

- ✓ Create a space for homework
- ✓ Help your child plan their studying
- ✓ Deal with exam stress



Helping your child with
**homework
and revision**

department for
education and skills

Parentline_{plus}

AT A GLANCE



Helping your child with homework and exam revision

- Take an interest in your child's schoolwork and give them plenty of encouragement and praise.
- Support your child in taking responsibility for organising and doing their own homework.
- Create a quiet space at home where your child can work without being disturbed.
- Help your child get as much access as possible to information through your local library and, if you have a computer at home, the internet.
- Help your child create a routine that works for them.
- Make a home study plan to help your child manage their homework or revision.
- If your child is taking an important exam or test, make sure they realise that you'll still love and value them if they fail.
- Make sure your child has fun, relaxes and gets plenty of sleep!

Did you know?

Children get better results when parents get involved in their schoolwork and help them to prepare for tests and exams.

Making homework easier for everyone

Tearing your hair out trying to get the kids to do their homework? Dreading the run-up to exams and important school tests? You're not alone.

Many households, especially those with children going to secondary school, are going through exactly the same thing. As a parent or guardian, it's only natural that you want your child to do well at school, which means getting that homework or revision done. But your child may have other ideas about how they want to spend the evening or weekend. Sound familiar?

There are things you can do to help make homework and revising for tests and exams easier for everyone. That's what this booklet is about. It will help you to:

- give your child encouragement and support, without having to do the homework yourself
- create the right environment for homework and revising to be done at home
- help your child establish a routine and manage their schoolwork
- help your child prepare for and take exams
- deal with any problems.

A little encouragement goes a long way

They may not show it, but most children like to feel their parents are interested in what they're doing at school. They thrive on encouragement, praise and understanding.

Taking an interest in your child's schoolwork doesn't mean you have to be able to do it for them. It means providing support and showing interest so they can do it for themselves. Even if you only see your child at weekends, you can still make a real contribution and help them progress.

Helping your child get down to homework and revision

- Make sure your child understands why homework and revising is important. Explain how it increases their knowledge and helps them to gain qualifications that will give them a better chance to get on when they are older.
- If your child wants to talk about their schoolwork, let them. It doesn't matter if you don't know about a particular subject, you can still help by listening. Discussing what they are doing helps them find their own answers.

- Try not to be too strict about homework and revising. If you feel positive and relaxed about it, your child may begin to feel that way too.
- Give your child the support they need to take responsibility for organising and doing their homework. For example, if it works for them to do it at a particular time in the evening, try to make sure they are not disturbed.
- Let your child know you have confidence in their abilities – don't forget to praise them when they work hard and do well.
- Do what you can to give your child access to information. Take them to the local library. And if you have a computer at home, see if you can get it linked to the internet.

Setting a routine and managing homework

Your child needs to learn how to manage their homework. Supporting them in this will help them to take responsibility for their own work, while learning valuable planning and time management skills.

Routines are important to children, so it may be worth helping your child to find one that suits them. For example, some children prefer to do their homework straight after school, while others like to 'unwind' first and do their homework later.

Many schools have a homework diary or planner where children write down what they have to do and when they have to hand it in. You may be asked to sign it, so check it every day if you can.

Making a 'home study' plan

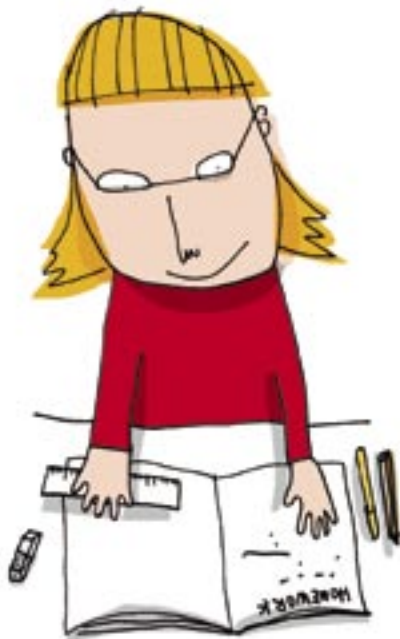
- Sit down with your child and go through the teacher's homework instructions, noting exactly what needs to be done and by when.
- Plan how long the homework will take.
- Split each homework period into 30-minute sessions.
- Make sure your child has a break between each session, especially if they are using a computer.
- Each session should start with tackling the parts your child finds most difficult.

Remember...

...everyone needs time to relax and have fun. Make sure your child has time to enjoy other activities – such as sport or seeing their friends – and gets enough sleep, even when they're revising for exams.

Practical tips

- Keep pens, pencils, calculators and dictionaries handy – and encourage your children to use them.
- Use everyday activities – like going to the shops – to help put learning into practice.
- Watch out for TV programmes and videos that have something to do with what your child is studying.
- Make sure children eat breakfast – it gives them energy to learn.
- Educational games, books and things to do on the internet can help make learning really enjoyable.



Creating the right environment

It's not always easy to create the perfect place where homework and revising can be done, especially if you have other children. The ideal space needs to:

- have a clear work surface
- have good lighting
- be quiet and free from interruptions.

Different children like to study in different ways. Some find it helps to have music playing, although you should try to restrict the use of television. Many children like to study alone, while others enjoy doing it with friends or family.

If you have other children or family members living at home, ask them to keep the noise down and not to interrupt your child while they are doing their homework.

No quiet space at home?

If you are pushed for space at home and your child finds it difficult to find a quiet corner where they can work, find out if the school runs a homework club. These are for children whose parents are still at work after school or who find it difficult to work at home.

Problems?

If your child is having problems, don't ignore them and hope they will go away. Instead, try these approaches:

- Put some time aside to sit down and listen to what your child has to say. Very often, all they need is a sympathetic ear and the chance to discuss their worries openly.
- If your child has problems with certain subjects at school, talk to the teacher and find out if they can get extra help.

Taking the heat out of revising for exams

Everyone gets stressed when someone at home is taking exams. To help you support your children through these testing times, we've combined some useful tips from Parentline Plus with more general advice.

Getting ready to take exams

- Arrange things around exam revision and try to get other children and family members to understand what's going on.
- Try not to put too much pressure on your child to do chores or to be more tidy.
- If your child loses their temper or gets moody, try to be tolerant. It's normal!

- Make sure your child has all the notes and books they need and encourage them to start re-reading. Try and work through a few sample questions with them.
- Help your child create a 'home study plan' for exam revision (see page 5). Then put it on the wall where you can both see it.
- Rather than offering children presents if they pass exams, it's better to encourage them to work for their own satisfaction.

- Go through a checklist with them to make sure they have everything they need.
- Send them off with the knowledge that you love and support them whatever the result of the exam.
- After each exam, let your child talk it through but then encourage them to let it go.
- Make sure they get plenty of sleep. They need it!

During exam time

- Reassure your child that if they fail an exam, they can always have another go. It's important that they understand they are not a failure, personally.
- Be as calm, as reassuring and as confident as you can. Give them what they need, whether it's a cup of tea or a shoulder to cry on.
- On exam days, encourage your child to eat breakfast and make sure they get to school on time.

When it's all over

Mark the end of exams with a celebration! Show your child that whatever the result, you value them and know they have done their best.




Want to find out more?

If you'd like to find more help for parents and guardians of school-age children, check out the following websites:

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/homeworkandrevisiontips
www.direct.gov.uk

Parentline Plus is a charity that offers a wide range of support to parents.

 **0808 800 2222**

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

The following websites provide more information on homework clubs:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/homework/homeworkresources

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/workingwithparents/resourcesforparents/

Can't get onto the internet at home?

Visit your local library which will have computers and internet access.

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