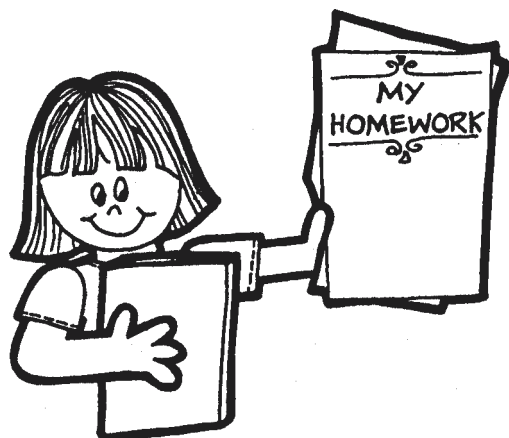
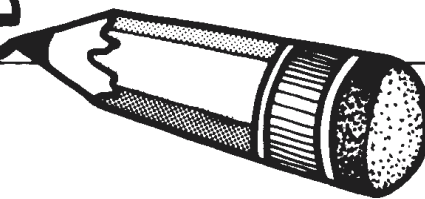


Parenting Pipeline

*A newsletter for parents of second-grade children
from Iowa State University Extension*



Helping With Homework

“Dad! Mom! I have homework tonight!”

As a parent, how do you react? Do you immediately feel a headache coming on, or do you think of this as your chance to share a few minutes of private time with your child?

If you choose to take an active interest in the homework, you will enjoy:

- exploring areas of your child’s school world
- visiting about the day’s activities
- getting a glimpse of your child’s learning patterns and abilities

Spending time together on homework shows the child that you value school and learning. Sit down and review the assignment; then check the progress

when she is done. Have your child tell you what she did and why. This will give the child a chance to work through the problem solving again. Parents should not give answers or do work for children, but your active interest will help your child get positive results. And knowing what your child is studying will help you explain what is learned in school and how it relates to your family life and to the world.

Young children are usually proud to have homework. As they progress into higher grades, they may find homework less appealing because it interferes with more attractive activities, like being with friends. Set the stage now for homework.

Set aside a time and a place for homework. The kitchen table right before or after dinner is a favorite homework scene for many families.

Be careful not to bribe your child. Homework is a natural part of being a student. If you make it a priority, your child will do the same.

Science experiments are often a child’s first homework. A parent may need to help the child obtain supplies and do simple experiments at home. These may be reported on in school. Children are more interested in the world about them if they can





contribute. Children learn best from active involvement with their learning. Reading a text or hearing a lecture is a part of learning, too, but not as effective at this age as the involvement process.

Spelling is another common homework assignment. Five minutes of spelling each night can help a child master this skill. Help the child identify spelling words in conversations by making an effort to use them. Be sure to post the weekly successes on the refrigerator or bulletin board to show your interest and pride. Do not expect perfection. Expect a best effort.

Reading to children or having them read to you aloud is a painless way to improve pronunciation and develop voice control. Children learn what is important by watching their parents. Encourage them to read and let them see you read. Set aside a regular reading time — without the TV! It may be a Sunday afternoon or after-dinner activity for the whole family.



Parents' active interest in homework does not ensure a straight A student. Each child has different abilities. Talk to your children about their work and let them know you want them to do their best, whatever that may be. Show that you love them regardless of how they do. Respect their individual levels of development and capabilities.

Some teachers and schools do not use A-B-C grades for this age. Grades are not the focus at this age. Not all children can get A's, B's and C's, but all can get the top marks in effort and behavior. You could be surprised to find that simply providing parental support can improve grades. Most teachers welcome your questions and interest in your child's progress.

Visits, telephone calls and notes to the teacher will help keep lines of communication open between you, your child and the world of school. Volunteering to help when parental input is requested will also make you more familiar with the school scene. It will demonstrate the importance of school activities to your child.

A child's values are reinforced through a parent's example. Valuing education can be an important outcome of your interest and involvement.

Adapted for use in Iowa from Parenting Pipeline, North Dakota State University Extension Service, by Donna K. Donald, family life field specialist, Iowa State University Extension.

This newsletter is published for families with second-grade children by Iowa State University Extension. For more information about parenting education, contact your local county extension office or access the Iowa State University Extension to Families website, www.extension.iastate.edu/families.

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