

Tips for Improving Homework and Study Skills

Homework and studying can be a source of stress for kids and parents alike. Having good study habits in place can reduce that stress:

1. Create a homework station.

It doesn't matter whether there's a space in your house set aside for homework or a portable homework station. Having a place to keep everything you need for homework can help prevent organization issues. Make sure the space has enough light and few distractions.

2. Use checklists.

There's something very rewarding about being able to cross a task off a checklist. Record assignments for the day, as you complete each one, cross it off the list.

3. Create a homework schedule.

A homework schedule can help you set a specific time for studying (and schedule in breaks between subjects). Find a time of day when you're able to concentrate and not in a hurry to get somewhere else. The homework schedule can also help you keep track of long-term assignments and upcoming tests. Use a large wall calendar to write down due dates and tests. Then you can work backward to add in study days before tests and break projects down into smaller chunks.

4. Choose and use a homework timer.

Homework timers are a great way to help keep on track if you are easily distracted. A timer can also give you a better sense of time. If you are distracted by sounds, a ticking kitchen timer may not be the ideal choice. Instead, try an hourglass timer or one that vibrates. There are also homework timer apps that you can program for each subject. And don't forget that your phone probably has a timer built right in, too!

5. Use a color-coding system.

Using colored dot stickers, highlighters, and colored folders and notebooks is a great (and inexpensive) way to keep organized. You can mark assignment due dates and test dates on the calendar with a sticker of the right color.

Before you file homework assignments and study guides in the appropriate notebook or folder, use a highlighter or sticker to mark the page with the right color. That way if the paper falls out, you will know what class it's for.

6. Mix it up a little.

For some students, studying is tough because you need to learn material in different ways. If you are having a hard time with a writing assignment, talk it through or act it out first—even if you have to be silly about it. You can even master new facts by setting them to music!