

NEWINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



PARENT GUIDE TO HOMEWORK GRADES K - 4

Introduction

Homework is an important component of your child's school experiences. It affords the opportunity for practice and review, and helps your child become an independent learner; an essential life skill. Homework extends your child's opportunities to learn and provides opportunities for families to be involved with their children's education, but helping children with homework is not always easy. If you are like most parents, you feel a mixture of emotions about homework, some positive and some negative. All parents, however, wonder if the homework routine they have set in place is an effective and positive one.

Homework assignments are based on the skills and concepts the learner needs to review, practice, expand and apply. Students learn to value the importance of homework during the primary grades. Support and guidance provided by the parent or guardian is a key to the child's attitude toward homework and quality of homework.

Why Homework is Assigned

Homework assignments are designed to support students' learning. There are several reasons for giving homework:

- Allows practice and reinforcement of concepts introduced in the classroom such as language arts activities, math facts, reading, responding to literature or information read.
- Prepares students for future class work - read an article in preparation for a class discussion.
- Expands class assignments.
- Improves skills in reading, mathematics, writing, etc.
- Develops efficient study skills and work habits.
- Enables students to complete short and long term projects.
- Assists students in completing assignments.
- Prepares students for tests and quizzes.
- Develops independent study skills.



Role of the Parent

The role of parent or guardian is key in developing the student's commitment to success in school. As a parent, you can help your child improve her/his performance in classes by ensuring that homework is understood and completed. Some basic strategies for success are:

- 1. Help your child find an appropriate and consistent environment for study.**
 - This place should be quiet, and have adequate lighting and a desk or writing surface.
 - Minimize distractions such as TV, stereo, telephone, etc.

- 2. Help your child set a routine.**
 - Set up a daily homework routine or schedule. This will let your child know that you have expectations for her/him regarding homework.

- 3. Help your child be prepared to do the work.**
 - Provide the appropriate supplies to support your child's homework completion - pencils, pens, erasers, paper, dictionary, calculators, glue stick, scissors, etc.

- 4. Help your child get organized.**
 - It is best to develop a list of assignments on a sheet of paper or review your child's assignment book. Help your child prioritize her/his homework so that longer assignments can be broken down into shorter sessions with a break in between.
 - A good rule of thumb is to have your child start and end with assignments s/he considers "easy".

- 5. Help your child get started.**
 - For many children getting started on homework seems like an overwhelming task. Try sitting with your child for the first 5 minutes to make sure s/he understands the homework and gets off to a positive start.

- 6. Help your child complete her/his homework.**
 - Make sure adequate short breaks are built in to your child's schedule.

7. How much help should a parent give?

- Review the assignment to make certain your child knows what to do.
- Your child should be able to complete at least 70 percent of the assignment independently.
- Look over the completed homework for neatness and accuracy. If you find errors or mistakes, give the paper back to your child asking him/her to please look the work over for errors or you can tell the child where the specific errors are; however do not provide the answers.

Take Home Reading Program

Reading is an important aspect of your child's learning. Parent involvement in their child's education is a factor that has proven to have a positive effect on a child's success. Reading "with" and "to" a child for 15 to 30 minutes each day increases that child's reading ability and contributes to school success.

Newington's take home reading program in kindergarten through second grade provides children and families with the components that contribute to reading success and make reading a life long habit. At each grade level the program has a unique name:

Kindergarten's backpack program is called **BEAR** - Books, Enjoy And Read

First grade's program is called **STAR** - Sit Together And Read

Second grade's program is called **WEB** - We Enjoy Books

We request that each family become involved in their child's learning to read through the take home reading program.



Quantity of Homework

The time required to complete homework varies with each child. Factors impacting the time needed to complete homework include:

- Grade level.
- Attitude and interest toward the assignment.
- Needs of the student.
- Competence in study skills.

Homework assignments are planned to meet individual needs. Students vary in skill and motivation from one area of learning to another and may spend more or less time than the guidelines state.

The amount of time and difficulty of homework assigned increases as students progress through the grades. The following guidelines are used by Newington's teachers and do not include daily at home reading time.



Grade level

Time and Expectations

Kindergarten

Formal homework is not usually assigned.

- Read aloud to and with your child approximately 10- 15 minutes each day.
- Participate in the kindergarten take home backpack program, **BEAR**.
- Discuss the school day.
- Encourage children to "read" signs and picture books, identify letters, name objects, count objects and share rhymes or songs learned in school.
- Visit the local library and parks with your child.

Grade 1

10 minutes, 4 to 5 days a week plus daily reading

- Formal homework is started as an expectation of the student's educational program. The emphasis is on reading aloud daily, mathematics and writing.
- Participate in the first grade take home reading program, **STAR**, by reading to or with your child each day.
- Parents are encouraged to:
 - Visit the library, children's museums or park with their child.
 - Read aloud to their child each day.
 - Listen to their child read aloud each day.
 - Provide assistance in the memorization of basic math facts (addition facts to sums of 18, subtraction facts to differences of 6).

- Parents are encouraged to:
 - Continue to offer their child visits the library, museums and science centers.
 - Encourage reading for pleasure and information.
 - Provide assistance in the memorization of basic math facts (multiplication and division facts of 10).

If your child is having difficulty completing homework assignments or is spending an excessive amount of time on homework, you may want to talk to your child's teacher. Together you can develop a homework completion plan.

Parent Requests for Make-up Work

In general, only those students absent two or more consecutive days will be eligible to receive schoolwork at home. Students absent less than two days will be provided appropriate time and guidance to complete the necessary schoolwork upon their return.

Requests for make-up work should come directly from the parent/guardian either by sending a note to the teacher or calling the office. Make-up work consists of material that has already been assigned to the class.

In the event a student is going to be away from school on vacation while school is in session, arrangements for make-up work are to be made with the classroom teacher prior to the child's absence.

Conclusion

Parents are their child's first teacher. As children begin school the attitudes of their parents toward learning help shape the student's commitment to learning. The partnership between home and school begins in kindergarten and continues through high school. High quality homework is key to developing responsibility, independence and success in learning. The support of the home in monitoring homework assignments is the most critical factor in the completion and quality of assignments.