

10 Easy Ways to Make Homework Time Smoother

1. Create a “homework hub”

- Place all items that are typically needed during homework time in a shower caddy or basket. This will cut down on the “where is the ____?!” drama.
- Some things to consider putting in your homework hub:
 - i. Writing utensils and erasers
 - ii. Ruler
 - iii. Lined, white, graphing, and colored paper
 - iv. Scissors
 - v. Stapler
 - vi. Glue sticks
 - vii. Markers and colored pencils
 - viii. Handy charts like multiplication or conversion charts

2. Select a designated homework area with your child(ren).

- Each child works better in different environments. Help your child pick a place that suits their needs (quiet, natural light, etc.).
- When your child works on their homework in the same place every day- the routine will lend itself to increased productivity.

3. Make sure your child is full before starting homework.

- Stock up on some healthy snacks that your child can grab before starting their homework. Your child will be able to concentrate better with a full belly.

4. Take frequent homework breaks.

- Research suggests that a child can focus their age plus one minute. (For an eight year old that would be nine minutes.)
- If your child has a hard time focusing for long periods of time, try not to force them too far past their natural attention span.
- Set a timer for a set number of minutes that your child can concentrate. When the timer goes off, have your child take a quick one-minute break that involves movement such as dancing, jumping, twirling etc.

10 Easy Ways to Make Homework Time Smoother

5. Use resources.

- When you or your child are unsure how to complete an assignment, use online resources to figure out the answer. Some of my favorite resources are:
 - i. Math and Science: Khan Academy
 - ii. Grammar: Grammargirl

6. Have a homework “time out” plan.

- It is completely common for either child or parent to become frustrated during homework time for one reason or another. Talk with your child about what everyone should do when this happens.
- Figure out the amount of time that is needed for a “time out” to let everyone cool down, as well as what everyone will be doing to cool down during that time.
- Having a “time out” plan can keep the break from becoming too long, and keep both parties from being frustrated for extended periods of time.

7. Limit electronic distractions.

- Designate a “home” for phones, tablets, and other electronics that might distract your child during homework time. The “home” should put the device out of sight and earshot.
- Even if your child does not pick up their device during homework time, the notifications or alerts can take away concentration for little moments that add up over time.

8. Prioritize — do the most difficult assignment first.

- Have your child tackle the biggest or most challenging assignments first while they still have energy.
- Leaving the easier assignments for last will help your child coast to the finish line instead of having to pedal uphill.

9. Make a to-do list of assignments.

- A to-do list of assignments can help your child fully understand what needs to be done that day, and in what order to do it.
- Crossing off items on the list creates a sense of accomplishment and momentum that can help with homework motivation.

10. Plan out big projects with your child.

- Avoid last minute project panic by writing project dates on the family calendar.
- Work with your child to plan out the steps of the project and assign dates for when your child will complete the steps.