

## OVERCOMING HOMEWORK BARRIERS: TIPS FOR PARENTS



**PROBLEM:** The student does not write down assignments or does not bring assignments home from school.  
☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** Student is given an assignment book, such as a small notebook, or a daily/weekly homework planner. A special homework folder for assignments may help students be more organized. Parents check the student's assignment book or planner every day. If the parents have difficulty understanding the assignment, they should call the child's teacher for clarification.

**PROBLEM:** The student completes the homework, but it is often sloppy and full of mistakes.

☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** Parents make certain that student does not rush and that the student spends time checking his/her own work. Parents can get students into the habit of proofreading. In one technique, the parent looks over the assignment then says to the student, "I have found two spelling mistakes on this page. Let's see if you can find them."

**PROBLEM:** The student is distracted by younger siblings, television, video games, the internet, loud music, or people talking.

☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** The parents and student should designate a specific "homework time" for each day in a distraction free area in the home. While the student works on homework, parents and young siblings engage in quiet activities.

**PROBLEM:** The student puts off doing homework until the last minute, so there is not enough time to complete the assignment or the student is too tired to concentrate.

☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** An earlier homework time will likely be beneficial, for example, immediately after returning from school. It is harder for many children to do homework once they are in "relaxation mode." If a student attends an after school program, parents should check with the program's director to see if there is a set time and place for studying.



**PROBLEM:** The student has many scheduled after school activities and is too busy to complete assignments.

☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** Parents recognize that time management is an acquired skill, and it may not be possible to do everything. Students must prioritize their activities with school work being their first priority.

**PROBLEM:** The student does not have the tools necessary to do homework, such as writing utensils, dictionary, paper, ruler, calculator, etc.

☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** The parents create a "homework box" that contains supplies for doing assignments. Parents can ask teachers, parent program coordinators, or the principal if supplies could be borrowed from, or provided by, the school.



**PROBLEM:** The student frequently gets stuck on difficult problems or does not understand the material.

☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** The purpose of homework is to reinforce skills already learned at school. If the student does not understand how to do an assignment, parents and teachers need to address the student's academic needs. It is helpful for parents to be available during the scheduled homework time, or at some time later that day, to provide encouragement. It is recommended that parents ask students about their assignments, make sure the student comprehends the tasks, and when possible, supervise the student through the first few parts of the assignment. Parents should not, however, do the assignment for the students. When necessary, parents should redirect the students to their textbook or notes where they are likely to find helpful information.

**PROBLEM:** The student has difficulty focusing for long periods of time.

**POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** Parents can help students break daunting task into doable chunks. One way to do this is for the parent and student to agree on a schedule of breaks, for example, a 10-minute break after the student completes 10 math problems.

**PROBLEM:** The student completes the homework, but it never seems to make it into the teacher's hands.

☆ **POSSIBLE SOLUTION:** The parents and student work together to identify what is going wrong. Parents can help the student create a system for getting the work returned to school, for example, having a special folder for completed assignments.