

# 10 Ways to Reduce and Manage Homework Stress

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For many families, a nightly battle begins to take shape as soon as their children enter kindergarten. The problem? As many parents would likely say: too much homework!

For decades, the gold standard for the time children are supposed to spend on homework each night has become known as the 10-minute rule. Starting with 1st grade, it is recommended that children spend 10 minutes of time working on schoolwork, with an additional 10 minutes per grade level, per night. But as many families quick to report, kids are often tasked with hours of schoolwork per night, even in the younger elementary grades!

While there isn't much parents can do about the amount of work their kids' teachers assign, there are quite a few solutions for managing homework stress and helping little learners cope with a larger than recommended workload. First, let's explore whether today's students are being overloaded, and how that might affect them before moving to our top 10 tips to manage homework overload stress in kids of all ages!



# Do Kids Get Too Much Homework?

It's only natural to wonder the exact percentage of students stressed by homework. However, even after numerous reports and studies by various research groups, it's nearly impossible to pinpoint a precise number due to the differences in education found across the country. Considering that each state in the US has an independently run department of education, and each school district governs itself, it's clear that the amount of homework assigned widely varies.

Instead, it's more helpful to look at the number of parents throughout the country who report their concern over their children's homework. In a 2015 study by [The American Journal of Family Therapy](#), families reported that their kids spent significantly more time completing class assignments in the early elementary grades than the traditional gold standard for homework time might suggest. Some parents reported that kindergarteners are spending over 20 minutes completing school assignments, when these early learners should not in fact have homework at all!

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All considered, the study proves that many students at the primary level are being assigned an inappropriate amount of work per night. At this point, you might be tempted to reason with yourself and to ask how can 25 minutes of nightly schoolwork really harm a 1st grader? Let's take a closer look at how homework can cause stress.

## How Does Homework Affect Students?

It's no secret: homework stresses kids out! Many of us grown adults might wonder why or blame laziness and video games for all this so-called stress, but in actuality, today's children really are burdened with a workload that is unlike any that we as students ever had to deal with as a child. Has your child been irritable lately after school lets out? Perhaps he or she seems to be arguing with you or siblings more than usual. Too much afterschool work could very well be one of the main reasons for their acting out. Here are a few other symptoms that your child is stressed by school:

- Slipping grades on assignments or tests
- Lower report card grades or failure to meet grade level standards
- Repetitive illnesses, like colds and viruses
- Ongoing physical complaints like stomachaches or headaches with no medical problem or explanation

- Frustration with school and an unwillingness to complete assignments
- Students may lose interest in activities he or she once loved, like reading

Some of the above symptoms are probably not very surprising to because they are general complaints that anybody dealing with stress might experience. To determine if homework is what is truly the problem, pay attention to how your child acts during your nightly work time.



## How to Reduce Homework Stress

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, our kids still have to learn to cope with the situation they have been handed. Besides attending the local school district board meeting, there isn't so much families can do to reduce the amount of homework that comes home.

However, there are many ways to help kids manage homework and reduce stress! Try the following tips to guide little learners in dealing with their workload:

## Set an afterschool routine

Just like in other aspects of home life, children thrive when given structure and a routine to follow. After walking in the door after the kids are picked up from school, it's important to have in mind what your child will spend his or her time doing. Based upon your weekly or daily schedule, create a routine to keep afterschool hours predictable. Whatever your family decides is best, keep a whiteboard or chalkboard handy in the kitchen or another centralized location of the house to keep the daily schedule squared away.

## Try giving kids brain breaks after school

Many parents choose to get started on homework right after the kids get home. The idea here is that kids will have more energy to focus and complete schoolwork earlier rather than later. But let's think about this: after a long day at work, are you—as a parent—thrilled to walk in the door and complete more of the same at home? Probably not!

While getting started on homework right after school might work for some families, for many kids, it's the surest way to foster frustration. Sometimes it's important to offer brain breaks after class to release bottled energy and distract children from the stress of the day. To do this, plan in a half hour or hour after returning home to do something fun. Head to the park, take a walk, ride bikes, or offer kids some educational screen time with [PDF worksheets](#), for instance. Whatever it is your child loves to do to relax, pencil it in each day before hitting the books!

## Don't let kids sacrifice sleep time for homework

Especially troublesome for middle or high schoolers, many students feel stressed to the point of staying up excessively late to complete homework. Instead, teach early learners not to procrastinate from a young age, and draw a line when it comes to bedtime. No matter what has or hasn't been completed, be sure to have kids in bed the same time each evening to promote the idea that getting enough sleep is key to success in academics and in life.

## Teach kids to practice self-care

Mindfulness isn't just for adults! Children should also be taught to look after their own mental health needs, and this can mean teaching children to take care of themselves when the going gets tough. Give your kids the tools needed for adequate self-care. This can mean anything from practicing yoga, meditation, exercising, to just getting outside and enjoying the fresh air. Show your child how you practice self-care and make suggestions for your little one when he or she seems stressed out from school.

## Enjoy a healthy afterschool snack

Eating a healthy snack needs little explanation, since most of us know the benefit of giving our bodies a boost of energy late in the afternoon. Try offering your child an apple, granola bar, yogurt, or any other healthy snack to redirect focus.

## Model and encourage good time management skills

Kids watch parents closely and tend to imitate our habits. Don't just set a routine for your child, but set one for yourself, as well. Stick to all afterschool routines closely and follow through with consistency. Talk with your kids about time management and discuss the tricks you use to stay organized and get work done on time.

## Use a planner

Agenda books are wonderful tools for 1st or 2nd graders who have learned to write, and need help organizing their time and assignments. If your child's school does not already provide one to keep at home, be sure to pick one up at your local office supply store. Check your child's planner each afternoon and offer rewards, like a points-based chart system, for keeping it up to date!

## Create a comfortable homework space

Where does your child complete homework? If it isn't a space specifically dedicated to homework, be sure to set one! Whether it's the dining room table, or an in-home office, make sure to make it a cozy place for your child to study. Consider flexible seating, like bean bags in a "schoolwork nook" in your child's room.

## Teach kids to walk away when overwhelmed

Is it just too much? Teach kids to know when to throw in the towel. Talk to your child about pausing during work and coming back to it later if they feel overwhelmed. In the event of a tricky assignment, encourage your children to speak up to the teacher and go directly to him or her to ask questions or get extra help.

## Make time for relaxation and fun

Life is much more than school and work! Don't forget to schedule in your family's favorite activities and make dedicated time for family games, events, and activities your child loves!

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As parents, we want our children to love learning and to enjoy school! But stressing over homework and becoming overwhelmed may be one of the quickest ways for any kid to become frustrated and burnt out. Understanding the issue and how it affects kids is just half the battle. Use the stress-busting tips above to help your children manage and beat homework overload before it begins!

