



Be a Help, not a Hassle. 10 Simple Tips to Help your Student with Homework

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“That’s not how my teacher showed us to do it!” When you reach this point homework help becomes homework hassle. A lot has changed in education since we were in school, the solutions remain the same, but the process is totally different. With the added stress of virtual and hybrid learning it has become even harder to help guide our children through the homework and studying process. Before you get to raised voices and groundings take these ten simple tips into consideration.

- Let them teach you: “Forgetting” how to add or multiply puts your child in the driver seat and they can take everything they learned in school and show you how to do it. This will reinforce their skill set, give them motivation to keep working and makes the whole process more fun. Have them teach you on one problem and then try the next on your own, make mistakes, ask questions and share in the “aha” moments. If your student is struggling use gentle nudges or questions to get them back on track.

- Don't tell them the answer: We know you want to help and at times it seems like giving the answer is the only way to get to the solution, but it never helps. Lessons build on each other, by feeding them the answers for one lesson without the student gaining a real understanding they will struggle even more with the following lesson. Learning is about understanding what they are doing, not just getting the correct answer.
- Let them struggle: Life is not a walk in the park, these students will one day face struggles whether we want to believe that or not. By allowing them some level of struggle on things like math homework they will develop skills to overcome these stresses. These skills can not be taught and only come from experience. Trying, failing and starting over are all part of the learning process and your child will be better equipped for challenges ahead.
- No tears: While struggle is an integral part of the process there needs to be a cut off line. My rule is always "No Tears". Once a student gets to the frustrational level of tears, raised voices, and heated argument the learning has completely stopped and all those negative feelings are being associated with school and school work. Not only does this build a barrier between you and them it creates anxiety and dislike for school in general. If you need to call it quits send an email to the teacher letting them know, they may just need a review of the lesson.
- Reach out for help: Teachers are here to help. A teacher's job is just that, to teach. If you find yourself unable to help, email the teacher and ask how your child is performing and what you might be able to do to help. Most teachers are more than willing to help you out and may have developed a few of their own strategies for helping your student. Remember a successful student makes everyone's job easier and more enjoyable.



- Turn to a sibling: Older siblings have learned the same information, done the same projects and maybe even had the same teachers just a few years before. They are also still actively using a lot more of those lessons than we are in our daily lives. They can be a great source for help. Siblings look up to one another and will think it's cool to get a chance to hang with their older brother or sister. Set them up to do homework in the same room as each other. The older sibling can serve as a role model and a mentor. Most importantly give them space, they may not be perfect teachers but siblings want to help and feel good looking back at how easy their younger siblings work is. By allowing this relationship to develop naturally they will feel more comfortable helping and not forced to be a tutor. While the younger children may take quickly to this, the older sibling might take a little convincing.
- Youtube: Teachers have taken to youtube to help support their students and the amount of information out there is incredible. Your student will be thrilled when you pull out the tablet during homework hours and fire up some [learning videos](#). Use the name of the lesson or the heading of the homework to search and odds are there is a

video designed specifically for that lesson. You can even let your child show you their Youtube prowess to find what you're looking for.

- [Kids Academy](#) has a huge library of videos, great for young learners
- [Nestlerlabs](#) provides short concise videos aimed at elementary education
- Don't help: This may sound counteractive and goes against every parenting bone in your body, but our model of education is designed to identify those in need and help them. When a student shows up with homework riddled with errors teachers identify that and work to help them get back on the right track. Alternatively when a student shows up with perfect work thanks to parental intervention the teacher pats themselves on the back for a lesson well taught and moves on, meanwhile the student still struggles with the basic concepts.
- Environment: Creating an environment conducive to work is absolutely essential to getting the most out of students. Any form of distraction can cause frustration and lead to outbursts and poor quality work. Set a schedule with a time and location where students are expected to do their homework like practicing with [writing worksheets](#) or [educational games](#) each day. It should be an isolated area far from any potential distractions, TV, siblings playing, or parents cooking dinner. Make sure all necessary tools are nearby. For a distracted student a trip to sharpen a pencil can lead to 20 minutes in the snack cabinet.
- Make the end in sight: Watching that clock tick away and looking back at a blank paper or computer screen is torture for any student. At younger ages it is much more difficult to see an end to an assignment. Break it down into more manageable pieces. Use numbers on the homework or completing a subject as a "checkpoint." Let the student grab a snack or tell you a story when they reach the checkpoint. This gives them realistic goals and provides immediate feedback. The younger they are the closer together these checkpoints should be.

These strategies are not a one size fits all. You are the expert on your student and your household. While sibling help may work for some families it may be a recipe for disaster for others. Mix and match these as you see fit but don't assume they won't work. As a teacher I am regularly surprised by what can motivate certain students. It is also some of your students first practice in organization, prioritizing, time management and meeting deadlines, skills that will become beneficial in all avenues of life.

While the goals are to build these skills they are still children and this is their time to make mistakes and learn what works for them. It is your time to learn when to push,

when to support and most importantly when to step away. With these skills in hand you are on your way to a happier and more successful student.

