

REPORT to PARENTS

RP 30:2

Practicing Good Study Habits

Although your children spend hours in school every week, the time they spend at home doing school-related work is just as important. By helping your children learn and practice good study habits, you'll do a lot to help them succeed in school.

Have a set time to settle down: By having the same start-time for homework every day, you avoid having daily battles about when it's time to hit the books. Many families have their kids start their studies as soon as they get home from school. Others wait until after dinnertime. The key is to have a routine and to stick to it.

Take a breather: Just like schools have recess, children need to have mini-breaks when they're working hard to complete homework or projects, or studying for tests. Come up with some five-minute break ideas that will appeal to your child—doing some stretches, playing with a pet, grabbing a glass of juice, etc. Every hour or half-hour (depending on your child's age and attention span), set a timer for five minutes and take a break. If it's been a particularly long study session, make it a 10-minute break. Just make sure, when the timer rings, that it's back to work, no questions asked (or no break next time!)

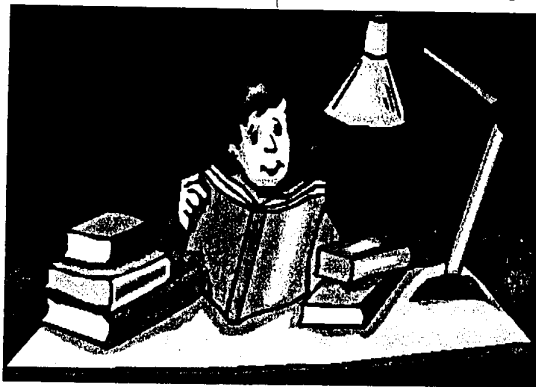
Create a study space: Every family needs the basic "ingredients" for studying and doing homework: a workspace with good lighting, the tools needed to complete the work (e.g., paper, pencils, markers, ruler), basic reference materials available either online or in print (dictionary, encyclopedia, and atlas), and a library card for special projects. Keeping all the materials in one area makes it faster and easier to get work done.

Turn off the distractions: Your child's study area should be distraction-free during study/homework

time. That means the TV, music, and computer games should be off—or out of view (and earshot). Kids may say they have no trouble studying with the TV or music on, but studies show that they have trouble retaining what they've learned.

Teach them responsibility: Children have to absolutely know that it is their responsibility to know what work has to be done and when it's due. And, of course, it's their job to make sure they get it done—correctly and on time.

Make day-by-day lists: Keep track of what needs to be done by creating a daily check-off list, and posting it in a prominent place (e.g., on the refrigerator or another public space). Write in things that are due the next day, as well as longer-term work (such as upcoming projects or tests). Make a big deal out of every item crossed off.



Get in the "flash card" habit: From the earliest grades on (all the way through college), students can benefit hugely

from using homemade flash cards to learn facts, spelling, and math. Not only does drilling with the cards help cement the knowledge, but the act of writing down the information on the cards in the first place (writing the answer on one side and the question, problem, or definition on the other) is a great learning tool.

Keep a watchful eye: Although you don't need to sit with your children while they do their homework, it helps to be nearby. They see that you're keeping track of whether they're daydreaming or working, they know you'll be available if they are stumped, and they learn that you care about what they're doing—that learning is important to you, and to them.