
Homework

Ah, yes, that Monday through Thursday after school review activity...homework. Dreaded by some, homework can feel harrowing at worst or chore-like at best. Rarely do I meet a child who truly looks forward to it. Now that we have moved beyond the introductory phase of the year and routines and expectations are firmly established, I want to remind you about the advice I offered during open house during those times when homework seems harrowing.

1. Begin with the drill sheet.

Children must practice their basic facts. This is not considered “real” homework, and it is the family’s responsibility to ensure mastery. Those who haven’t mastered basic addition facts have to get caught up! The MA frameworks state that “by the end of second grade” children should be able to fluently “add and subtract within 20” so that by the end of third grade children can “[f]luently multiply and divide within 100.” At the very least I expect mastery of +1, +2, +9, +10, all the ways to make a ten (7+3, 2+8, etc.) doubles, doubles +1, and doubles -1 facts. Knowing these facts automatically enables a child to tackle more complex math. The drill sheet isn’t included in the 30 minutes and must be completed no matter how long it takes.

2. After completing the drill sheet, set a timer for 30 minutes, then stop if best-effort has been given.

Generally one language arts and one math page is assigned each night. Approximately fifteen minutes for each is reasonable.

3. Don’t read directions to your child.

Have your child read them to you then clarify them if necessary.

4. Encourage your child to complete whatever they can independently *before* asking for help.

Doing the homework with your child may be more harmful than helpful. Building confidence in independence is important. Do look it over when it’s complete then sign the student planner.

5. It’s OK to pass in unfinished work when it is too challenging.

However, a parent must sign the work itself to indicate that best-effort was given. Also, it is expected that whenever this happens your child attend the next extra help session without being asked by the teacher.

6. Reading is not part of the 20 to 30 minute homework requirement.

It is an additional across-the-grades requirement.

7. Reader response is only a 5 minute ordeal.

Children who struggle with this should think out loud before writing. It helps. Don’t spend time correcting grammar.