



Executive Function and Homework

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

What are executive functioning skills?

- ▶ Planning and organization
- ▶ Concentrating and managing mental focus
- ▶ Analyzing and processing information
- ▶ Managing emotions and behavior
- ▶ Remembering details
- ▶ Managing time
- ▶ Multitasking
- ▶ Solving problems

How to teach executive functioning skills

- ▶ Enforce accountability
- ▶ Write it down- post it notes, make lists
- ▶ Keep time- use clocks, timers, counters or apps
- ▶ Offer incentives- REWARDS!
- ▶ Hands on learning
- ▶ Give breaks!
- ▶ Practice praise- great job! You can do this!
- ▶ Exercise before starting work
- ▶ Sugar- drink lemonade or a sports drink
- ▶ Show compassion- show them where they went wrong and allow them to learn from their mistakes
- ▶ Play board games (matching, strategy, fast response)

Homework



Preconceptions

- ▶ Homework- a teachers' way of finding out how smart the parents are
- ▶ “7 hours of school is enough”
- ▶ “There's not enough time in the day”
- ▶ Parents are tired too!

Benefits

- ▶ Time management
- ▶ Gives students other opportunities to review class material outside of the classroom
- ▶ Parents get to be aware of what is going on in class
- ▶ Teaches students to take some responsibility for their own education
- ▶ Trains students to work independently, stay organized, act and plan
- ▶ Promotes communication between parent and child

Homework types

- ▶ The U.S. Department of Education describes four common types of homework: practice, preparatory, extension and integration.
 - ▶ **Practice**- Most common type you'll see come home. It is intended to bolster classroom learning and help students master specific skills. So, just as the name implies, the key to success with this type of homework is to keep practicing.
 - ▶ **Preparatory**- Introduces concepts and ideas that will be covered in class in the near future. Common preparatory homework examples include learning vocabulary or reading a textbook chapter before the content is to be discussed the next day.
 - ▶ **Extension and Integration**- Often assigned when teachers want to challenge a student with opportunities to apply what they have learned to something new.

Practice Tips

- ▶ Nail down the basic skills that are the underpinning for more complex skills
 - ▶ Lay things out step by step not moving on to the next step until the one before is understood
- ▶ Learn from mistakes by going over missed class problems or test questions
 - ▶ Keep old tests and use for reference when working on new homework
- ▶ Always consider homework to be required, not optional
 - ▶ Build in time after school that way it is a part of their schedule
 - ▶ After school, after dinner, 30 minutes, 15 minutes, etc. even if they don't have any they have it in their head to think about it and devote that time to school work or assignments

Preparatory Tips

- ▶ Take notes of the main ideas of passages and bring them out when the topic is covered in class.
 - ▶ Taking note will help to remember to ask for help or clarification not only for the child at home but also for the parents
- ▶ Write down questions that arise while completing homework. Ask those questions in class the next day.
 - ▶ Attach the questions to the assignment so it is not lost or forgotten
- ▶ If stumped on a problem (math or science, for example), circle it and write down a few reasons why the problem is confusing.
 - ▶ Write a note in the assignment book so the teacher sees it

Extension and Integration Tips

- ▶ Be resourceful, looking through notes or the textbook for strategies on how to solve a problem or additional information that might be helpful for homework completion.
 - ▶ Pull out old assignments or notes from old tests
- ▶ Think about concepts in different ways and from different angles. This helps children engage in different ways of mental processing.
 - ▶ Attempt to apply ideas to real life situations in the home
 - ▶ Use fruit or toys as props for math problems

HAVE FUN

- ▶ Homework is something that is dreaded by all, try to apply it to fun situations
 - ▶ Try to use nature for problem solving
 - ▶ When writing a report on historic events incorporate things like movies, or cartoons and apply the concept to things the child is interested in
 - ▶ Take breaks as needed! Try **CHUNKING**
 - ▶ Review the assignments and break them down into smaller more attainable parts
 - ▶ One before dinner and one after

Things to keep in mind

- ▶ **Establish the spot.** Consistency is important and helps children get into good homework routines. Designate a place in your home for homework, whether that's the kitchen, dining room or your child's desk in her room.
- ▶ **Designate a time.** Some children focus best right after school, while others are most alert after dinner and activities. Figure out the best time of day for homework and do your best to set and keep a schedule.
- ▶ **Commit to organization.** A homework center with the supplies your child needs to be productive helps children get to work when it's time to do homework. Your child should spend a few minutes at the end of each homework session tidying it up for the next day.
- ▶ **Spend time creating a game plan.** Your child should go through his planner before starting homework to look over all assignments for the evening and rank them in order of priority. This will keep homework time on track and eliminate procrastination.
- ▶ **Limit homework help.** Resist the urge to take a lead role in your child's homework or step in to show your child how to do homework. Your child should take the initiative and assume responsibility. Make sure your role is as a supporter.