave this house, You will not watch TV, listen to music, or use the telephone. You will sit here until all of your homework is done. The choice is yours." Stick to your demands. It may take your child several days to realize that you mean business.

**3. Praise your child when homework is completed.**

Say, "You've been getting all of your homework done. You should feel proud of yourself."

**4. Use a homework contract.**

This motivator is a written, signed agreement between you and your child that states a reward or a point toward a prize will be earned for each day that homework is brought home and completed. (The younger the child, the more quickly the prize is earned.)

**5. Contact the teacher.**

If problems continue, request that additional discipline be provided at school for incomplete assignments. Your child will learn that the school is supporting your efforts.

## **Sample Parent Resource Sheet: What to Do When Your Child Fails to Bring Home Assignments**

### **Solving Homework Problems**

#### **What to Do When Your Child Fails to Bring Home Assignments**

When your child continually fails to bring home assigned homework, take action.

- 1. State that you expect all homework assignments to be brought home.**  
Say, "I expect you to bring home all assigned work and all the books you need to complete it. If you finish your homework at school, I expect you to bring it home so that I can see it."
- 2. Work with the teacher to make sure you know what homework has been assigned.**  
Students can use a weekly assignment sheet to record assignments. Ask the teacher to check and sign the sheet. When your child completes the assignments, you sign the sheet and have your child return it to the teacher.
- 3. Provide praise and support when assignments are brought home.**  
Say, "It's great to see that you remembered to bring home all of your homework. I knew you could do it."
- 4. Institute mandatory homework time.**  
If your child still fails to bring home assignments, institute mandatory homework time, which requires spending a specific amount of time on academic activities (reading, reviewing textbooks or class notes) whether homework is brought home or not. When students learn that they are expected to study in any case, they will be encouraged to bring home their assignments.
- 5. Use a homework contract.**  
This motivator is a written, signed agreement between you and your child that states a reward or a point toward a prize will be earned for each day that homework is brought home and completed. (The younger the child, the more quickly the prize is earned.)
- 6. Contact the teacher.**  
If the forgetfulness continues, discuss with the teacher the possibility of imposing loss of privileges at school. Your child will know that you and the school are working together to ensure responsible behavior.

## Sample Parent Resource Sheet: What to Do When Your Child Takes All Night to Finish Homework

### Solving Homework Problems

#### What to Do When Your Child Takes All Night to Finish Homework

Some children spend hours on homework when it's not necessary. They may stop and start and be easily distracted. In cases like this, here's what to do.

1. Schedule daily homework time.  
Allot a time each day when all other activities stop and your child must go to his study area and do homework. Say, "I expect you to get all of your homework done during this time. Your taking all evening to do it must stop."
2. Make sure homework is done in a quiet area.  
If your child has been working in a distracting environment, make sure there is no TV, stereo, or interruptions by siblings. If necessary, you may need to change the location of the study area.
3. Give praise and support when homework is done on time.  
Say, "I am really pleased to see that you got your homework done on time. I'm so proud of you."
4. Give additional incentives when appropriate.  
To help develop the habit of completing homework on time, play Beat the Clock. First determine how long homework should take.
  - Then, at the start of homework time, set a timer. If homework is finished by the bell, a special privilege is earned.
5. Back up your words with action.  
Say, "You can either do your homework during daily homework time or lose these privileges during that time: You will not leave this house. You will not watch TV, listen to music, or use the telephone. You will sit here until all of your homework is done. The choice is yours." Stick to your demands. It may take your child several days to realize that you mean business.

## Sample Parent Resource Sheet: What to Do When Your Child Will Not Do Homework on His Own

### Solving Homework Problems

#### What to Do When Your Child Will Not Do Homework on His Own

If your child will not do homework without your assistance, first make sure that he is making a genuine effort to try to work alone. Follow these steps.

1. State that you expect your child to work alone.  
Say, "I expect you to do homework without my help. I will not sit with you or do your work for you, but I will be available for questions every so often."
2. Schedule daily homework time.  
Allot a time each day when all other activities stop and your child must go to his study area and do homework. Say, "I expect you to get all of your homework done during this time."
3. Give praise and support when your child works independently.  
When you see your child working alone, say, "I am really proud of the way you are doing all of this work on your own. I knew you could do it."
4. Help your child build confidence.  
If you think your child feels that homework is too much to handle on his own, "chunk" the assignments by breaking them  
• down into smaller chunks that can be handled successfully.
5. Offer help only after your child has genuinely tried to solve the problem independently.  
There will be times when something is really too hard for your child to understand, but make sure that you don't step in until he has made a sincere effort to solve the problem at least twice.
6. Back up your words with action.  
If the problem persists, tell your child that at the end of homework time he must sit in his study area until the work is finished.  
*Don't* let tears, anger, or indifference manipulate you. Relying on you for help will only lead to greater dependence instead of the confidence you are trying to build.

## **Sample Parent Resource Sheet: What to Do When Your Child Waits Until the last Minute to Finish Assignments**

### **Solving Homework Problems**

#### **What to Do When Your Child Waits Until the Last Minute to Finish Assignments**

If your child puts off starting long-range assignments and goes into a frenzy at the last minute, use the following suggestions.

- 1. State that you expect long-range projects to be planned and completed responsibly.**  
Say, "I will not tolerate your putting off projects until just before they are due. This waiting until the last minute must stop."
- 2. Ask the teacher for a long-range planner.**  
This planning sheet will help your child learn how to break down a large project into small, easily completed tasks over the period of time given for the project. Help your child fill in the steps on the planner.
- 3. Give praise and support for your child as each step is completed.**  
Say, "You finished reading the book by the date you scheduled. Keep up the good work."
- 4. Give additional motivators when appropriate.**  
If your child needs additional motivation to complete a project on time, institute a system that allows her to earn a point toward a reward or privilege each time a step is completed according to the schedule.
- 5. Back up your words with action.**  
If the problem persists, impose restrictions. If your child fails to complete a step on the planner on time, take away a privilege (watching TV, using the phone) until the step is completed. Unless you set limits, your child is not going to believe that you mean business.

## Sample Parent Resource Sheet: What to Do When Your Child Will Not Do Homework If You Aren't Home

### Solving Homework Problems

#### What to Do When Your Child Will Not Do Homework If You Aren't Home

If your child will not do homework unless a parent is home, take these steps.

- 1. State that you expect homework to be done whether you are home or not.**
- 2. Schedule daily homework time.**

Allot a time each day when all other activities stop and your child must go to his study area and do homework.
- 3. Tell the person responsible for child care about daily homework time.**

The caregiver should know when and where your child is expected to do homework.
- 4. Monitor your child when you're not home to make sure homework is done.**

Telephone your child, if possible, at the beginning and at the end of daily homework time to make sure the homework is getting done.
- 5. Give praise and positive support.**

Praise your child for work done in your absence. "You're doing a great job on homework when I am not here. Keep it up!"
- 6. Use additional incentives, if necessary**

A homework contract can help your child develop the habit of doing homework without your supervision. It should state: that homework will be done whether you are home or not; the amount of time for completing homework; the number of points earned for completing homework; the reward earned when a certain number of points is attained.
- 7. Backup your words with action.**

Say, "You can do homework during daily homework time or you can choose not to have privileges. You will sit there until homework is finished." Make sure you follow through.
- 8. Contact the teacher.**

If the problem persists, discuss the possibility of imposing loss of privileges at school so that your child knows you and the teacher are working together to help your child behave responsibly.

## Involving Parents in the Homework Process

### Reminders

#### DO

Let parents and students know exactly how you will deal with homework. Send home your homework policy before you give the first homework assignment.

Give parents tips for helping their children do homework.

Send home positive homework notes to parents.

Assign a homework study buddy for each student.

Let parents know about upcoming tests.

Plan your homework when you plan your classroom lessons.

Require students to write down all homework assignments in an assignment book or on an assignment sheet.

Make sure that all your homework assignments are appropriate to the age and skill level of the student.

Make sure that students understand how to do each homework assignment. Explain the assignment before students go home.

Collect and comment on all homework. Students must know that you are paying attention to the work they do.

Comment in a positive way on how each student did on an assignment, whenever possible.

#### DON'T

Don't give last-minute, thrown-together homework assignments.

Don't give homework assignments that have no objective.

Don't give assignments that bear no connection to lessons.

Don't expect students to know how to study unless they've been taught study skills.

Don't overload students with homework. Be sensitive to the realities of their lives.

Don't give only drill and practice homework.



**Involving Parents in the Homework Process**  
**Checklist**

Refer to this checklist as you plan your homework program.

**HAVE YOU:**

Sent home a homework policy to all parents?

Sent home homework and study skills tips to all parents?

Planned to teach homework skills to your students?

Set goals for yourself for sending home positive homework notes to parents?

Set goals for yourself for sending home positive homework notes to students?

Planned to assign family learning activities throughout the year?