

The Homework Chain



Doing one's homework may be more complicated than you thought! Many parents don't realize that there are many steps involved in doing homework. As ADD/ADHD workshop leader and author John F. Taylor, Ph.D. points out, a student must complete all of the following steps in order to successfully complete a homework assignment. Mr. Taylor calls this series of steps "The Homework Chain." Parents can help by identifying and improving weak links in the chain.

- 1) Realize an assignment is being given
- 2) Understand *what* the assignment is
- 3) Record the assignment accurately
- 4) Understand exactly *how to do* the assignment
- 5) Remember to bring the correct books or other materials home
- 6) Actually arrive at home with those materials (not leave at a friend's house, etc.)
- 7) Begin homework and complete it in a reasonable time
 - ⇒ Manage interruptions (phone, doorbell, siblings)
 - ⇒ Prioritize work being done
 - ⇒ Identify if work needs to be done in a certain order
 - ⇒ Be able to access materials needed to complete the homework (computer, dictionary, calculator, pen or pencil, paper, etc.)
 - ⇒ Keep attention focused long enough to complete assignment
- 8) Check homework for completeness, accuracy, and neatness
- 9) Ask a parent to review it
- 10) Put completed homework in place (i.e. homework pocket in binder or backpack) so will remember it the next day
- 11) Take completed work to school
- 12) Arrive in class with homework (not left in parent's car, bus or locker)
- 13) Turn in homework



Parents can help their kids manage their homework assignments in a variety of ways. First, observe your child and see if you can discover the stronger and weaker links in their "homework chain"; this will tell you where to intervene. If you don't know what the problem is, make sure you talk to your child's teacher. Also don't forget to talk to your child: walk him through the steps he/she needs to do to fully complete his assignments, make sure he understands each step, and find out where he/she tends to have trouble. Then, with your child, figure out ways to help him/her strengthen that link.

For example, if he/she sometimes doesn't seem to know when an assignment is given or what the assignment is, then ask the teacher to write down his assignments or to get him a "study buddy" from his class. Or if your child does his/her homework but somehow seems to forget to take it to school, then establish a pocket in his/her backpack for all homework assignments, and check it with her each night before she goes to bed ensuring the homework is there. Part of your job as a parent is to watch for your child's strengths and weaknesses, applaud the strengths, and work with your child to figure out creative strategies that will help him/her learn how to improve their weak areas.



Who would have thought doing homework could be so difficult? And we are not even talking about the assignment itself! As we have seen, there is so much more involved in doing one's homework than just finishing the assignment!!!