

## **HASSLE FREE HOMEWORK**

If your child is not doing his homework, or you are spending more time on his homework than **he/she** is, here are some tips:

1. Use the student agenda. Agendas are given to all students at the beginning of the year. If your student has lost theirs they may get another one in counseling office. Have them fill-in all assignments and scheduled commitments such as: dentist appointments, dinner, athletics, and don't forget "fun times" as well.
2. Be sure your student keeps their agenda book in the front of their binder.
3. Develop a mutual understanding of what homework is. Though he/she may claim that there is no homework on that day, please check you child's agenda, if there is no homework assigned in a class, ask your child to write "no homework" in the agenda so you know that he/she didn't forget. If your student doesn't have assigned homework, encourage reading ahead reviewing notes and worksheets, reworking math problems, or reading a book for pleasure as activities that can be done during the designated homework time. Seventh and eighth graders need to set aside ½-2 hours per evening, ninth graders need 3 hours.
4. Assist your child in choosing a distraction free work space, with good light, stocked with paper, pens, pencils, tape, hole punch, white out, sharpener, scissors, glue, ruler, stapler, index cards, dictionary, compass, protractor, calculator, atlas, thesaurus. He/she should not need to wander the house for anything.
5. Be available to answer questions, but avoid doing the work for your child or trying to be the teacher. If you do, you will be giving the subtle but very powerful message that he is not capable of doing it himself.
6. If your child is very dependent on your help, use encouragement and help him/her review. For example, say, "Let's start with the directions, please read them to me." Keep the ball in his/her court, but break the work into steps until he/she gains confidence.
7. Praise your child's efforts. "You have really tried hard! Good job! I'm delighted to see you studying so hard." "Eighty percent. Great improvement! Your hard work is paying off. I bet you feel good!"
8. Some students are motivated by incentives (rewards). Unfortunately, long range rewards don't always work because young people can't stay focused on a distant goal. Keep the rewards short range and tangible, e.g. an upcoming weekend, a special evening outing, an afternoon with a friend.
9. Think of your parenting in management terms. Don't over manage (pressure, nag) a motivated and capable student, as over control often produces resistance. Some students would rather fail than submit to parent control. Similarly, too much sympathy and too little direction for the unmotivated student can be

**disastrous. Know your child's abilities and attitudes and tailor your involvement with school work accordingly.**

**10. If your student has a history of poor school performance, don't "hang back," hope for the best, and then become furious when the grades come out. Act early and be a support for your student. Talk to your child's teachers and counselor to devise a proactive plan for realizing success.**

**(Adapted from: Curing the Homework Blues, by A. Miranda, district counseling department chair)**